

ENSURING FUNCTIONAL-PRAGMATIC ADEQUACY OF THE HUMOROUS LAYER IN THE TRANSLATION OF “SHUM BOLA”

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Abstract

This article analyzes the strategic approaches applied in ensuring the adequacy of humor in the English translation of “*Shum bola*”, a prominent work of Uzbek literature written by Gafur Gulom. The study examines the processes of preserving equivalence, functional correspondence, and communicative impact in translation based on linguistic, pragmatic, and linguocultural factors. The article demonstrates, through examples, the application of translation strategies such as literal translation, adaptation, compensation, pragmatic equivalence, and explanatory translation.

Keywords: humor, adequacy, translation strategy, linguoculturology, compensation, pragmatic equivalence, adaptation.

The novella “*Shum bola*” occupies a distinctive place in Uzbek children’s literature as a work written in a satirical-realist spirit. Its author, Gafur Gulom, portrays childhood not merely through a sequence of ordinary events, but through humor, irony, and internal monologues. Through the mischievousness, intelligence, and adaptability of the central character, the work artistically reflects social disparities, poverty, orphanhood, and inequality.

The psychology of childhood in the novella is depicted on the basis of profound realism. Childlike logic, spontaneous reactions, attempts at self-justification, and the ironic perception of the adult world generate the comic effect. This humor is not superficial laughter; rather, it is infused with social meaning. Through hyperbole, wordplay, and folk expressions articulated in the protagonist’s voice, the author preserves the naturalness of children’s speech. As a result, humor emerges from the interaction between psychological and linguistic layers.

In “*Shum bola*”, humor manifests itself on two levels:

1. **Situational comedy** (humor based on events and circumstances);
2. **Verbal comedy** (humor created through linguistic units).

Situational comedy often emerges from the opposition between the child and adults, as well as from the conflict between social conditions and personal desires. Verbal comedy, in contrast, is constructed through folk metaphors, ironic descriptions, phonetic play, and stylistic shifts. It is precisely this layer that requires the most complex transformation in the process of translation.

In this novella, humor functions not only as an aesthetic device but also as an instrument of social criticism. Through laughter, the author exposes social injustice, the fate of orphaned children, everyday hardships, and social stratification. Satirical elements intertwine with social realism, thereby reinforcing the critical spirit of the work. From this perspective, “*Shum bola*” may also be interpreted as a social portrait created through the medium of humor.

In the process of translating the novella into English, the principal challenge lies in transferring the national comic effect into another cultural space. The task involves not merely rendering the text linguistically, but recontextualizing the cultural code embedded in it. Irony, idiomatic expressions, and proverbs characteristic of Uzbek folk thinking may lack direct equivalents in English. Consequently, there is a risk that the humorous effect may be diminished or neutralized.

In some cases, however, the universality of humor in “*Shum bola*” allows for adequate rendering through literal translation. Situations such as childish mischievousness, attempts at self-justification, or humorous ways of escaping difficulties possess a cross-cultural



psychological foundation. In such instances, formal equivalence can produce an effective translational outcome.

To analyze this translation strategy, let us consider the following excerpt from the novella:

Kunlardan bir kun Tojixon jinni bitta ketmon dasta bilan o'tgan-ketganni quvlab, urib, so'kib: "Hammang bir tomonga yur, tarqalib yurma! Tartib kerak, intizom kerak", deyar edi. Hech kim unga bas kelolmas edi. Shunda Olim jinni kelib qolib: – Hoy, hoy, nima deyapsan, jinni? – deb so'rab qoldi. – Nimaga odamlar bir tomonga yurmasdan, har qayoqqa tarqalib yuradi? Nikolay poshsho zamonida tartib-intizom kerak, bir tomonga yursin-da! Bunga Olim jinni: – Ahmoqsan, Toji, ahmoqsan. Yer, axir, taroziga o'xsha gan narsa bo'ladi, hamma bir tomonga yursa, yer barkash day bir yoqqa og'ib, hammamiz Qurum daryoga g'arq bo'lib ketamiz-ku, – dedi¹.

In the English translation, the translator renders the passage through a literal (word-for-word) strategy:

Once, crazy Tojilkhan was carrying a hoe and driving away everybody and swearing: "Everybody, in one direction, don't drive away! Keep the order!" – He doesn't said. No one could calm him down. At that time Olim Stupid came and asked:

– Hey, hey, why do you shout like that, you idiot?

– Why don't people walk in one direction? During the reign of Nikolay we need order here, they have to walk in one direction!

Then Olim Stupid said:

– You are foolish, Toji. The Earth needs balance, if everybody walks on one side, the Earth will sink to one side and we will fall down into the Khurdum River, – he said².

The dialogue between Tojixon Jinni and Olim Jinni in "Shum bola" represents an episode built upon the interplay of situational and verbal comedy. In this scene, G'afur G'ulom satirizes artificial notions of "order" prevalent in society.

In the given passage, humor operates on three distinct levels:

1. Situational comedy – a madman attempting to impose "discipline" on others;
2. Social irony – the phrase "Nikolay poshsho zamonida tartib kerak" which alludes to the colonial period;
3. Hyperbolic logic – the so-called "scientific" explanation about the earth tilting.

Literary Transfer at the Lexical Level

Source text:

"Hammang bir tomonga yur, tarqalib yurma! Tartib kerak, intizom kerak."

Translation:

"Everybody, in one direction, don't drive away! Keep the order!"

In this case, the translator preserves the syntactic structure of the original to the greatest possible extent. The sentence construction, word order, and dialogic progression remain closely aligned with the source text, reflecting a strategy of formal equivalence.

"Nikolay poshsho zamonida tartib-intizom kerak..."

Translation:

¹ G'ulom G'. Shum bola. Yoshlar nashriyot uyi Toshkent – 2018.-P.5

² Gulom G. Naughty Boy. Translators: I.M.Tukhtasinov, U.R.Yuldoshev.-Tashkent: Yangi asr avlodi, 2017.-P.7



“During the reign of Nikolay we need order here...”

In this case, the translator applies a combination of transliteration and literal translation. The preservation of the name “Nikolay” retains the historical-contextual reference and prevents the loss of its implicit colonial connotation. This strategy helps conserve the cultural and historical code embedded in the source text.

However, from a pragmatic perspective, the reference may remain ambiguous for the English reader. Without additional clarification, the allusion may not be immediately recognized, which can weaken the intended social irony and historical implication.

Literar Transfer of Hyperbole and Logical Absurdity

Source text:

“Yer, axir, taroziga o ‘xshagan narsa bo ‘ladi, hamma bir tomonga yursa, yer barkashday bir yoqqa og ‘ib...”

Translation:

“The Earth needs balance, if everybody walks on one side, the Earth will sink to one side...”

In this case, the literal strategy proves to be relatively successful.

- The hyperbole is preserved.
- The absurd logic retains its comic effect in English.
- The phrase *“The Earth needs balance”* simplifies the structure while providing semantic clarity.

In this example, literal translation does not diminish the comic effect, since the absurdity of the situation is universal and culturally transferable.

Adaptation (Cultural Substitution) Strategy

In *“Shum bola”*, elements of national color, the neighborhood (*mahalla*) environment, and references to traditional lifestyle constitute essential components of the humorous layer. G‘afur G‘ulom constructs the social and cultural background of the narrative through such culture-bound units as *mahalla*, *osh*, *choyxona*, *ariq*, *hovli*, and *tandir*. These elements function not merely as background details but as contextual triggers that contribute directly to the comic effect.

For an English reader, however, these realia may not be immediately comprehensible. Therefore, the translator may resort to an adaptation (cultural substitution) strategy. This strategy is typically implemented through two principal approaches:

1. Finding a functional analogue in the target culture;
2. Transliteration accompanied by brief explanation (explication) to preserve cultural specificity while ensuring comprehension.



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