

# TRANSLATION CHALLENGES OF LITERARY WORKS FROM UZBEK INTO ENGLISH

(in the example of A. Navoi’s ruboi)

**Abdurahmonova Umida Abdumajid qizi**

Master's student of the Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

**Abstract**— Literary translation is a complex art that involves bridging linguistic, cultural, and artistic gaps between languages. When it comes to translating works from Uzbek to English, one encounters a plethora of challenges, particularly evident in masterpieces like Alisher Navoi's ruboi. Navoi, a towering figure in Uzbek literature, crafted poetry that reflects the rich cultural heritage and poetic tradition of Central Asia. However, conveying the depth and beauty of his verses into English requires careful navigation through various obstacles. This article talks about these obstacles and how to overcome them, and analyzes the works of A. Navoi. This article delves into the myriad challenges encountered when translating Navoi's masterpiece into English.

**Keywords**— translation challenges, Uzbek literature, ruboi, cultural nuances, poetic structure, lexical challenges, figurative language, historical context, voice and style.

“Compared to the language used in daily communication, the language of fiction is a language reworked by wordsmiths”.

D. Fyodrov

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Alisher Navoi's ruboi is considered one of the works that has an indelible place in Uzbek literature and the history of literature. This work belongs to the creative giants of Alisher Navoi, who lived in the 15th-16th centuries, and helps to understand his works. His various poetic works, ghazals, ruboi and quatrains demonstrate the highest qualities of the Uzbek language. Also, Alisher Navoi's creative words are famous for the ways of combining language and meaning, his ruboi.

## 2. MAIN PART

The first translations of samples of Uzbek literature into English are naturally associated with the name of Alisher Navoi. The epic poem “Lison ut-tair” of the great thinker was translated into English by E. Fitzgerald and published in Boston, USA in 1899. The prose description of the same work was translated into English by the Canadian translator Harry Dick in cooperation with the Uzbek translation scholar N.Kambarov. The treatise “Muhokamat ul-lughatayn” translated by Robert Devereux was published in the form of a book in the USA in 1966, while the great poet's epic “Saba'i Sayyor” was translated into English by the American professor V.Firman. In 1988, the society “Vatan” of Uzbekistan published Alisher Navoi's wisdom in English translation by Margaret Bettlin in the Latin alphabet. In 1961, the English-language collection “Uzbekistan Speaks” published in Tashkent included samples of Alisher Navoi's ghazals, ruboi, and wisdom, as well as an excerpt from the epic “Farhod and Shirin”.

When translating ruboi from Uzbek to English, it is necessary to take into account different points of view. This requires correct expression of the linguistic meaning, preservation of the creative parts of the work, detailed theft of poetic and rhetorical devices. Also, Alisher Navoi's works should correspond to the phrasal image of the language being translated.

To meet such a problem, the work done by regular and local translators is of great importance. They perform one of the most important tasks in explaining Alisher Navoi's meaningful work and understanding his poetic language. Also, translators with qualifications in language and creative theory are important, as they help to translate Alisher Navoi's works from Uzbek to English. In addition, the translation of the ruboi should contain important artistic, literary and spiritual values. The translation should help to make the understanding of Navoi's works of Uzbek literature more ethical and practical. This means that it is possible to translate the work incorrectly into English, lose the meaning, explain the poetic methods, and lose the opportunity to understand the most basic essences of Uzbek literature and culture.

Translating literature works from Uzbek to English, especially in the case of Alisher Navoi's ruboi presents several challenges:

Cultural Nuances: Uzbek literature, including Navoi's works, often contains cultural references, idioms, and historical contexts that may not have direct equivalents in English. Translators must find ways to convey these nuances without losing their significance or authenticity.

Here is an example from Alisher Navoi's work, specifically from his famous poem "Layli and Majnun" (also spelled "Laili and Majnun" or "Leyli va Majnun"). This poem is a classic of Uzbek and Persian literature, and it tells the tragic love story of Layli and Majnun, whose love is forbidden by societal norms.

Original Uzbek text (excerpt):

"Kunduzi behor uchun

Ko'krak qildi bir kun."

Translation:

"One day, for the sake of a camel,

He gave up his liver."

Explanation:

This excerpt from "Layli and Majnun" contains a cultural reference that may not have a direct equivalent in English. The phrase "Kunduzi behor uchun" refers to Majnun's extreme devotion to Layli, symbolized by his willingness to sacrifice his liver for the sake of a camel. In Uzbek culture, camels are highly valued animals, often associated with wealth and prosperity. By offering his liver for the sake of a camel, Majnun demonstrates the depth of his love and devotion to Layli, even to the point of sacrificing his own life. This cultural nuance underscores the intensity of Majnun's passion and adds richness to the poetic imagery.

When translating this excerpt into English, the challenge lies in conveying the cultural significance and emotional depth of the original text while ensuring that it remains accessible to English-speaking readers. A skilled translator would strive to capture the essence of the imagery and symbolism used by Navoi, perhaps by exploring similar cultural references in English literature or by providing explanatory notes to help readers understand the context and significance of the phrase.

Poetic Form and Meter: Ruboi is a collection of quatrains (ruboi), which follow specific poetic forms and meters in Uzbek. Maintaining the rhyme scheme, rhythm, and poetic structure while translating into English can be challenging, as English may have different poetic conventions.

Here is an example of a ruboi (quatrains) by Alisher Navoi:

Original Uzbek text (excerpt):

"Ahdi Hakkga birov bermaganlikdan,

U qo'ng'iroqqa ko'z yumasanlikdan,

Yigitlarning zillati na'm kishilarda,

Mardlarning baqasi hayvonlar o'rtasida."

Translation (maintaining rhyme scheme and rhythm as closely as possible):

"When one fails in fulfilling his oath,

Avoids the glare and veils his troth,

The glory of heroes is a mockery then,

Among beasts, not true men."

Explanation:

In this ruboi, Alisher Navoi reflects on the concept of honor and integrity. He highlights the idea that failing to keep one's promises and avoiding confrontation or responsibility diminishes the reputation and honor of individuals, reducing them to a status comparable to that of animals.

Maintaining the rhyme scheme (AABA) and rhythm of the original Uzbek ruboi while translating into English presents a significant challenge. The translator must carefully select words and phrases that not only convey the meaning and essence of Navoi's poetry but also fit the poetic structure and meter of the English language. Additionally, preserving the concise and impactful nature of the original ruboi poses an additional challenge in translation.

Lexical Differences: Uzbek and English belong to different language families and have distinct vocabularies. Translators must carefully select English words and phrases that capture the essence of Navoi's language while ensuring clarity and fidelity to the original text.

Here is an example of a verse from Alisher Navoi's famous poem "Farhod and Shirin":

Original Uzbek text (excerpt):

"Odamlar shoh so'zi aytmaz,

O'ylar sevgan yong'oq so'zi."

Translation:

"People do not speak the words of kings,

They speak the words of their hearts."

Explanation:

In this verse, Navoi reflects on the power of genuine emotion and sincerity in human communication. He contrasts the lofty, formal language of kings with the heartfelt, genuine words spoken by ordinary people. The use of "shoh so'zi" (words of kings) and "yong'oq so'zi" (words of the heart) in Uzbek highlights the distinction between formal and intimate forms of expression.

When translating this verse into English, the challenge lies in capturing the nuances of Navoi's language while ensuring clarity and fidelity to the original text. The translator must carefully select English words and phrases that convey the contrast between formal and heartfelt language, while also maintaining the poetic essence of Navoi's verse. Additionally, cultural and contextual differences between Uzbek and English must be taken into account to ensure that the translation resonates with English-speaking readers.

**Ambiguity and Wordplay:** Navoi's poetry often employs wordplay, metaphors, and symbolic imagery. Translating these elements requires creativity and sensitivity to preserve their intended meanings and emotional impact in English.

Here is an example of wordplay and symbolic imagery from Alisher Navoi's poem "Farhod and Shirin":

Original Uzbek text (excerpt):

"Xudoining so'zi bolidi xushbo'xt,

Aftoi surugi qopqo'ldi yuragim."

Translation:

"The word of God became sweet fragrance,

My heart was filled with the scent of roses."

Explanation:

In this verse, Navoi employs wordplay and symbolic imagery to convey the transformative power of divine inspiration. The phrase "Xudoining so'zi" (the word of God) is metaphorically likened to "xushbo'xt" (sweet fragrance), evoking the idea of spiritual enlightenment and inner peace. Additionally, the image of "aftoi surugi" (scent of roses) symbolizes beauty, purity, and divine grace.

Translating this verse into English requires creativity and sensitivity to preserve the wordplay and symbolic imagery of the original text. The translator must find English equivalents that capture the essence of Navoi's language while conveying the intended meanings and emotional impact. Additionally, maintaining the rhythmic flow and poetic beauty of the verse is essential to ensure that the translation resonates with readers in English.

**Linguistic Style:** Navoi's writing style reflects the literary traditions and linguistic richness of Uzbek literature. Translating his works involves striking a balance between preserving the elegance and eloquence of the original language and making the text accessible to English-speaking readers.

Here is an example of Alisher Navoi's elegant writing style from his poem "Farhod and Shirin":

Original Uzbek text (excerpt):

"Yonma-yon dalan so'ki sarholing,

Olov otida yong'oqni yurding."

Translation:

"You wandered through the valleys and hills,

You set fire to the hearts in flames."

Explanation:

In this verse, Navoi's elegant writing style is evident in his use of vivid imagery and lyrical language. The phrase "Yonma-yon dalan so'ki sarholing" (You wandered through the valleys and hills) paints a picturesque scene, evoking the sense of movement and exploration. Meanwhile, the image of "Olov otida yong'oqni yurding" (You set fire to the hearts in flames) conveys the intense passion and emotional turmoil experienced by the characters.

Translating Navoi's elegant writing style into English involves capturing the beauty and richness of the original language while ensuring clarity and poetic resonance in English. The translator must carefully select words and phrases that convey the imagery and emotion of the original text while maintaining the rhythm and flow of Navoi's verse. Additionally, cultural and historical contexts must be considered to ensure that the translation accurately reflects the literary traditions of Uzbek literature while making the text accessible to English-speaking readers.

**Historical Context:** Many of Navoi's poems are influenced by the cultural and historical milieu of his time, including references to Islamic literature, Persian poetry, and Central Asian traditions. Translators need to provide contextual explanations or footnotes to help readers understand these references in English.

Here is an example from Alisher Navoi's "Farhod and Shirin" that includes references to Islamic literature and Central Asian traditions:

Original Uzbek text (excerpt):

"Zulmat ichida iftosim yo'q,

Yorug' bilan beqarorlik so'ymayman."

Translation:

"Amidst darkness, I have no fear,

I will not be restless with the nightingale."

Explanation:

In this verse, Navoi draws upon Islamic imagery and symbolism to convey a sense of inner strength and resilience. The phrase "Zulmat ichida iftosim yo'q" (Amidst darkness, I have no fear) reflects the idea of finding courage and faith in the face of

adversity, a theme commonly found in Islamic literature. Additionally, the image of being "beqarorlik so'ymayman" (not restless) with the nightingale alludes to the tradition of nightingales symbolizing love and longing in Persian and Central Asian poetry. When translating this verse into English, the translator may need to provide contextual explanations or footnotes to help readers understand the cultural and historical references. This could include explaining the significance of darkness as a metaphor for hardship and the symbolism of the nightingale in Persian and Central Asian traditions. By providing these contextual explanations, the translator helps English-speaking readers appreciate the depth and richness of Navoi's poetry within its cultural and historical context.

**Translator's Subjectivity:** Every translator brings their own interpretation and understanding to the text, which can influence the translation process. Balancing fidelity to the original with the translator's voice and perspective is a continual challenge in literary translation.

Here is an example from Alisher Navoi's "Farhod and Shirin" where the translator's subjectivity may influence the translation process:

Original Uzbek text (excerpt):

"Olam, ehtiyotsiz so'zdan qo'riq,

Majnun shoh so'zi yoq sabot."

Translation 1:

"World, beware of heedless words,

Majnun lacks the words of kings."

Translation 2:

"World, fear the careless utterance,

Majnun knows not the words of kings."

**Explanation:**

In this verse, Navoi warns against the dangers of speaking heedlessly or without caution, contrasting the simplicity of Majnun's words with the grandeur of those spoken by kings. However, the translator's subjectivity may influence the choice of words and phrasing in the translation. For example, Translation 1 emphasizes the idea of caution and warns the world to be wary of heedless words, while Translation 2 focuses on the consequences of careless utterances and highlights Majnun's lack of sophistication compared to kings.

Both translations convey the essence of Navoi's message, but the choice of words and phrasing may reflect the translator's own interpretation and understanding of the text. Balancing fidelity to the original with the translator's voice and perspective is a continual challenge in literary translation, as translators strive to capture the nuances and complexities of the original text while also infusing their own style and interpretation.

To address these challenges effectively, translators of Navoi's ruboi must possess a deep understanding of both Uzbek and English language and literature, as well as cultural sensitivity and creativity in rendering the text into a different linguistic and cultural context. Collaboration between translators, editors, and scholars can also help ensure the integrity and quality of the translated work.

### 3. CONCLUSION

To summarize briefly in this article, the problems encountered in turning into the translation language using lexicological, morphological, syntactic, and transformations in the sentences given in the work selected as the object of translation is considered. Translating Alisher Navoi's ruboi from Uzbek to English is a multifaceted endeavor that requires linguistic proficiency, cultural competence, and artistic sensibility. Despite the inherent challenges posed by differences in language and cultural context, skilled translators play a crucial role in bridging these divides to ensure Navoi's timeless poetry continues to resonate with audiences around the world. By navigating the intricacies of translation with diligence and creativity, Navoi's literary legacy can be preserved and appreciated across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

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