Literary translation and its features in uzbek prose relating to the twentieth century

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“In antiquity, says Andrew Chestermen, one of the dominant images of the translators was that of a builder: his task was to carefully demolish a building, a structure (the source text), carry bricks somewhere else (into the target language) and construct a new building with the same bricks”

Indeed, translation, especially translating literary works is not only converting a text from one language into another one, but also expressing literary creativeness and conveying atmosphere, culture, outlook and style of the author’s work. In this case we can say undoubtedly that literary translation is the most important and, of course, the most difficult branch of translation field.

The dimension of literary translation in Uzbek literature is incomparable too. Thanks to some Uzbek writer-translators who lived and wrote in the previous century we can get much pleasure by reading valuable works from foreign literature, such as well-known author Shakespeare’s valuable tragedies “Othello”, “King Lear” (translated by Gafur Gulam). And a talented writer, the master of short stories Abdulla Kahhor introduced most well-known books from Russian literature to us by translating them with his art. Besides, we can see several translated works by Oybek (“Eugine Onegin”, “Masquerade”). Likewise, the writers who appeared in the second half of the last century made many translational works. As an instance, a valuable representative of Uzbek national literature Toghay Murod translated Jack London’s stories and plays into Uzbek.

At this moment a question comes: “Did the world booklovers enjoy the samples of Uzbek literature relating to the 20 th century?”

Yes, because the prosaic works which were created in different periods of the 20 th century have been translated to many different world languages, as well as English.

To be more precise, the novels relating to the first half of the previous century “Days Gone by” (“O’tkan kunlar”), “Scorpion from the Altar” (“Mehrobdan chayon”), as well as “Obid Ketmon” by Abdulla Kodiriy were translated into English[1].

Some fragments of Oybek’s memoir work “Childhood” (“Bolalik”) have been translated by Carolyn Wei recently. Azam Abidov overset Toghay Murod’s narrative “People by moonlight” (“Oydinda yurgan odamlar”) into English. Another story of T.Murod “Husband and wife” (“Er-xotin”) and Shukur Kholmirzaev’s “The character of Uzbek people” (“O’zbeklar”) were translated by Shuhrat Sattorov. He overset also Abdulla Kahhar’s “Pomegranate” (”Anor”) and Abdulla Qodiriy’s “At the Ulok” (“Uloqda”) into English.

So, what are the main features of translating the 20th century’s Uzbek Prose? What we should pay more attention to while translating ?

In the first half of the 20 th century, as we know, in Turkistan the Jadid movement arose as a social-political movement. The Jadids turned to literature to achieve their goal of social reform[2].

Therefore, the literary works which were created at that period served to show the poor life of the people and challenge them to become literate, enlightened and independent. Mainly, poetry played an important role in this case. For instance, one of the founders of Uzbek modern poetry Chulpon wrote in his

poem “Soul” that

“Tiriksan, o’lmagansan,

Sen-da odam, sen-da insonsan;

Kishan kiyma, bo’yin egma,

Ki, sen ham hur tug’ilg’onsen!.. “

By this poem Chulpon was going to wake his people’s soul up and encourage them not to live in the dependence. The talented translator A. Abidov translated it with its atmosphere:

“You’re alive, not passed away,

You’re a man, act humanly,

Refuse the fetters, don’t obey,

In fact, you also were born free!”[3]

Prose also had a significant role at that period. By prosaic works writers tried to reveal the unfairness of the regime of governments which existed at that time. Besides, the pure nationality of Uzbek people was demonstrated by the works, including “Days Gone By” (“O’tkan kunlar”), “Night and Day” (“Kecha va kunduz”), “Scorpion from the Altar” (“Mehrobdan chayon”) and etc.

However, the specialists argue that their translation verses are not perfect, you cannot feel the pleasure or enjoy by translation verses so much as original text. For instance, in “Days Gone By”, according to the specialists, in most cases it was avoided from expressive colourfullness and was translated technically. This means that world readers are not being able to enjoy our materpieces and cannot feel the atmosphere.[4]

Let’s take another work which is related to the next period of the twentieth century, “Pomegranate” (“Anor”) by Abdulla Kahhor. As we know well, Abdulla Kahhor is the master of short and meaningful stories in Uzbek literature. He saved the words, I mean, he used less words, but managed to leave meaningful works. One of his stories “Pomegranate” smells the scent of pure Uzbek nationality, because its language is totally national and it delivers the nationalism. Though the author used very colourful words its translation verse by Shuhrat Sattorov has some confusions and inappropriate words. For instance, in the dialogue between the characters of the story, Turobjon and his wife, Turobjon says:

“What should I do? Should I kill my boss and steal his money? Or should I leave myself as a deposit?”

The words here used “boss” and “deposit” are not appropriate for belles-lettres, I think. “Boss” is used more as a business term, “deposit” also is the term which is related to the financial field or economics. If the translator used the words “ my master” and “pledge” instead of the words above, it would be much more correct.

Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines the noun “master” as “(old-fashioned) a man who has people working for him, often as servants at home”, “boss” as “a person in charge of other people at work and tells them what to do; a person who is in charge of a large organization”. [5]

Another confusion is here. Before analysing the English version I prefer to give its original form in Uzbek.

“Turobjonning bu so’zlari xotinining qulog’iga notayin bir g’oldirash bo’lib kirar edi. Uning Turobjon

bilan uy qilganiga uch yil bo'lib kelayotir, nazarida, bu odam shu uch yildan beri g'oldirab kelgan, hozirgisi go'yo shuning davomiday edi"

"Turobjon's words sounded to his wife like pointless mumbling. They had been married for three years and during this time her husband had done nothing but mumble. This mumble was a continuation of those mumbles."

As it is shown from this instance, Turobjon never mumbles and had not mumbled by that time. But his words sounded to his wife like mumbling. It just sounded like mumbling. The translation version refers to that Turobjon is a tiresomely garrulous man, and always mumbles. In this case readers may misunderstand the meaning. Maybe it would be more correct if it would say:

"Turobjon's words sounded to his wife like pointless mumbling. In the woman's view he had always mumbled since they got married and at that time she heard as if her husband had been continuing his mumbles.

However, in some cases the work of translators are real praiseworthy and must be conceded. For example, in "Pomegranate" Abdulla Kahhor pressed a couplet which can coincide the meaning of the story. And the translation of it really impressed me. I decided to give both versions.

"Uylar to'la non, och-nahorim bolam,

Ariqlar to'la suv, tashnai zorim, bolam."

"The houses are full of bread, but my child is hungry,

The waterways are full of water, but my child is thirsty."

I want to give some examples for successful and remarkable translation from "The character of Uzbek people" by Shukur Kholmirzaev. Firstly, the story is about Uzbek people's gentle attitude and miraculuous, legendary hospitability. While the author did his best to show it, translator must also be able to demonstrate all charm of the story.

One part of the story the author used the word "vodiy". It means an oasis or a valley in English.

"Baribir ularga – vodiylik, toshkentlik bolalarga nisbatan qishloqimiz-da, to'g'risi."

"It's true that we were more provincial than the guys from vodiy or Tashkent"

The translator could have used one of the words "valley" or "oasis", whereas he preferred to keep it as its original and wrote its definion at the end of the story, in the glossary. Why? Because as you have noticed in given example it was used to refer to the name of place. To be more precise, Uzbek people call "vodiy" a geographical place, including three regions: Andijan, Namangan and Fergana. If the translator overset it, the meaning wouldn't refer to a geographical place, but any valley.

In brief, Uzbek prose relating to the twentieth century is typical. Both pure Uzbek words and Russian words (because of Russian invasion) were in the usage at that time. Besides, the writers wrote in the dialect of the twentieth century. Likewise, tranlators are demanded to research the terms and dialect of the 20 th century literature, and, of course, literary approach to the works while translating. We can say that some literary works which were created in the last century were translated successfully and some need to be worked on.

[1] http:// ziyo.uz/en/uzbek-literature/40-literature-of-jadids-period/93-abdulla-qodiriy-1984-1938

[2] Mirzaeva Z.”Representations of Europeans in Twentieth-Century Uzbek literature”. Journal of the Institute for Foreign Language Studies, 2012, № 2, Korea

[3] http://ziyo.uz/en/poetry/44-modern-uzbek poetry/195-abdulhamid-chulpon

[4] Umarali Normatov. “Yangi davr olimi: U qanday bo’lishi kerak?” “O’zbekiston adabiyoti va san’ati” gazetasi, 2011, №9

[5] Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary. Cambridge University Press, 2008