

Adequacy and Equivalency in Poetic Translation from English into Uzbek

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ABSTRACT

Poetic translation is a nuanced and complex process that demands both linguistic proficiency and artistic sensitivity. This study explores the concepts of adequacy and equivalency in translating English poetry into Uzbek, focusing on the theoretical underpinnings and practical applications of various translation strategies. Drawing upon the works of key scholars such as Sirojiddinov, Odilova, and Neubert, the article categorizes types of translation transformations—such as reconstruction, lexical-semantic replacement, and compensation—that aid in achieving semantic fidelity. Through detailed comparative analyses of selected poems by Lord Byron and Robert Burns and their Uzbek translations, the paper demonstrates that lexical-semantic transformation plays a crucial role in achieving semantic adequacy and that although complete equivalency is largely unattainable, striving toward it is essential for conveying the aesthetic, emotional, and intellectual depth of the source text in the target language.

Keywords: Poetic translation, adequacy, equivalency, semantic adequacy, lexical-semantic transformation, reconstruction, compensation, English-Uzbek translation, literary translation, translation theory.

INTRODUCTION

The translation of poetic texts has long stood as one of the most intricate and debated domains within translation studies. Unlike prose, poetry demands a delicate balance between form and

meaning, rhythm and content, emotional impact and linguistic precision. As poetry is tightly bound to its original linguistic, cultural, and stylistic context, the act of translating it into another language – particularly from English into Uzbek – raises fundamental questions regarding adequacy and equivalency. Translating a poetic work is a challenging task and the following question arises in this process: should a poem be fully adequate to the original text or are some deviations permissible for conveying the ideas of the author more fully? Another question is: should the translated text correspond to the unique features of the target language or should the translator focus on the special characteristics of the source language?

Indeed, the author, while creating a piece of literary work, be it poetry or verse, is very likely not to concern themselves with the future possibility of its translations into languages other than the original. However, the translator whose task is to communicate the literary work in the target language should most decisively seek answers to the above-mentioned questions. As translating poetic texts requires finding answers to these questions, the necessity of a detailed discussion of adequacy in translation emerges.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

We employed a qualitative and descriptive approach grounded in both theoretical and practical analysis of poetic translation in this paper. The primary objective of ours is to investigate how adequacy and equivalency are achieved in translating English poetry into Uzbek, with a focus on the semantic and stylistic strategies used by translators. We primarily rely on both theoretical sources and the comparative analysis of selected translated texts.

The practical part of this study is based on the analysis of two poetic texts: Lord Byron's renowned poem 'She Walks in Beauty' along with its Uzbek translation, and an excerpt from Robert Burns' 'The Cotter's Saturday Night', also accompanied by its Uzbek translation by us. These texts were chosen for their literary significance, cultural resonance, and accessibility in both

source and target languages. As exemplary works of classical English poetry, they are rich in poetic devices such as rhythm, imagery, and emotional nuance, making them especially suitable for examining how translators work to preserve semantic fidelity during the translation process. In analyzing these texts, a comparative textual analysis method was used, which started with a structural analysis, stanza format, line length, rhyme patterns, and then word order were closely examined to detect any instances of reconstruction or formal transformation. Following this, we carried out a semantic analysis, focusing on the translator's (in this case, our) use of lexical-semantic strategies such as specification, generalization, antonymic transformation, compensation, and stylization. Each change identified during the analysis was then categorized according to the five types of transformation proposed by Sirojiddinov & Odilova (2011). We also conducted an interpretive evaluation to determine how these transformations affected the overall tone, meaning, and poetic essence of the original works in their translated form. This multifaceted approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the complex process involved in achieving adequacy and equivalency in poetic translation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on such sources as *Словарьиностранныхслов*, L. Barkhudarov and E. Nida, S. Sirojiddinov and G. Odilova state that the word "adequacy" comes from the Latin word *adaequatus* and means "similar," "identical," "equal." In Uzbek literary theory it is rendered as *muvozanat* which literally means "balance." According to some theorists of translation it is permissible to try to convey the meaning of the source text strictly following the standards of the target language. Scholars also distinguish two types of adequacy, namely formal and dynamic ones. Formal adequacy means translating a text in accordance with the genre of the source language, i.e. poetic text is translated in a poetical form and verse is translated as verse. However, the most important characteristic of dynamic adequacy is closeness of meaning.

Moreover, the concept of “adequacy” is closely related to “equivalency” and in literary theory the latter is interpreted differently. Normally adequacy of translation means “correspondence of translation to the requirements and conditions of the act of language communication.”

In other words, adequacy in poetical translation is rendering a work of poetry into the target language in correspondence to translation principles, requirements and commonly accepted norms.

N. Bepalova (2015: 20) elaborates on this issue in her article named ‘*Особенности перевода поэтического текста с русского на английский язык*’ and quotes V. Woolf and A. Lipgart saying that it is impossible to avoid losses in translation, but this factor must not prevent translation from being done.

As losses in translation are inevitable, the task is to strive for achieving adequacy and bring the translation as close to the original as possible.

A. Neubert says that, “to be more precise, the translation which fully corresponds to the original image – a pragmatically adequate translation is able to reconstruct the pragmatics of text A in text B exploiting the potential of the target language. It creates the text in the target language not only by means of grammatical and semantic changes, but also via the reconstruction of pragmatics. Such reconstruction is closely related to the necessity of translation and it is important to strive for the pragmatics which serves the purpose of the poetical work (1978: 196).

It is clear that besides endeavoring to recreate the lexical, grammatical and other elements of the source language in the target language the author’s purpose, his thoughts and feelings outside the text should also be taken account for the sake of adequacy.

Also, adequate translation is the translation which allows to realize pragmatic objectives at maximum capacity while preserving the authenticity of the source language and which takes into consideration the stylistic criteria of the genre and corresponds to socially accepted norms of translation. Informally,

adequate translation means “good translation” and such translation justifies the expectations of communicators of translation or the ones who define the quality of translation.

A closer look at the statement by Komissarov reveals the fact that adequate translation implies conveying the meanings intended by the author of the original text in the target language at a high level. Indeed, it is impossible to measure the accurate level of how “good” a translation is. Such a measure is impossible by definition. We believe that the ultimate evaluation of how “good” or “adequate” a translation is, is given by the target audience of the translation. As long as the main intention of translation is to communicate it to as large an audience as possible, it is reasonable to rely on the judgement of the target audience.

It is reasonable to state that poetical translation is a very challenging and complicated process. The translator is required not only to understand the source text fully, which includes its linguistic, pragmatic, socio-historical aspects, but also to convey the meanings which he generates as the result of this understanding. As it is not right to treat this process in a superficial manner, one can witness a whole diversity of approaches to it. Hence, several approaches to this matter could be looked through.

There are three ways of translating poems and in the first one the translator uses incidental rhythms, rhymes and vocabulary which are familiar to themselves but alien to the author of the original text. They feel free to extend or abridge the original text. Such translations can be named but amateur. In the second type of translation the translator acts in a similar way. However, in this case they have a theoretical background to justify their stand. They believe that if the author of the original text had written in Russian, they would have written in this very manner. This method of translation was particularly wide-spread in the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century this approach was rejected but some of its traits can still be seen. Even today there are translators who replace one rhythm with another, get rid of rhymes, and add new images. Both of these types of translation can be condoned provided that they manage to preserve the “spirit” of the source text. Unfortunately, most often the translators who act in this

manner focus on the form of the text because they believe that the form is the only way expressing the “soul”.

Although the two methods of translation are not very welcome due to lack of fidelity to the original text, they still have the right to exist even today. Sadly, most of the translations done into Uzbek presently are those of verse and popular science. Translations of poetry in general and those of English classical poetry in particular are very scarce. Besides, English textbooks used in Uzbek schools, colleges and universities do not provide substantial knowledge on English poetry. Therefore, we believe that provided that there is interest in English poetry among Uzbek audience, the two ways of translation are welcome, no matter how amateur and theoretically unsupported they are. The third way of translation is professional translation which meets all the requirements of modern translation processes and requires not only linguistic knowledge but also mobilization of his complex intellectual and spiritual faculties. This means that only the translators who have had a professional training in this field can be engaged in it.

“Equivalency” in translation is considered one of the key concepts of linguistic translation because many scholars think that it provides full correspondence of the target text to the source text. In other words, equivalency means “replacing a text in the original with a text of the same quality in the language of translation”. Here “equivalency” implies high quality of translation. Thus, while the translation with equivalency is believed to be a “good” one, the translation which lacks equivalency cannot be characterized as adequate. This means that equivalency is the process of recreating the meaning of the original text in the language of translation at a high level and the original purpose and function of the text is fully restored in the target language.

The poet who intends to write a piece of poetry experiences specific psycho-emotional conditions. These conditions inspire them to take a pen and put their emotions down on the paper. Next task of the poet is to encode those feelings into linguistic elements and write them down. As a result, poetry in the original language comes into being. The translator who intends to translate an original piece of poetry, in their turn, should be able to read the text and understand the symbols and meanings behind

the “code”. Additionally, they should be able to feel and understand the psycho-emotional state in which the poet was while creating the work. Only then will the translator be able to choose the proper elements of the target language to create an adequate translation.

This means that equivalency is one of the key factors in creating a high-quality poetical translation. The translator who faces such challenging tasks should be offered instruments. Hence the discussion of the strategies of achieving adequacy and equivalency in translation is advisable at this point.

It has been stated several times that the text in the target language undergoes certain changes during translation process and most scholars in this field believe that the uniqueness of poetical translation is that a considerable attention is paid to the recreation of the original form in the language of translation. Form in poetical translation includes rhythm, genre and a number of compositional features and their harmony allows the target reader not only to comprehend the text but also to feel the essence of the poem. While trying to achieve this goal experiencing losses is inevitable. Nevertheless, there is a set of changes which the source text undergoes and they are called “transformation.”

As this discussion focuses on the issue of poetical translation from English into Uzbek, we find it suitable to present a few thoughts of ours on this matter.

As Uzbek poetical traditions are based on such genres as *gazel*, *rubai*, and others, translating poetic works from English into Uzbek preserving full structural correspondence to the original causes serious difficulties. Take the famous English poet William Shakespeare as an example. The author is famous for his plays and tragedies, as well as sonnets. The translator who intends to translate Shakespeare’s sonnets into Uzbek should take into account the formal structure of the sonnet as well as its meaning and think about choosing a proper equivalent structure in Uzbek.

Here the translator has to decide whether to preserve the original structure of the sonnet, which is alien to Uzbek poetry. On the other hand, transforming a sonnet by Shakespeare into a *rubai* or a *gazel* might not be the best solution either. As a result, one faces the imminent choice of transformation, be it formal or

semantical. In other words, the source text undergoes certain transformations in order to become comprehensible in the language of translation.

In their work dedicated to literary translation Sirojiddinov & Odilova (2011) discuss five types of transformation which are used in translation. They are reconstruction, replacement, addition, omission and lexical-semantical replacement.

The five types of transformation mentioned above are used depending on which type of adequacy is required in the translation. The translator may use one or several types of transformation depending on the linguistic and extra-linguistic features of the source text.

SEMANTIC ADEQUACY

Semantic adequacy is one of the most important aspects of literary translation. Being the main requirement of equivalency, it requires high level skills and sensitivity from the translator. Semantic adequacy has been studied by many theorists and specialists of literary translation. Although views on this matter vary greatly, all of them are based on the same principles. Namely, Sirojiddinov & Odilova (2011) state that semantic adequacy means full reflection of the original meaning in the translation and a high level of semantic equivalency.

Indeed, as a definition, the quoted statement describes semantic adequacy very accurately. In fact, the main objective of any translation activity is to communicate the meaning and the essence of the text in the source language to the readers of the target language. Nevertheless, there is one point which needs explaining and this is the “full” reflection of the original meaning in the translation. Considering the word “full” an integral part of the definition and taking into account the fact that full adequacy is simply impossible to achieve, it is advisable that the word “full” should be replaced with “to a maximum capacity”. It is a common knowledge that full semantic adequacy is impossible even among closely related languages. Therefore, it is more rational to view full semantic adequacy as the objective to which every translator keeps striving for.

According to another scholar, semantic adequacy being the object of the discussion, it should be born in mind that the most important purpose of poetical translation is to preserve the meaning of the original text, its rhythm and tone as much as possible. This implies providing semantic harmony, exploiting the words to their full potential.

We believe that this definition of semantic adequacy is more accurate. Indeed, numerous factors such as words, their meanings and essence contribute to achieving a high level of semantic adequacy. The fact that semantic adequacy is something to strive for should also be born in mind.

The above-mentioned definitions clearly show that in case of semantic adequacy hardly is it possible to achieve it fully and at first sight the original poem and its translation may seem to have nothing in common. However, they are united by a common theme. In order to highlight this point by describing how this high level of semantic adequacy is achieved and which types of transformation are used for this purpose, a detailed analysis of a poem by the famous English poet Lord Byron is presented below. The poem is named ‘She walks in beauty’

The original text:

*She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.*

*One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.*

*And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,*

*A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!*

Translation into Uzbek:

*Go`zallik ichra u borar tun kabi
Bulutsiz, yulduzli osmonga monand.
Oh, uning qomati hamda ko`zlari!
Qaro tun va shu'la bo`lgandir payvand.*

*Ushbu yorug`likdan erigan osmon
Uni ravshan kunga bermas, qilar rashk.
Bir soya ziyoda, bir nurda nuqson,
Nomsiz nafosat-chun bo`lgaydir ofat.*

*Zulmat, nur bahslashar kokillarida;
Yuzida moh qalqar tegingan zamon.
Hayollar chiroyin etar oshkora,
Pokiza va aziz oy qalqqan makon.*

*Qoshlarin ustida, yanoqlarida
Mayin va hotirjam, lekin so`zamol
O`tgan kunlaridan hikoya aytar
Otashli tabassum, varaqlagan ol.*

*Dunyoda har ne-la murosali qalb,
Qalb-ki muhabbati ma'sum va zilol.*

First of all, it should be noted that the original poem was written in the form of sestets (six lines) but it was translated into Uzbek in the form of quartets (four lines). The order of the fourth and fifth lines in the first sestet were changed in the Uzbek translation:

Original:

*Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.*

Uzbek translation:

*“Ushbu yorug`likdan erigan osmon
Uni ravshan kunga bermas, qilar rashk.*

In the original text the following two lines talk about the sweetness of thoughts. Besides, contextually the text implies that these sweet thoughts are reflected on the countenance of the beauty. The latter line quoted below describes how pure and precious the countenance of the beauty is. The fact that the structure of the lines has been radically altered in the Uzbek translation indicate that the type of transformation named “reconstruction” has been exploited in this case. As far the countenance of the beauty is concerned, it is clear that lexical-semantic replacement has been used in the Uzbek translation.

Original:

Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

Uzbek translation:

Hayollar chiroyin etar oshkora,
Pokiza va aziz oy qalqqan makon.

In the Uzbek translation the thoughts are described not as “sweet,” but “beautiful.” In addition, the countenance of the beauty is not rendered with synonyms of the word “face” but the “location where the moon rises.” Here as well, although linguistic parallels are not obvious, the lines are still connected by means of the common theme. The translation of the following lines can be interpreted as an example of lexical-semantic replacement.

And on that cheek, and o’er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,

The word order of the first line of this quartet has been changed in the Uzbek translation. Besides, the third and fourth lines have been translated into Uzbek in a reverse order. This kind structural changes of the lines indicate that “reconstruction” has been used in this piece of translation.

Qoshlarin ustida, yanoqlarida
Mayin va hotirjam, lekin so`zamol
O`tgan kunlaridan hikoya aytar
Otashli tabassum, yaraqlagan ol.

The characteristics which are used in the original for describing beauty are rendered into Uzbek as an exclamation of surprise. Lexically, the Uzbek words *qomat*, *qaro tun*, *shu'la*, *payvand* are not equivalent translations of the English version. However, as the main purpose of the translation is to describe the beauty, we can say that they are serving the same purpose as the original text. This means that lexical-semantic replacement has been exploited here.

If we express the types of transformation which have been used to reach semantic adequacy in numbers, in general, transformations have occurred in five instances. Three of them are semantic transformations and two of them are reconstruction. Thus, it is reasonable to state that the two types of transformation are the most productive ones in providing semantic adequacy in this particular translation.

L. Tatarina & A. Artomonova (2008) make use of the classification suggested by Y. Ratsker in defining semantic adequacy. Y. Ratsker divides semantic adequacy into three parts and the first part is named "equivalency." This implies that the meaning of a word or phrase fully corresponds to that of a word or phrase in another language regardless of the context. Importantly, frequently set expressions are found to be equivalent to separate words as while a set expression holds one meaning only, a word may have many.

We believe that the most productive instrument for achieving semantic adequacy is lexical-semantic transformation as this very type of transformation deals with meanings of words and the context of poems.

One sub-type of lexical-semantic transformation is "specification." This type of transformation means using one particular meaning of a word among many. There is also a type of transformation named "generalization" and it has an opposite function to specification. It uses the word in its general meaning.

Antonymic transformation transforms the negative sentence into an affirmative one. “Compensation” involves compensating the losses in the translation with the words and phrases which have the closest meanings to the omitted words of the original. “Stylization” means using the same style (e.g. historical-archaic) of the original in the translation.

The concept of equivalency can be illustrated in the following translation of an excerpt from a poem by the famous Scottish poet Robert Burns named ‘The Cotter’s Saturday Night.’

The original:

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,
The big ha'bible, ance his father's pride:

Translation into Uzbek:

*Quvnoq tushlik bitdi jiddiy ravishda,
O`choq atrofida davra tuzishdi;
Ota boqdi, nigohida salobat,
Olib Injil, otasidan omonat.*

In the quoted quartet it is clearly seen that the word couples “cheerful – *quvnoq*”, “serious – *jiddiy*”, “round the ingle – *o`choq atrofida*”, “form a circle – *davra tuzmoq*”, “grace – *salobat*”, “bible – *injl*”, “father – *ota*” are full equivalents of each other. In general, the passage consists of 29 words from which 7 words have full equivalents in Uzbek. However, several types of lexical-semantic transformation can be observed in the translation:

The word “done” has multiple meanings in English and in this translation it is rendered as *tugamoq* “finish.” The word *sire* is translated as *ota* “father.” The phrasal verb “turn over” also has numerous meanings and in Uzbek it is “*boqmoq (o`girilib qaramoq)* – to look”. Clearly, all of these transformations exemplify “specifications,” which is a type of lexical-semantic transformation. Quantitatively, specification has been used in three instances.

“Wi’ serious face” is translated as *jiddiy ravishda* – “seriously”. “They ... form ...” is translated as *tuzishdi* and the verb has the indicators of the categories of third person plural. It has the same meaning as the English phrase though it lacks the subject. The word “patriarchal” was omitted and the translation of “grace” is used to render the meaning. The word “pride” is translated as *omonat* – “trust”. All of these examples illustrate the type of lexical-semantic transformation named “compensation”.

Taking into account the fact that from the 29 words in all, 8 have been translated by means of equivalency, 3 have been translated using specification and 6 have been rendered via compensation, one can see that equivalency is the dominant method of translation on this occasion.

Based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the translations we can state that the main method of providing semantic adequacy is lexical-semantic transformation.

CONCLUSION

The translation of poetry, particularly from English into Uzbek, is a complex and intellectually demanding endeavor that requires more than linguistic equivalence – it demands cultural sensitivity, poetic intuition, and theoretical awareness. This study has examined the core concepts of adequacy and equivalency in poetic translation through the lens of translation theory and practical examples. By analyzing translated versions of Lord Byron’s ‘She Walks in Beauty’ and Robert Burns’ ‘The Cotter’s Saturday Night,’ it has become clear that achieving full semantic adequacy is not only challenging but often unattainable. Nevertheless, translators strive to approximate it by using a variety of strategies, chief among them being lexical-semantic transformations and structural reconstruction.

The findings of this study indicate that lexical-semantic transformation is the most frequently employed method for maintaining semantic fidelity, as it enables the translator to convey the original meaning, emotional undertone, and stylistic richness of the source text. Structural changes, such as reconstruction, are also crucial when adapting poetic form to fit the conventions of the

target language, particularly when translating into a language with different poetic traditions like Uzbek.

Ultimately, while absolute equivalency may remain an ideal, this research reaffirms the value of pursuing adequacy as a guiding principle in poetic translation. A successful translation is not one that mirrors the original word for word, but one that resonates with the target audience while preserving the spirit, tone, and communicative intent of the original poem. In this light, adequacy and equivalency are not fixed outcomes but dynamic processes that reflect the translator's skill, interpretive choices, and cultural understanding.

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