

INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION OF A FAIRY TALE TEXT

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Annotatsiya: The article presents a comparative analysis of the Uzbek original of the fairy tale “Bulbulig‘yo” and its Russian translation. The study examines differences in imagery, structure, and semantic emphasis: the Uzbek text highlights the hero’s inner qualities and cultural traditions, while the Russian translation intensifies the dramatic elements of the narrative and its social motifs. The analysis concludes that the translation performs an interpretative function and reflects the specific features of the intercultural adaptation of a folklore text.

Keywords: uzbek fairy tale, russian translation, cultural heritage, social motifs, intercultural adaptation, folklore text.

The translation of literary texts is a complex and multi-layered process that cannot be reduced to the mere transfer of words from one language to another. It always involves interpretation and requires a choice between literalness and the preservation of artistic effect, cultural context, and emotional nuance. Translation implies not only accuracy but also equivalence of perception. A literal translation often disrupts the artistic form, especially in the case of idioms, metaphors, and cultural realities. In such situations, creative adaptation is necessary to preserve the spirit of the original, not just its literal content. At the same time, excessive freedom can lead to the loss of the author’s voice and meaning, turning the translation into an independent work.

The fairy tale “Bulbulig‘yo” was recorded in 1937 by Izzat Sultonov from the words of the storyteller Hasan Khudayberdi-oglu, who lived in the city of Namangan. The manuscript is kept in the folklore archive of the Institute of the Uzbek Language, Literature, and Folklore of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan (inv. №667) and consists of 52 pages. [4] The translation of the fairy tale from Uzbek, “Bulbulig‘yo,” into Russian, “The Sweet-Voiced Nightingale,” was carried out by L. Saderdotova. [8] In the original, the text of “Bulbulig‘yo” is presented in a rather brief and concise form, which is typical of the oral folk tradition. In such texts, simplicity and compactness are important, and a significant portion of meanings and emotions is conveyed through context and cultural realities, which are well understood by native speakers. This is why translation requires not only an accurate rendering of the text but also its interpretation in accordance with the perception of a different audience. In the Russian version, the events are presented in a more detailed and expanded manner. This is due to the fact that the Russian language generally requires more elaborate descriptions to fully convey meaning and create an emotional effect. [6: 94-96] Moreover, the translator adds certain explanations that help the reader better understand the historical context, social injustices, and the inner experiences of the characters, which in the Uzbek original remain implied. Such expansion of the text in translation is a common practice, especially in the case of folk tales and legends, where cultural codes and context play a significant role. The purpose of this approach is to adapt the content for readers from a different linguistic and cultural environment without losing the depth and artistic value of the work. Ultimately, the differences in length and style can be explained by linguistic features, cultural context, and the goals of translation aimed at preserving and conveying the meaning and spirit of the original work. Let us consider several examples:

For example, consider the opening part of the tale. **In the original:** “Қадим замонда бир золим подшо бўлган экан. У халкни хўрлаб, фуқароларидан йиққан пулга ўрдасида чинор курдирибди”. **In the translation:**– В стародавние времена жил жестокий шах. Много лет

он притеснял и истязал народ. Изю рта своих подданных он вырывал последний кусок хлеба, душил их всякими поборами да налогами. Так награбил он столько золота, серебра и драгоценных камней, что не знал, куда все это девать. (Once upon a time, there was a cruel king. He humiliated the people and, with the money he extorted from his subjects, had a plane tree planted in his garden).

The opening in fairy tales serves the same function: it introduces the plot. The initial part of the tale, both in the original and in the Russian translation, sets the narrative, establishes its general atmosphere, and highlights the main moral conflict. However, it differs in form and content: the Uzbek original demonstrates economy of linguistic means combined with profound semantic density. A significant portion of the information is conveyed implicitly, relying on the audience's background knowledge and the cultural imagery of the oral tradition. In contrast, the Russian translation is more detailed, emotionally expressive, and adapted to the perceptual expectations of a different linguistic audience. This is determined both by the type of narrative tradition and by the linguocultural context.

The translator, L.Saderdatova, in adapting the text for a Russian-speaking audience, expands and interprets the original; however, a successful literary translation requires a balance between accuracy and expressiveness.

Original: – Бу чинорнинг танаси ёқутдан, шохлари зумраддан, барглари забаржаддан, мевалари гавҳару шамчироғдан бўлсин! – деб амр қилибди. Шаҳар халки буни эшитиб: – Бу дарахт битгунча, бош қашигани тирноғимиз ҳам қолмаса керак, – деб қайғурибди. **In the translation:** Однажды собрал шах лучших мастеров и приказал им: – Сделайте мне дерево чинару – ствол из яхонтов, ветки из хризолита, листья из изумруда, а плоды из жемчуга. А листва должна быть такая густая, чтобы сквозь нее не проникал ни один луч солнца. Услыхал о шахском повелении народ, зароптал: – Пока смастерят такое дерево, с нас, должно быть, и последнюю рубашку снимут. Однако шах жестоко расправился с недовольными. Одним головы приказал отрубить, других – в яму бросить. (let the trunk of this plane tree be of ruby, its branches of emerald, its leaves of sapphire, and its fruits of pearl and lamp! – he commanded. When the townspeople heard this, they lamented: – By the time this tree grows, there will hardly be a nail left on our fingers from all the toil – they said sorrowfully.)

In the Uzbek original, the main emphasis is placed on the emotional reaction of the people: In the translation, however, the criticism becomes explicit: direct references to reprisals appear «голова отрубить», «в яму бросить», which are not present in the original. The folk expression is conveyed more simply: «с нас, должно быть, и последнюю рубашку снимут», thus, part of the folkloric expressiveness and irony of the original is lost, although the statement becomes more understandable for a reader from another culture. The shah's order is presented briefly and vividly: “Бу чинорнинг танаси ёқутдан, шохлари зумраддан, барглари забаржаддан, мевалари гавҳару шамчироғдан бўлсин!” In the Russian translation, the structure of the episode becomes more detailed: the shah's order takes up more space and is described more elaborately (in particular, a reference to the foliage is added, «чтобы сквозь неё не проникал ни один луч солнца»). Moreover, a new line is introduced in the translation a harsh reprisal against the discontented. In the original, the image of the ruler is conveyed implicitly and through hints, whereas in the translation his characterization becomes explicit and direct, adapting the text to a different cultural and readership context. “бу дарахт битгунча, бош қашигани тирноғимиз ҳам қолмаса керак”, (by the time this tree grows, there will hardly be a nail left on our fingers) and other popular remarks ironically convey hidden criticism of the authorities. In the translation, however, the criticism becomes explicit: direct references to punishments such as «голова отрубить», «в яму бросить», appear, which are absent in the original. The people's remark is simplified to ‘they will probably take even our last shirt,’ which results in the loss of some of the folkloric expressiveness and irony of the original, though the statement becomes more understandable for readers from another culture.

Original: “Орадан уч кун ўтибди. Подшонинг кенжа ўғли туш кўрибди. Тушида бир парча булут узилиб кўйнига тушибди. Чўчиб уйғониб подшонинг ёнига келиб: – Эй отажон! Менга ҳам сафар йўли тушди. Туш кўрдим, тушимда сафарга чиқишни хуш кўрдим. Яхшилик билан жавоб берсангиз ҳам, “йўқ!” десангиз ҳам кетаман, – дебди. Подшо кенжа ўғлини ҳам жўнатибди. У бир ҳафта деганда акаларига етиб олибди”.

Translation: «Прошло три дня. Младший сын шаха подумал: «Ничего братья не найдут, а отец в ярости может и город сжечь. Надо ехать мне». Он пошел к отцу и сказал: – Отец! Позвольте и мне сослужить вам службу. Я хочу найти волшебную птицу. Отпустите меня – я уеду, не отпустите – тоже уеду. Очень не хотелось шаху отпускать младшего сына. Но царевич твердо стоял на своем. Делать нечего – шаху пришлось снарядить и младшего сына в дорогу. Младший царевич ехал быстро и через неделю догнал своих братьев».

(Three days passed. The shah’s youngest son thought, my brothers will find nothing, and our father, in his rage, might even burn the city. I must go myself. He went to his father and said, Father! Allow me to serve you as well. I want to find the magical bird. If you let me go, I will leave; if you do not let me go, I will leave anyway. The shah was very reluctant to let his youngest son go. But the young prince stood firm. There was nothing to be done the shah had to equip his youngest son for the journey. The youngest prince rode swiftly and within a week caught up with his brothers).

In this episode, the original Uzbek text conveys events through the use of concise, symbolic imagery typical of the Eastern storytelling tradition. For example, the dream in which... «бир парча булут» («кусочек облака») (“a piece of a cloud”) falls into the hero’s bosom represents a metaphorical foreshadowing of his destined path. Such a poetic and figurative construction remains concise, yet requires the reader’s understanding of folk traditions and beliefs.) In the Russian translation, the emphasis shifts toward logical sequencing and the hero’s emotional motivation. Instead of a dream, the youngest son’s reflection on a possible misfortune is used «отец в ярости может и город сжечь» (our father, in his rage, might even burn the city). This explains the character’s behavior and makes his actions more understandable to a broad audience unfamiliar with the traditional symbolism of Uzbek folklore. Such a transformation is driven by the desire to adapt the tale to the perception of a Russian-speaking reader. The translation not only conveys the meaning but also expands it into more concrete actions and dialogues. This is typical of an interpretive approach in literary translation, where it is more important to preserve the overall impression and emotional intent than to follow every word of the original literally.” Thus, the differences arise not only from linguistic features but also from distinct cultural storytelling traditions: the figurative and symbolic language of the Uzbek text is supplemented in the Russian translation with expanded explanations of the characters’ actions and a coherent development of the plot.

In the original: Бу дарёнинг нариги қирғоғи кўринмабди. Маймун: – Бу дарёдан қандай ўтамиз? – деб сўрабди. Шахзода: – Бу дарёдан нима қилиб бўлса ҳам ўтишимиз керак. Келган йўлимизга асло қайтмаймиз! Ё ўтамиз, ёки дарёга ғарқ бўламиз, – дебди. Маймун боланинг ҳимматига завқи келиб: – Ҳар ишга қадам қўйсанг, шердек ҳайкириб қадам қўй. Асло қўрқма! Сен, мен омон бўлсам, муродинга етасан. Сени ўз шаҳринга етказаман, – деб дарёнинг лабидан чуқур ковлай бошлади. **Translation:** Увидел царевич бесконечный морской простор и загрустил. – Не переплыть нам моря,– сказал он обезьяне.– Погибнем. Обезьяна стала ободрять его. – На каждое дело иди смело! Ничего не бойся! И она начала рыть подземный ход под морем. Через сорок дней и сорок ночей обезьяна кончила работу и вернулась. (The young prince saw the boundless expanse of the sea and grew sad. “– We cannot cross the sea,” he said to the monkey. “– We will perish.” The monkey began to encourage him. “– Approach every task boldly! Fear nothing!” And she started to dig an underground passage beneath the sea. Forty days and forty nights later, the monkey completed her work and returned.)

In this episode, the Uzbek text emphasizes the hero's determination and strength: he firmly declares that he will either cross the river or perish, showing no intention of turning back. His speech is full of pathos and courage.: «Ё ўтамыз, ёки дарёга ғарқ бўламиз!» (Either we will cross, or we will be drowned in the river!) underscores his inner resilience and determination. In the Russian translation, the pathos is softened: the youngest son appears less confident; he does not assert that they will cross the sea but, on the contrary, expresses sadness and doubt: «Не переплыть нам моря, – сказал он обезьяне. – Погибнем». “We cannot cross the sea,” he said to the monkey. “We will perish.”

Thus, the initiative in the dialogue is taken by the monkey. In the original, it is the young prince who inspires the monkey with his determination, whereas in the translation, the monkey becomes a more active and encouraging character. This reflects a shift in character portrayal: the original emphasizes the prince's leadership and heroism, while the translation highlights the monkey as a helper. Moreover, in the original, digging the underground passage beneath the river begins immediately as a continuation of the hero's resolve, whereas the Russian translation adds a time formula typical for fairy tales: «Через сорок дней и сорок ночей обезьяна кончила работу», (“Forty days and forty nights later, the monkey completed her work,”) which is absent in the original. Thus, in the translation, there is a reinterpretation of heroism and a redistribution of roles: in the Uzbek text, the hero leads while the helper supports; in the Russian version, the helper takes the initiative, and the hero expresses doubt.

In the original: Ўша заҳотиёқ қуш тилга кириб, бўлган воқеаларни сўзлаб берибди. Подшо ўғлининг пешанасидан ўпибди. Қирқ кун юртга ош бериб, маликани шаҳзодага олиб берибди. У икки катта ўғлининг кўлини орқасига бойлаб, қўй кўшоқлагандек қўшок қилиб, кичик ўғлининг олдида тиз чўқдирибди: – Сенга зулм қилган шу икки оғанг сенинг хукмингда! – дебди. Кичик ўғил акаларининг гуноҳидан кечибди. Подшо ўғлининг гина сақламаслигини билиб, унга яна меҳри ошибди. Юртга жар солиб, ўғлига тахтини берганини эълон қилибди. Маймун-пари шаҳзода билан маликанинг тўйини парилар юртидагидек қилиб ўтказибди. Кейин сочининг толасидан бериб, хайрлашиб кетибди.

Translation: Но тут сладкоголосый соловей заговорил человеческим голосом и поведал шаху все от начала до конца. Тогда шах увидел, что власти его пришел конец, ибо народ, узнав, кто спас город от беды и несчастья, стеной встал за молодого царевича. Злой шах со старшими сыновьями сбежали из города. Сорок дней угощал царевич всех на своей свадьбе. И пери сказала ему на прощанье: «Когда захочешь меня увидеть, зажги мой волосок, и я являюсь». Так народ был избавлен от притеснений шаха, а царевич достиг исполнения своих желаний. (But then the sweet-voiced nightingale spoke in a human voice and told the shah everything from beginning to end. Then the shah realized that his power had come to an end, for the people, learning who had saved the city from disaster and misfortune, rallied behind the young prince. The evil shah fled the city with his elder sons. For forty days, the prince feasted everyone at his wedding. And the peri said to him as a farewell: “Whenever you wish to see me, light my hair, and I will appear.” Thus, the people were freed from the shah's oppression, and the prince achieved the fulfillment of his desires.)

In the finale of the Uzbek original, the moral strength of the youngest son is emphasized: despite his brothers' betrayal, he refuses to seek revenge. Seeing his magnanimity, the shah rewards his son with trust and transfers power to him. This episode reflects a traditional theme in Eastern folk tales: forgiveness as the highest virtue, and the throne as a deserved reward for moral resilience and mercy.

In the Russian translation, this ending is transformed: the emphasis shifts away from forgiveness, portraying the shah more as a tyrant stripped of power by the people, and his elder sons as exiles rather than condemned. The youngest son becomes ruler by the will of the people, not by his father's decision. This shifts the focus from the hero's moral victory and inner growth to social justice and popular will, which are more familiar themes in fairy-tale traditions. Moreover, the scale of the wedding in the Uzbek original «ўтказибди», (бук. «провели») (lit.

“was held”) is presented modestly, without details, whereas in the translation, additional descriptions are added... «сорока дней угощения» the “forty days of feasting” is a characteristic fairy-tale trope, emphasizing grandeur and festivity. These differences can be explained by the adaptation of the text to the cultural expectations of a Russian-speaking audience, as well as the aim to make the ending emotionally satisfying within a different narrative tradition. The Russian translation gives the story an interpretive character: it heightens elements of drama, external conflict, and the pursuit of justice, whereas the original focuses on the hero’s inner nobility and presents forgiveness as the highest expression of strength and triumph. This is an example of a dynamic equivalence: “a translation quality in which the message of the original text is conveyed into the target language in such a way that the recipient’s response is analogous to that of the original audience.” [3]

Literary translation is always a balance between accuracy and adaptation. The best translation is one that sounds natural in the new language while preserving the artistic power and the semantic depth of the original. The example of the fairy tale *Bulbuliguyō* shows that translation is not simply copying the original text, but a secondary authorial interpretation, organically integrated into the cultural and literary context of a different audience.

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