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STRATEGIES FOR TRANSLATING ENGLISH IDIOMS INTO UZBEK IN DANIEL DEFOES ROBINSON CRUSOE

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Abstract. This paper investigates the challenges of translating figurative language between two structurally and culturally different languages: English and Uzbek. Focusing on Daniel Defoe's classic eighteenth-century novel Robinson Crusoe, the study analyzes how the prominent Uzbek translators Gaybulla Salomov and Qodir Mirmuhammedov managed to transfer complex idioms and metaphors into the target text. Since English is an analytical language and Uzbek is an agglutinative one, a word-for-word translation often fails to convey the original meaning and emotional impact. Using the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), this research evaluates a parallel corpus of 120 figurative expressions collected from both books. The quantitative and qualitative findings reveal that the translators relied heavily on target-oriented strategies to bridge the cultural gap. Specifically, cultural substitution was the most frequent strategy, used in 46.7% of the analyzed examples, followed by paraphrasing at 31.7%. By replacing foreign maritime terms and abstract English idioms with traditional, deeply expressive Uzbek phraseological units, the translators maintained the narrative's energy and dramatic tension. The study shows that effective domestication does not destroy the foreign identity of the book; instead, it localizes the protagonist's internal emotional experiences. Ultimately, the paper concludes that successful literary translation requires remapping conceptual frameworks rather than copying linguistic structures, turning the translated text into an independent piece of art within Uzbek national literature.

Keywords: cultural substitution, stylistic compensation, figurative language, Robinson Crusoe, Uzbek translation school, descriptive translation studies, conceptual metaphors.

Introduction. The translation of figurative language, such as idioms and metaphors, between unrelated languages is one of the most difficult tasks in translation studies. Idioms and metaphors are not just artistic decorations in a book. They carry the history, lifestyle, and unique worldview of a specific group of people [6, p. 12]. When a classic eighteenth-century English novel like Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe is translated into Uzbek, the translator faces huge linguistic and cultural gaps. This is because English and Uzbek belong to entirely different language families and have different structural rules. The main grammatical problem is that English is an analytical language that uses a strict **Subject-Verb-Object (SVO)** word order. On the other hand, Uzbek is an agglutinative language that places the verb at the end of the sentence in a Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) structure and connects words using various suffixes [14, p. 88]. If a translator tries to translate English idioms word-for-word into Uzbek, the meaning is usually lost, and the sentence sounds unnatural to the local reader [8, p. 112]. Therefore, the metaphors and idioms used by Daniel Defoe cannot simply be copied; they must be carefully adapted to fit the mindset of the target audience.

This study explores how the famous Uzbek translation scholars, Gaybulla Salomov and Qodir Mirmuhammedov, solved these problems through the strategies of "cultural substitution" and "stylistic compensation." Using the framework of **Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS),** this paper analyzes how these translators successfully replaced English maritime and colonial expressions with traditional Uzbek phraseological units [12, p. 45]. In doing so, they managed to keep the dynamic pace and emotional depth of the original story while keeping it completely understandable for Uzbek readers.

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Literature review. The systematic study of idiom and metaphor translation has moved away from the old idea that poetry and art cannot be translated. Instead, modern researchers focus on finding functional and pragmatic equivalence [9, p. 23]. Mona Baker, in her well-known book In Other Words, provides a very practical guide for dealing with idioms during translation. She explains that an idiom is a fixed expression whose meaning cannot be understood just by looking at its separate words. Because of this, Baker suggests that "cultural substitution" is often the best strategy. This means replacing an SL (source language) idiom with a TL (target language) idiom that looks different but has the exact same emotional and practical impact on the reader [1, p. 82].

When it comes to metaphors, Peter Newmark's classifications and George Lakoff's **Conceptual Metaphor Theory** are highly relevant. Lakoff argues that human beings naturally use metaphors to understand difficult, abstract concepts through everyday experiences. Newmark adds that translators must separate universal metaphors from cultural ones [8, p. 104]. Cultural metaphors are tightly linked to a specific country or time period, making them risky to translate literally [2, p. 24]. In prose fiction, replacing a foreign cultural image with a familiar local image is usually the only way to help the reader understand the text without confusion. In Uzbekistan, the scientific work of Gaybulla Salomov formed the foundation of the national translation school. In his book Tarjima nazariyasi asoslari (Foundations of Translation Theory), Salomov argued that a good translation must preserve the "national color" (milliy kolorit) of the work by using stylistic compensation. He believed that instead of copying foreign sentence structures, translators should use the rich idiomatic vocabulary of the Uzbek language to capture the spirit of the original text [11, p. 112]. The Uzbek translation of Robinson Crusoe by Salomov and Mirmuhammedov is a perfect example of this theory in action, changing an old English text into a natural, beautiful Uzbek story.

Methodology. This study uses a descriptive-comparative qualitative method based on Gideon Toury's **Descriptive Translation Studies** (DTS) model [12, p. 67]. The main goal is to look closely at the actual choices made by the translators in the Uzbek version of Robinson Crusoe and compare them to Daniel Defoe's original English text [3]. To do this, a parallel corpus of 120 figurative expressions and idioms was gathered from both books following the research guidelines proposed by Williams and Chesterman [15, p. 34]. The selection focused on parts where Defoe uses metaphors to describe Crusoe's fears, his struggles at sea, and his life on the lonely island. The analysis was done in three clear steps. First, sentences containing idioms or metaphors were collected from the English text and matched with their Uzbek translations. Second, the context of each sentence was examined to understand its exact emotional and stylistic meaning. Third, these translation pairs were categorized using Mona Baker's system to see which strategies—like cultural substitution, paraphrasing, or literal translation—were used most often [1, p. 75]. To make the study more reliable, a basic quantitative analysis was added to the qualitative discussion [5, p. 92]. This means the study did not just look at individual examples, but also calculated how often the translators used different methods. By finding out the exact percentage of cultural substitutions across the 120 examples, the paper shows the general pattern and style that Salomov and Mirmuhammedov preferred throughout the entire novel.

Results. The analysis of the collected data shows that the translators strongly preferred changing the text to fit Uzbek culture rather than copying the English structures directly. Out of the 120 figurative expressions studied, cultural substitution was the most popular choice, being used in 56 instances, which represents 46.7% of the data. Paraphrasing was the second most common strategy, appearing 38 times or 31.7%. Literal translation, or linguistic calque, was used less frequently, in only 16 cases (13.3%), while 10 expressions (8.3%) were completely omitted or deleted because they could not be adapted smoothly. These numbers prove that the translators prioritized the natural flow of the language, using cultural adaptation for nearly half of all figurative challenges. A closer look at the text

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reveals how these changes look in practice. For instance, in the opening chapter, Defoe describes how Crusoe's father warned him against going to sea, saying it was only meant for people looking for "desperate fortunes on one hand, or aspiring, superior fortunes on the other" [3]. The Uzbek version translates this abstract idea by using lively, rhythmic local idioms: "yo mol-dunyo ketidan quvib, o'zini o'tga-cho'qqa uradigan tavakkalchilarning, yo shon-shuhrat ketidan quvib, oyog'i yerdan uzilgan kimsalarning qismati" [4]. The translators did not translate "**fortunes"** literally as baxt or omad. Instead, they used traditional expressions like "o'zini o'tga-cho'qqa urmoq" and "oyog'i yerdan uzilgan" to show the reckless nature of Crusoe's dreams in a way that sounds natural to Uzbek students. A similar choice is made when Crusoe faces a dangerous shipwreck and says, "we had nothing to do but to shift for ourselves" [3]. A literal translation of this idiom would sound strange. Salomov and Mirmuhammedov beautifully changed it to: "endi bizga faqat jon shirinligida har kim o'z boshini amallab panohga tortishi qolgandi" [4]. By using the culturally deep concept of "jon shirinligi" **(the sweetness of life)** and the phrase "o'z boshini panohga tortmoq", they managed to convey the intense panic and danger of the moment using familiar Uzbek imagery.

The translation of metaphors also shows great artistic skill. When Defoe describes a terrible storm at sea, he writes that "the sea went mountains high, and we expected every moment to be swallowed up" [3]. Instead of simply writing **tog'day baland,** the Uzbek text turns the sea into a living creature: "Dengiz tog'day qaddini ko'tarib, osmonga bo'y cho'zardi, biz esa har lahzada uning g'arqi daryo qilib, yutib yuborishini kutardik" [4]. The phrase "qaddini ko'tarib, osmonga bo'y cho'zardi" adds dramatic physical movement, and translating "swallowed up" as **"g'arqi daryo qilib, yutib yuborishi"** blends a classical literary phrase with an active verb to make the scene feel more intense for the reader. Finally, when Crusoe begins to calm down on the island, the English text says, "The anxiety of my mind wore off by degrees" [3]. Defoe treats anxiety like a piece of cloth that wears down over time. The translators completely changed this image in Uzbek to make it more active: "Qalbimni kemirayotgan g'am-ando'hlar asta-sekin chekina boshladi" [4]. Here, the anxiety becomes a predator that was **"gnawing at the heart"** (qalbni kemirayotgan) and then began to **"retreat"** (chekina boshladi). This adjustment fits the emotional style of Uzbek prose, which prefers active, lively metaphors over static descriptions.

Discussion. The findings of this study show an important rule in literary translation: to stay true to the spirit of an original book, a translator often has to change its literal words. By using cultural substitution as their main tool, Salomov and Mirmuhammedov solved the deep conflicts between the English and Uzbek worldviews. A word-for-word translation would have made the book feel cold and distant. Instead, through domestication, the translators turned Robinson Crusoe from an ordinary eighteenth-century British sailor into a universal symbol of human courage, speaking in a way that aligns perfectly with Uzbek literary traditions. This method connects directly to Lawrence Venuti's famous theory about the **"translator's invisibility."** Venuti usually warns that changing a book too much to fit the local culture can erase its original identity [13, p. 34]. However, in Robinson Crusoe, the use of cultural idioms does not hide the foreign setting. The wild island, the strange tools, and the sea adventures are still clearly British and foreign. What changes is the emotional vocabulary. By keeping the physical world foreign but making the feelings local, the translators achieved a great balance: the reader travels to a distant island but experiences the story through a shared human emotional language [13, p. 81].

Additionally, these changes highlight the flexibility needed when translating between analytical languages like English and agglutinative ones like Uzbek. English often packs complex figurative ideas into short phrases like "wore off" or "shifted for." Uzbek, because of its suffix system and compound verbs, needs more space to unpack and rebuild these ideas. The results prove that this extra

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space should not be seen as a mistake or unnecessary expansion. Instead, it is an opportunity to make the language more beautiful. Salomov and Mirmuhammedov used this space to add the rhythmic balance and poetic pairs that are typical of high-quality Uzbek literature.

Conclusion. The comprehensive analysis of the translated version of Robinson Crusoe demonstrates that cross-cultural literary transfer requires a flexible approach to linguistic equivalence. G‘aybulla Salomov and Qodir Mirmuhammedov successfully managed the deep structural and cultural gaps between seventeenth-century English and modern Uzbek by prioritizing communicative naturalness over literal accuracy. Their reliance on cultural substitution allowed them to replace foreign maritime concepts and complex analytical idioms with deeply expressive, traditional Uzbek phraseological units [14, p. 88]. This technique ensured that the emotional depth and critical turning points of Crusoe's journey were immediately clear and engaging for local readers, preserving the text's artistic intent within a completely different linguistic family. Furthermore, this study highlights that effective domestication does not erase the original identity or geographical context of a foreign classic. While the setting, tools, and historical background remain clearly British, the localization of the character's internal feelings creates a balanced reading experience. By utilizing the rich idiomatic vocabulary and natural rhythmic structures of the Uzbek language, the translators transformed a specific historical narrative into a universal story of human resilience and survival. Ultimately, the Uzbek version of Robinson Crusoe serves as a model for literary translation, proving that true fidelity to a source text is achieved not by copying individual words, but by remapping its core concepts to fit the cultural mindset of the target audience.

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