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TRANSLATION AS A SEMIOTIC INSTRUMENT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CHULPAN'S ORIGINALS AND THEIR TRANSLATIONS

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Abstract

This article explores the intersection of translation and semiotics, emphasizing the evolution of translation studies from marginalization during the structuralist era to its current interdisciplinary relevance. It highlights the shift from form-centered linguistics to an approach that includes meaning, context, and communication. Drawing on semiotic theories and translation analysis, particularly the works of Roman Jakobson and Umberto Eco, the paper demonstrates how translation functions not only as a linguistic operation but also as a semiotic process of interpretation and cultural negotiation.Through comparative analysis of original texts by Abdulhamid Chulpan and their translations into English, the study uncovers implicit meanings and explores how translated versions reshape the language world. The research discusses the challenges of equivalence, including semantic loss, compensation, and cultural adaptation, and considers adequacy from semantic, stylistic, and functional perspectives. The findings reveal how translation bridges linguistic systems and illuminates the translator's role in cultural transformation.

Keywords: Translation studies, semiotics, poetry, cultural adaptation, equivalence, interpretation, comparative linguistics

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Introduction

In recent decades, the field of translation studies has undergone a significant paradigm shift, moving from its marginal status in linguistics to becoming a rich interdisciplinary arena engaging with culture, philosophy, semiotics, and communication theory. Once regarded merely as a mechanical linguistic process, translation is now increasingly understood as an act of interpretation, embedded within the cultural, ideological, and psychological contexts of both the source and target languages. Roman Jakobson's famous assertion that interlingual translation is "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language" laid the foundation for the semiotic approach to translation. Scholars like J.C. Catford, and Umberto Eco later expanded this view by framing translation as a process of meaning-making across semiotic systems.

The relationship between semiotics and translation is particularly evident in the translation of poetic texts, where language functions not only as a carrier of information but also as a system of signs, symbols, and cultural codes. This is especially true for the works of Abdulhamid Chulpan, whose metaphoric density, cultural allusions, and intertextual richness challenge even the most skilled translators. As Chulpan's works move across linguistic and cultural boundaries — from Uzbek into English — they inevitably undergo transformations that are not just linguistic but also semiotic and conceptual.

This article proposes that translation serves as a valuable semiotic tool. By comparing Chulpan's original poems with their translations into English, we aim to uncover latent meanings, trace interpretive shifts, and evaluate the adequacy and cultural resonance of translated versions. Through this comparative semiotic lens, we argue that translation is not a secondary representation but a parallel act of meaning construction. This study is based on comparative textual analysis combining methods from translation studies, semiotics, and linguistics. The primary materials include selected works by Chulpan and their official published translations into English. The literary works were chosen based on their high degree of metaphorical density, intertextuality, and cultural specificity.

The methodological tools include **analysises** to deconstruct the semantic elements (semes) of key words and metaphors in both source and target texts, to identify structural shifts and modifications in grammar, syntax, and word order, to

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visualize shifts in symbolic meaning between languages. The study also integrates the concepts of **translation loss**, **compensation**, and **lacuna filling** — particularly through the addition of footnotes or recontextualization — as discussed by Sorokin and Markovina. Additionally, instances of **auto-translation** are analyzed to explore the translator's internal negotiation between cultural identity and communicative clarity.

In focusing on these aspects, the methodology not only evaluates the fidelity and creativity of translated works, but also utilizes the translations themselves as a tool to better understand the structure, imagery, and latent layers of meaning in the original texts.

The comparative analysis of Chulpan's original poems and their translations reveals profound shifts not only in linguistic structure but also in the cultural, emotional, and symbolic weight of the texts. Chulpan's poetic language is deeply metaphorical, often elliptical, and rich in intertextual references to classical literature, Russian historical context, and philosophical imagery — features that pose significant challenges in translation.

For example, in the poem "Kishan", Chulpan employs images of kishan and temir barmoqlar to evoke both personal detachment and historical finality. In the English translation, "Hobble(chain)", the "kishan" is translated here as fetter or chain, which is an appropriate choice. The phrase "spots of iron fingers" preserves the image of "temir barmoqlar" (iron fingers) from the original line, but it lacks sufficient poetic and semiotic strength. Such variations reveal that translation is not simply the replacement of words across languages but the remapping of meaning within new semiotic frameworks. The translator inevitably acts as an interpreter, filtering the source text through their cultural worldview and linguistic competence. This often leads to semantic loss — the disappearance of secondary meanings, allusions, or sound-based symbolism.

In the case of "Go'zal", one of Chulpan's translated into English, we observe a metaphor translating process. In the English translationthe **semantic fidelity** is preserved to some extent, but **key semiotic dimensions are weakened or lost**, whereas the Uzbek original carries more emotional ambiguity and tonal intimacy through metaphors. . This is particularly evident in the treatment of key metaphors: "Ul yulduz uyalib, boshini bukib aytadir: " - " That star inclining head remarks:",

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where the semiotic interpretation reveals that poetic translation should not only transmit literal meaning but also **retain the symbolic, emotional, and cultural codes** embedded in the original. In Chulpon's case, the imagery operates on multiple layers—linguistic, emotional, cultural—and thus demands an equally layered and nuanced rendering in translation.merely a vessel but a metaphor for ideological inheritance and estrangement — nuances that are diluted or altered in other languages due to differing conceptual metaphors tied to maritime imagery.A central aspect of this analysis is the notion of **compensation**: when a metaphor or image is lost in one line, the translator often seeks to restore the poetic effect elsewhere. **cultural lacunae** are often filled with glosses or generalized expressions, especially when Soviet-era realities or Orthodox religious references are untranslatable or unfamiliar to target readers.

The theory of **functional-pragmatic adequacy** becomes crucial here. Rather than aiming for absolute lexical fidelity, many translators prioritize the dominant communicative function of the poem — its emotional, aesthetic, or rhetorical effect. Yet, this approach raises the question: what is the threshold of alteration before a translation ceases to be representative of the original? This analysis shows that the act of translating poetry is not merely about crossing languages but also about navigating layers of meaning, symbol, and culture. The process involves decoding one semiotic system and encoding it into another — often reshaping the very essence of the poetic world.

This study has demonstrated that translation, especially of poetic texts, is not a mere linguistic transfer but a semiotic operation that reshapes meaning, context, and cultural identity. Through the comparative analysis of Abdulhamis Chulpan's poems and their English translations, we have revealed the multilayered transformations that occur in the process of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication. These include semantic loss, metaphorical reconfiguration, compensation techniques, and the adaptation of cultural allusions.

The research confirms that the translator is not only a linguistic mediator but also a cultural interpreter whose decisions reflect the interplay between textual adequacy and target-culture readability. The concept of adequacy — whether semantic, stylistic, or functional — must therefore be viewed as fluid and context-dependent, especially in the translation of literary and poetic works.

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In conclusion, translation serves as both a method of literary interpretation and a mirror reflecting the broader interaction between language, culture, and worldview. The semiotic approach not only enriches our understanding of the translation process but also contributes valuable insights to the study of meaning across linguistic boundaries.

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