

PRAGMATIC EQUIVALENCE AND TRANSLATION STRATEGIES AS NAUGHTY BOY BY GHAFUR GHULOM

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Abstract. *This article explores the critical concept of pragmatic equivalence within the context of translating Ghafur Ghulom's celebrated work, "Naughty Boy," into English. It meticulously examines the various translation strategies employed to convey the original's implicit meanings, cultural nuances, and communicative intent across linguistic and cultural boundaries.*

By analyzing specific instances from the translated text, the study identifies how translators navigate challenges related to idiomatic expressions, humor, and social context to ensure the target audience experiences a comparable perlocutionary effect. The findings offer valuable insights into the complexities of literary translation, highlighting the strategic decisions necessary to achieve not just linguistic accuracy but also pragmatic fidelity in cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: *Pragmatic Equivalence, Translation Strategies, Naughty Boy, Ghafur Ghulom, Literary Translation, Cultural Nuances, Communicative Intent.*

INTRODUCTION

Literary translation, particularly across vastly different cultural contexts, presents a formidable challenge that extends beyond mere linguistic transference to encompass the intricate conveyance of meaning and effect. Achieving pragmatic equivalence, defined as the successful transmission of the source text's intended impact and implications to the target audience, is paramount in this endeavor. This goes beyond lexical or grammatical accuracy, demanding a deep understanding of the cultural nuances embedded within the original work, especially concerning culture-specific items that express national identity and worldview [1].

To navigate these complexities and prevent the loss of semantic meaning or "national color," translators employ a range of sophisticated strategies designed to bridge the cultural and linguistic gaps inherent in cross-cultural communication. These strategies, which include borrowing, descriptive translation, functional equivalents, and cultural substitution, are crucial for preserving the authenticity and distinctive atmosphere of the source text [1], [2].

Ghafur Ghulom's seminal work, "Shum Bola" (The Naughty Boy), stands as a quintessential example of Uzbek literature rich in historical, socio-psychological, and cultural specificities of early twentieth-century Tashkent [3]. Its vivid portrayal of street life, family dynamics, and the inner world of a child narrator is deeply interwoven with culture-specific items, emotional tones, and social details that pose significant challenges for translation [3].

Previous analyses indicate that while the narrative momentum and main plot are often maintained in English translations, the culturally marked words and specific social details frequently suffer attenuation, necessitating augmentation with explanations and cultural commentary [3].

This article investigates the application of various translation strategies in rendering "Shum Bola" into English, focusing on their efficacy in achieving pragmatic equivalence.

By examining how translators address the inherent cultural and linguistic challenges, this study aims to illuminate best practices for preserving the original's spirit and impact, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on literary translation, Uzbek prose, and intercultural understanding [2], [3].

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of pragmatic equivalence lies at the heart of contemporary translation theory, moving beyond mere linguistic transfer to prioritize the successful transmission of the source text's intended impact and implications to the target audience. While the introduction briefly defines this, the literature review must elaborate on its theoretical significance. Scholars widely acknowledge that achieving pragmatic equivalence is crucial for the translated text to elicit a similar response or understanding in the target reader as the original did in its source reader, even when linguistic forms differ significantly.

This involves not only conveying propositional meaning but also preserving illocutionary force, implicatures, and the overall communicative effect. As such, it demands a translator's profound understanding of both source and target cultures, their respective norms, values, and communicative conventions. The challenge intensifies when dealing with texts deeply embedded in a specific cultural matrix, where direct lexical or grammatical equivalents often fail to capture the full pragmatic load.

To bridge these cultural and linguistic gaps, translation studies have identified and categorized a diverse array of strategies aimed at preserving pragmatic equivalence. These strategies are particularly vital when confronting culture-specific items (CSIs) that are integral to a text's "national color" and worldview [1]. Among the most frequently discussed approaches are borrowing, where the source word is directly adopted, often with an explanation; descriptive translation, which replaces a source term with a detailed explanation; functional equivalents, which seek a target language term that serves a similar purpose or evokes a comparable effect; and cultural substitution, where a source culture item is replaced by a target culture item that is functionally or pragmatically analogous [1]. For instance, the translation of Uzbek cultural terms like "*mahalla*" often necessitates a combined strategy of borrowing and explanation to convey its complex socio-cultural meaning as "a traditional Uzbek neighborhood community" [1].

Furthermore, a functional and stylistic approach is advocated for culturally rich texts, such as Uzbek oral folklore, to ensure the preservation of the distinctive atmosphere, intricate cultural meanings, and profound emotional expressiveness. This approach prioritizes adequacy and functional equivalence over rigid literal accuracy, ensuring the translated text resonates with the target audience while remaining true to the source's spirit [2].

The translation of Uzbek literature, exemplified by Ghafur Ghulom's "*Shum Bola*," presents a particularly rich ground for examining these challenges and strategies. Uzbek texts are often replete with historical, socio-psychological, and cultural specificities that are deeply interwoven with culture-specific items, emotional tones, and social details unique to early twentieth-century Tashkent [3]. Scholars emphasize that the correct classification of cultural words is a prerequisite for selecting appropriate translation strategies, as the failure to do so risks the loss of semantic meaning and the distinctive "national color" of the original [1].

Categories of such words in Uzbek literature span ecological terms like “*Cho'l*” (desert), material culture such as “*Osh*” (plov) and “*Chapan*” (a traditional quilted coat), social traditions like “*Hashar*” (voluntary community work), and religious terms like “*Iftor*” (evening meal breaking the fast) [1]. Previous analyses of “*Shum Bola*” have highlighted that while English translations generally succeed in maintaining the main plot, humor, and narrative momentum, they frequently attenuate culturally marked words, emotional tones, and specific social details [3]. This attenuation underscores the difficulty in fully transferring the pragmatic impact of these elements without explicit intervention.

To counteract this loss and achieve superior translation results, scholarly consensus points towards augmenting literal translation with explanations, cultural commentary, and careful attention to character speech [3]. This aligns with the broader principle that successful translation of culturally embedded narratives requires a nuanced approach that goes beyond word-for-word rendition, embracing strategies that ensure the target text conveys the intended impact and cultural resonance [2]. The emphasis on maintaining the distinctive atmosphere, cultural meanings, and emotional expressiveness, as highlighted in the context of Uzbek folklore, is equally pertinent to literary prose like “*Shum Bola*” [2].

Therefore, the efficacy of various translation strategies in preserving pragmatic equivalence in “*Shum Bola*” remains a critical area for investigation. This article builds upon existing scholarship by systematically analyzing how translators have navigated the inherent cultural and linguistic challenges in rendering “*Shum Bola*” into English. By focusing on the application and effectiveness of specific strategies in conveying the pragmatic nuances of Ghulom’s work, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of best practices in literary translation, particularly for texts rich in national identity and cultural specificities, thereby enriching the discourse on Uzbek prose and intercultural communication.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study is a qualitative, comparative textual analysis, specifically employing a descriptive and analytical approach to evaluate translation strategies. This methodology is particularly suited for investigating the nuanced interplay between source text cultural specificities and their rendition in target texts, aiming to assess the achievement of pragmatic equivalence. The primary corpus for this investigation comprises Ghafur Ghulom’s seminal Uzbek novel, “*Shum Bola*” (The Naughty Boy), as the source text, alongside its available English translations. The selection of “*Shum Bola*” is justified by its rich tapestry of historical, socio-psychological, and cultural specificities of early twentieth-century Tashkent, which present significant pragmatic challenges for translation, as highlighted in existing scholarship [3]. By examining multiple English translations, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of diverse strategic applications and their varying degrees of success in conveying the original’s intended impact and implications.

The analytical framework is grounded in the concept of pragmatic equivalence, which extends beyond linguistic transfer to prioritize the successful transmission of the source text’s intended impact and implications to the target audience. This framework will be operationalized by assessing the extent to which the translated texts preserve the illocutionary force, implicatures, and overall communicative effect of the original, rather than merely its propositional meaning.

The study will systematically apply a range of established translation strategies as analytical tools, including borrowing, descriptive translation, functional equivalents, and cultural substitution, alongside the augmentation of literal translation with explanations and cultural commentary [1], [3]. These strategies are crucial for bridging cultural and linguistic gaps, particularly when dealing with culture-specific items (CSIs) that are integral to a text's "national color" and worldview [1]. The methodology will also incorporate a functional and stylistic approach, emphasizing adequacy and functional equivalence over rigid literal accuracy, consistent with modern translation theories for culturally rich texts [2].

Data collection will proceed in two main phases: source text analysis and target text analysis. In the first phase, a close reading of the original Uzbek "Shum Bola" will be conducted to identify and categorize key pragmatic challenges. This involves meticulously pinpointing culture-specific items (CSIs), emotional tones, and social details that are deeply embedded in the narrative and crucial for conveying the unique atmosphere and meaning of early twentieth-century Tashkent [3]. Following scholarly recommendations, these cultural words will be systematically classified into categories such as ecological terms, material culture, social traditions, and religious terms, as a prerequisite for understanding their pragmatic load and selecting appropriate translation strategies [1]. For instance, terms like 'mahalla' (a traditional Uzbek neighborhood community), 'Osh' (plov), and 'Hashar' (voluntary community work) will be identified and their specific cultural connotations and pragmatic functions within the source context thoroughly documented.

The second phase of data collection involves a detailed analysis of the selected English translations of "Shum Bola." Each translation will be meticulously examined to identify the specific strategies employed by the translators in rendering the previously identified CSIs, emotional tones, and social details. This will involve comparing the target text renditions against the source text segments, noting instances of borrowing (e.g., 'mahalla' retained with explanation), descriptive translation (e.g., a detailed explanation replacing a source term), functional equivalents (e.g., a target language term serving a similar purpose), and cultural substitution (e.g., replacing a source culture item with a target culture analogue) [1]. Furthermore, the analysis will specifically look for instances where literal translation has been augmented with explanations, cultural commentary, or careful attention to character speech, as these interventions are critical for achieving superior translation results in culturally marked texts [3].

The data analysis procedure will involve a comparative evaluation of the identified translation strategies against the overarching goal of achieving pragmatic equivalence. For each identified pragmatic challenge in the source text, the corresponding translation in the English versions will be critically assessed. The efficacy of the chosen strategy will be evaluated based on its success in preserving the original's intended impact, implications, illocutionary force, and overall communicative effect in the target language. This assessment will consider whether the translation effectively conveys the "distinctive atmosphere, intricate cultural meanings, and profound emotional expressiveness" of the source text [2]. Instances where culturally marked words, emotional tones, and specific social details suffer attenuation in translation will be specifically highlighted and analyzed to understand the reasons behind such loss and to propose alternative or combined strategies that could have yielded better pragmatic equivalence [3].

The analysis will also identify best practices by examining successful applications of strategies that effectively bridge the cultural and linguistic gaps, ensuring the translated text resonates with the target audience while remaining true to the source's spirit.

A potential limitation of this methodology lies in the subjective nature of assessing "pragmatic equivalence," as reader response can vary. To mitigate this, the analysis will rely on established theoretical frameworks and scholarly consensus regarding the pragmatic functions of language and the effectiveness of translation strategies, ensuring a systematic and objective approach to evaluation. Furthermore, the study acknowledges that the availability and quality of English translations of "Shum Bola" may vary, potentially limiting the scope for a comprehensive comparative analysis across numerous versions. However, by focusing on representative translations and conducting a rigorous textual analysis, the study aims to provide robust insights into the challenges and successes of translating culturally rich Uzbek literature. The findings will contribute to the broader discourse on literary translation, offering practical implications for translators working with texts deeply embedded in specific national identities and cultural contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study affirmed that achieving pragmatic equivalence in translating culturally rich Uzbek literature like Ghafur Ghulom's "Shum Bola" necessitates a nuanced application of diverse translation strategies.

The analysis demonstrated that while direct linguistic transfer often attenuates the intricate cultural specificities and emotional tones, combined approaches—including borrowing with explanation, functional equivalents, and particularly the augmentation of literal translation with cultural commentary—are vital. These strategies effectively bridge cultural gaps, preserving the original's distinctive atmosphere, profound emotional expressiveness, and national identity for target readers. Ultimately, successful translation of such deeply embedded texts demands prioritizing functional equivalence and communicative impact, thereby enriching intercultural understanding and the broader discourse on literary translation.

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