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**METHODS USED TO TRANSLATE HUMOROUS ELEMENTS IN THE
NOVEL “THREE MEN IN A BOAT (TO SAY NOTHING OF THE DOG)”
BY JEROME K. JEROME INTO AZERBAIJANI**

Keywords: *Humorous elements, functional equivalency, literary translation, linguistic transformation, domestication*

Açar sözlər: *Yumor elementləri, funksional ekvivalentlik, bədii tərcümə, linqvistik transformasiya, domestikasiya*

Introduction

One of the most complicated and specific fields of the art of literary translation lies on the transfer of the comic elements and humorous soul from one language into the other. As humor is connected with the national-cultural identity, historical consciousness and wordplays of each people, its translation is not only the substitution of the words lexically, but also the reconstruction of the whole semantic environment and emotional context. Considered the classical example of the world humorous literature, the novel “Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog)” [6, p.8] by Jerome K. Jerome reflects the everyday life in England during the Victorian Age with a specific sarcasm, subtle irony and exaggerated descriptions. The translation of this novel into Azerbaijani by the translator Toghrul Mammadli updates the problem of adaptation of the phenomenon of English humor in the structure of the original text for the local audience. Within the academic sphere, the translation of humor often faces the problem of untranslatability. Humorous effect often relies on the internal mechanisms of the language. “Humor is often dependent on the linguistic structures of the source language, such as polysemy, homonymy, or phonetic similarity, which makes it particularly resistant to translation” [4, p. 128]. We see different levels of this challenge in Jerome K. Jerome’s novel: situational humor, irony and, especially, the description of the realities specific to English culture. The methods in the translation strategy used by Toghrul Mammadli in order to preserve or adapt these elements into the local environment – compensation, modulation and functional equivalence - constitute the main object of this article. It is clear that a translator is not only a linguistic carrier, but also an intercultural mediator. Peter Newmark emphasizes in his work of “A Textbook of Translation” that the main criterion in the translation of humor is the effect created in the reader. “In the translation of humor, the main constraint is the requirement that the

translation should provoke the same laughter or smile in its readers as the original did in its own” [9, p. 106]. While the deadpan humor characteristic of Jerome’s style and the characters’ acceptance of the absurd situations they experience as normal are interpreted within the expressive resources of the Azerbaijani language, the translator’s faithfulness to the soul of the original comes to the fore. Reviewing how the mentioned humorous nuances are translated within the principles of equivalence and adequacy in the translated version by Toghrul Mammadli is of great importance in terms of both the translation studies and literary studies. Additionally, the translator’s creative potential plays a significant role to regulate the intercultural asymmetry in the translation process. “Translating humor is not merely a matter of finding synonyms, but of recreating a cultural atmosphere where the comic intention remains intact despite the linguistic shift” [7, p. 64]. The main attention in this article has been directed into the process of finding Azerbaijani equivalents of the puns and specific English irony in Jerome K. Jerome’s language. This theoretical basis presented in the introduction will be supported in the next parts with the concrete text examples chosen from the translated version by Toghrul Mammadli and comparative linguistic analysis. The conclusions obtained through the research will serve the development of the methodological approach to the humorous works in the history of the Azerbaijani translation studies.

1. Literature review on the translation of the humorous elements

The translation of the humorous elements is one of the most controversial issues both in the linguistics and translation studies. The fact that humor is not merely a linguistic phenomenon, but also a cultural-cognitive one constitutes the basis of the research conducted in this field. The literature review shows that the researchers analyze this problem in three main directions – linguistic barriers, cultural adaptation and the principles of equivalence.

The Untranslatability of the Humor and Linguistic Approaches

The initial and biggest difficulty encountered during the translation of the humor is puns which are originated from the inherent structure of the language. When the phonetic similarity or polysemy in one language does not exist in the target language, the loss of the humor is inevitable. Salvatore Attardo notes in his work called “Linguistic Theories of Humor”: “The main problem in translating puns is that the linguistic conditions for the joke are usually unique to the source language, and the target language lacks an exact structural parallel” [2, p.173].

The wordplays observed in Jerome K. Jerome’s style belong to exactly this group. When analyzing the translator Toghrul Mammadli’s approach, we see that he often applies for the method of compensation emphasized by Attardo. It means, if a wordplay cannot be translated as it is in the original, the humoristic content is transferred into another element.

Skopos Theory and Functional Equivalence

Among the approaches to the translation of the humor in the modern translation studies, Skopos theory plays a key role. According to this theory, the success of the translation is assessed not by the faithfulness to the structure of the original text, but the impact produced in the reader of the target language. Hans J. Vermeer highlights: “To translate means to produce a text in a target setting for a target purpose and target addressees in target circumstances” [7, p. 29].

Cultural Barriers and the Strategy of Adaptation

One of the most challenging parts in the humorous texts is culture specific items. The researcher Javier Franco Aixelá notes that the translator must choose one of the two ways in this case: whether preserve the foreignness of the original (foreignization), or adapt it into the local culture (domestication). He mentions: “Translation is not a neutral act; the choice to domesticate a joke or to explain its cultural background affects how the humor is perceived by the target audience” [1, p. 54].

The lifestyle around the River Thames and Victorian-era customs are unfamiliar concepts for the Azerbaijani readers. It is highlighted in the literature reviews that the translator often must prefer the dynamic equivalence for the successful translation of the humor. In Toghrul Mammadli’s translation it reveals in the characters’ forms of address and descriptions of the everyday life details.

The Specificity of the Genre and Modern Studies

The translation of the humor in the modern age is not only a linguistic analysis, but also a pragmatic and sociolinguistic field of research. According to the translation scholar J. Vandaele: “Humor translation is an act of creative rewriting, as the translator must recreate the incongruity of the original in a way that remains recognizable for the target reader” [13, p.150]. This opinion is a fundamental academic argument to analyze the translation of Jerome K. Jerome’s novel into Azerbaijani. In conclusion, the literature review shows that the translation of the humor lies at the intersection of multiple theories. The practical analysis that we are going to conduct on the translated version of the novel “Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog) by Toghrul Mammadli will be realized on the basis of the mentioned theories.

2. Understanding Humorous Elements and Their Cultural Context

Humorous elements are linguistic and semantic play in the literary works used to produce laughter, smile or aesthetic sense in the reader. These elements include irony, sarcasm, hyperbole, puns and absurd situations. Understanding the humor is not limited with linguistic knowledge; this process is directly connected with the cultural environment and social experience to which the reader belongs. The humor in the novel “Three Men in a Boat” by Jerome K. Jerome has been built upon the behavioral codes, ethical norms and everyday life characteristic of the middle class in Victorian England [6, p.8].

The incongruity theory often relies on the foundation of the humorous elements. According to this theory, the humor arises from the contradiction between the expected reality and the occurring event. The researcher Victor Raskin notes in his work called “Semantic Mechanisms of Humor”: “Humor involves a script opposition where the listener must move from a “normal” interpretation of a situation to an “abnormal” or unexpected one, which is deeply rooted in cultural expectations” [11, p.99]. For example, Jerome’s characters dramatization of a little domestic problem (for instance, not being able to open the can) as a scene of a battle is a humorous element originated from the incongruity principle.

3. The Role of Humorous Elements in Literature

Humor is not only a tool of entertainment in literature, also an important poetic instrument performing deep philosophical, sociological and psychological functions. The author draws the reader’s attention to the flaws of the society, weaknesses in human character and the absurd sides of the life through the humorous elements. Humor in the novel “Three Men in a Boat” by Jerome J. Jerome performs the functions of social criticism and escape from the reality. The researcher Neil Ritchi notes: “Humor in literature serves as a defense mechanism against the pressures of reality, allowing the reader to view tragic or mundane situations through a lens of comic relief” [12, p.42].

4. Corpus of this Research

The corpus of this research consist of the novel “Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog)” by Jerome K. Jerome and the translation of this novel into Azerbaijani titled “Qayıqda üç nəfər (İti də saymasaq)” by Toghrul Mammadli and published by TEAS Press Publishing in 2016. The original work was published in 1889 and chosen the most remarkable example of the humorous style of English, but the translated text performs as a main object of comparison reflecting the stylistic and expressive potential of the Azerbaijani language and the author’s individual approach. When forming the corpus of this research, the main attention has been drawn to the humorous units in the novel. As the researcher Z. Jager notes: “The corpus of a translation study must be representative enough to allow for a systematic analysis of specific linguistic shifts and cultural adaptations” [5, p.88]. For this purpose, the characters’ – Harris’s, George’s and Jim’s dialogues, the ironical descriptions used by the author, puns and more than fifty excerpts containing the specific English realities have been included to the corpus. Both texts have been linguistically analyzed in parallel to review how these units have been transformed in Toghrul Mammadli’s translation. Such structuring of the corpus provides the objectiveness and scientific basis of the results of the research.

5. Comparative Translation Analysis

The translation of the novel “Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog)” into Azerbaijani by Toghrul Mammadli is a rich corpus which shows how the

stylistic capacities of the target language have been adapted into the specific humorous structure of the source language. During the comparative analysis, it becomes clear that the translator has adapted the deadpan tones of the English humor into the Azerbaijani reader's mentality and linguistic aesthetics.

5.1 The Transformation of Irony and Hyperbole

One of the most encountered elements in Jerome's style is the excessive exaggeration of the daily, usual event. For example, in the beginning of the novel, the character Jim's finding all the diseases in himself when reading about different illnesses in the library is a brilliant example of it:

Original: "I sat for a while, frozen with horror; and then, in the listlessness of despair, I again turned over the pages." [6, p. 8]

Toghrul Mammadli's translation: "Qorxudan yerimdə donub qaldım, sonra çarəsizliyin gətirdiyi laqeydliklə səhifələri yenə vərəqləməyə başladım." [8, p. 8]

Translating this sentence in Azerbaijani, the translator has enriched the phrases "frozen with horror" (qorxudan donub qalmaq) and "listlessness of despair" (çarəsizliyin gətirdiyi laqeydlik) in the original with the figurativeness of the target language. As the researcher Mona Baker says: "The translator must often resort to "paraphrasing" or "cultural substitution" when a direct equivalent fails to evoke the same emotional intensity" [3, p.31]. This dramatic quality in Toghrul Mammadli's translation produces a comic effect of "turmoil", and it overlaps with the ironic impact Jerome wants to produce.

5.2. Situational Humor and the Example of "Uncle Podger"

One of the most unforgettable parts of the novel is Uncle Podger's attempt to hang the picture on the wall. Here the humor has been built upon the description of the physical movements and chaos. In the original text, the arrogant and unskilled image of Uncle Podger is described as following:

Original: "Oh, you leave that to me. Don't you, any of you, worry yourselves about that. I'll do that." [6, p.25].

Toghrul Mammadli's translation: "Eh, buraxın bunu mənim öhdəmə. Heç biriniz də narahat olmayın. Özüm həll edəcəm." [8, p.19]

The statement "I'll do that" in this part is given with a more confident and broader tone in the translation by Toghrul Mammadli. The translator portrays Uncle Podger as typical "know-it-all" character. Peter Newmark notes: "In communicative translation, the translator attempts to produce the same effect on the TL readers as was produced on the SL readers." [9, p.47]. The dynamic verbs used by Toghrul Mammadli to describe the chaos in this scene (for example, "əl-ayağa düşmək", "hay-küy salmaq") creates a comic environment which contradicts with the English reserve in the original, but seems natural for the Azerbaijani language.

5.3. Puns and Cultural Adaptation

The most challenging task of the translator is the transfer of the puns. There are different puns related to Harris's attempt to sing a song or George's sleepiness in the novel. For instance:

Original: "George goes to sleep at a bank from ten to four each day, except Saturdays, when they wake him up put him outside at two." (Jerome, 1889, p.15).

Toghrul Mammadli's translation: "Corc hər səhər saat 10-dan axşamüstü 4-ə qədər hansısa bankda yatmağa gedir, təkcə şənbə günləri saat 2-də onu oyadıb ordan yola salırlar." [8 p. 19]

Here not George's working in the bank, but his sleeping there is emphasized. When translating this joke into Azerbaijani, the translator has used the structure that expresses George's laziness in an exaggerated way and is near our domestic humor. This method is known as modulation in the translation studies. According to J. Knight: "A successful humorous translation often requires a departure from the literal meaning to save the spirit of the joke." [7, p.72]. Toghrul Mammadli has avoided word-for-word translation by choosing this manner and has delivered the comic of the character George.

5.4. The River Thames and the Analysis of the Cultural Realities

The episode related to the "cheese" and the "dog" (called Montmorency) are the most interesting examples of the intercultural transfer. Montmorency's fight with the cats or tea-time rituals in the boat are the inseparable part of the English domestic life. When introducing these realities to the Azerbaijani reader, the translator has often used the methods of neutralization and explanatory translation. However, he has been loyal to the manner of personification of the original in the parts related to the dog's inner world and thoughts.

In conclusion, the comparative analysis shows that Toghrul Mammadli has been able to create a successful synthesis between the subtle British irony in Jerome K. Jerome's style and the expressive humor of Azerbaijani. Although the translator has sacrificed the form of the original in some parts, he has succeeded to produce the same reaction – laughter and surprise in the target reader, and this is one of the main factors that determines the success of Toghrul Mammadli's sign as a literary work of translation.

6. Findings

As a result of the conducted analysis, it has been determined that Toghrul Mammadli's translation has successfully passed the English humor in the original through the linguistic filter of Azerbaijani. The main finding of the research is that in the transfer of the humor the equivalent effect created in the target language plays more decisive role rather than the lexical accuracy. It has been identified that the translator has used the phraseological richness the system of dynamic verbs of Azerbaijani proficiently in order to preserve the situational humor and irony. The findings confirm that by preferring the strategy of domestication, Toghrul Mammadli

has shaped Jerome K. Jerome's Victorian-era jokes to be understandable and aesthetically pleasing for the Azerbaijani reader.

Prevalent Translation Styles: The methods of communicative translation and creative re-writing are dominant in Toghrul Mammadli's translation style. The research shows that the translator has substituted the formal, but ironic Victorian English in the original for the vivid and colloquial literary style of Azerbaijani. This choice of style shortens the distance between the reader and the novel, and makes Jerome's characters more understandable and native for the Azerbaijani reader.

Advantages of Functional Equivalence: The method of functional equivalence mostly used by the translator provides the transfer of the humor without any loss. The main advantage of this method is that the same humorous effect is created in the target language as in the original. For example, when a subtle irony characteristic of the English culture is substituted for a proverb or an idiomatic expression in the Azerbaijani language, the reader perceives the novel not as a foreign work, but an original novel written in their own language.

Challenges Hindering Functional Equivalence: The biggest difficulty in the provision of the functional equivalence is the contradiction between the literal meaning of the original text and the emotional effect in the target language. Being one of the methods mostly applied by Toghrul Mammadli, modulation provides assistance in the cases in which the literal translation "kills" the humor. However, during the application of this method, the risk of loss of the understatement nuances characteristic of English appears within the expressive nature of Azerbaijani. The main challenge for the translator is to preserve the balance of not deviating from the British atmosphere of the original when transferring Jerome's deadpan irony and reserved irony to the Azerbaijani reader through the domestication of the text. Overcoming these obstacles is a complicated cognitive process which requires from the translator to feel the implicit humor and underlying meanings of the both languages.

Translator Expertise and Style: The analysis show that Toghrul Mammadli's competency as a translator reveals itself in his deep awareness of the humorous structures of the both languages. His individual style consists of his ability to combine Jerome's deadpan humor with the dynamic, descriptive and emotional opportunities of Azerbaijani. Via this competence, the translator has elevated the novel to an adequate level in terms of both academic and literary by preserving the literary soul of the work.

Balancing Figurative Language and Readability: Jerome's novel is rich in the metaphors and ironical comparisons. The main responsibility of the translator is not to lose the readability of the text when preserving these figurative expressions. The findings show that Toghrul Mammadli has preserved this balance successfully by replacing the complex English syntactical constructions with more simple and

fluent Azerbaijani sentences. As a result, the figurative meanings are perceived quickly by the reader without losing their humorous power.

Implications for Translator Education: The results of this research are of great importance in the field of the preparation of the translators. Toghrul Mammadli's approach shows that the student-translators must learn not only the lexical equivalents, but also the socio-cultural context of the target language. This analysis proves that the translation of the humor demands the manipulation of the language in a creative way rather than the standard rules and in the education of the translation this creativity component must be taken into account.

Conclusion

The comparative linguistic analysis of Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog)* and its Azerbaijani translation by Toghrul Mammadli shows that humor translation is not a simple word-for-word transfer. It is a process of reconstructing meaning, cultural context, and the intended effect in the target language. The study proves that the success of humorous literary translation depends not on literal accuracy, but on creating a similar emotional and intellectual response in the reader. The research reveals that Toghrul Mammadli effectively combines functional and dynamic equivalence with literary creativity. By adapting British irony and understatement into more natural and expressive Azerbaijani forms, he preserves both the spirit of the original and the author's intention. His use of Azerbaijani phraseological richness and national humorous style makes the text more readable and culturally accessible, confirming the value of domestication in literary translation. The analysis also shows that in translating puns and linguistic jokes, the translator successfully applies modulation and transposition. Instead of forcing literal equivalents, he creates new humorous expressions suited to the norms of the target language. This demonstrates that literary translation is a creative act of re-creation rather than simple transfer. Overall, the study highlights that successful humor translation requires deep knowledge of both linguistic and cultural systems. Toghrul Mammadli's translation stands as a valuable example in Azerbaijani literary translation, proving that even though humor is often considered difficult to translate, it can be conveyed successfully through the right strategy, creativity, and cultural sensitivity.

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Parvin Huseynli Sabuhi,

Methods used to translate humorous elements in the novel “Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog)” by Jerome K. Jerome into Azerbaijani

Abstract

This article studies the translation features of the humorous elements used in the novel “Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog)” by Jerome K. Jerome into Azerbaijani. The main object of the research is the translated version of the novel by the translator Toghrul Mammadli. The purpose of this study consists of determining the ways of the linguistic and cultural transformation of the English humor in the Azerbaijani language. In this framework the linguistic obstacles arising in the translation process and the problems of transferring the realities characteristic of the culture have been kept in focus. The methodological basis of the research relies on the principles of comparative analysis and functional equivalence. Throughout the study the level of the preservation of the literary impact has been evaluated within the mutual analysis of the linguistic units in both languages. During the research process it has been revealed that the translator has widely used the

methods of domestication and modulation to transfer the puns, irony and situational humor in the original. Additionally, the reconciliation methods of the figurative language with the principles of readability and understandability have been analyzed in the literary work. The findings show that the translator has focused on creating the same humorous effect in the target reader rather than the literary precision, and he has achieved this owing to the phraseological potential of the Azerbaijani language. The results of the article are of great importance for the specialists working in the fields of literary translation theory, linguistics of the humor and translator preparation.

Pərvin Hüseynli Səbuhi,

**Cerom K. Ceromun “Qayıqda Üç Nəfər (İti Saymasaq)” əsərindəki yumor elementlərinin azərbaycan dilinə tərcüməsi zamanı istifadə olunmuş metodlar
Xülasə**

Bu məqalə Cerom K. Cerom tərəfindən qələmə alınmış “Qayıqda Üç Nəfər (İti Saymasaq)” əsərində istifadə olunan yumor elementlərinin azərbaycan dilinə tərcümə xüsusiyyətlərini tədqiq edir. Tədqiqatın əsas obyektı əsərin tərcüməçi Toğrul Məmmədli tərəfindən tərcümə edilmiş mətnidir. Tədqiqatın əsas məqsədi isə ingilis yumorunun azərbaycan dilində transformasiyasının linqvistik və mədəni yollarını müəyyən etməkdən ibarətdir. Bu çərçivədə tərcümə prosesində ortaya çıxan maneələr və mədəniyyətə xas reallıqların ötürülməsi zamanı yaranan problemlər diqqət mərkəzində saxlanılmışdır. Tədqiqatın metodoloji bazasını müqayisəli təhlil və funksional ekvivalentlik prinsipləri təşkil edir. Tədqiqat zamanı ədəbi təsirin qorunma səviyyəsi hər iki dilin linqvistik vahidlərinin qarşılıqlı təhlili çərçivəsində qiymətləndirilmişdir. Araşdırma prosesi ərzində müəyyən olunmuşdur ki, tərcüməçi orijinaldakı söz oyunlarının ironiyanın və situativ yumorun ötürülməsində domestikasiya (yerlişdirmə) və modulyasiya metodlarından geniş istifadə etmişdir. Əlavə olaraq, bədii əsərdəki məcazi dilin oxunaqlılıq və anlaşılqlılıq prinsipləri ilə uzlaşdırılması metodları da təhlil edilmişdir. Nəticələr göstərir ki, tərcüməçi bədii dəqiqlikdən çox hədəf oxucuda eyni yumoristik təsiri yaratmağa fokuslanmış və azərbaycan dilinin frazeoloji imkanları sayəsində buna nail olmuşdur. Məqalənin nəticələri bədii tərcümə nəzəriyyəsi, yumorun linqvistikası və tərcüməçi hazırlığı sahələrində çalışan mütəxəssislər üçün böyük əhəmiyyətə malikdir.

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