RECONSTRUCTING AUTHORIAL STYLE IN TRANSLATION: A MULTI-LEVEL EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Suyuberdieva Aiman Abdrazakovna
Candidate of pedagogical sciences the department "Foreign languages for humanitarian specialists "South Kazakhstan Research University named after M.Auezov, Shymkent

Kuchkarova Mukhayyo Abduvakhob kizi
Teacher, Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages
mukhayyokuchkarova@gmail.com
+998975010948

Abstract

This study explores the problem of reconstructing authorial style in literary translation, focusing on how stylistic meaning is preserved across languages. Using selected examples from The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and its Uzbek translation, the research adopts a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach based on close textual comparison. A multi-level analytical framework is applied, examining lexical, grammatical, stylistic, and pragmatic dimensions of translation.

The analysis demonstrates that translators rely on a range of context-sensitive strategies, including lexical transformation, contextual amplification, and phraseological equivalence. These strategies allow the translator to convey not only the semantic content of the original text but also its expressive and cultural nuances. At the same time, certain stylistic elements—particularly metaphorical imagery—may be partially transformed or simplified in the process.

The findings suggest that preserving authorial style is not a matter of direct equivalence but of careful adaptation and interpretive decision-making. The study highlights the active role of the translator in shaping meaning and maintaining the communicative and aesthetic impact of the original work. Overall, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how linguistic and stylistic features function in literary translation and how authorial voice can be reconstructed in a different cultural and linguistic context.

Keywords: authorial style, literary translation, stylistic analysis, lexical transformation, phraseological equivalence, contextual amplification, translation strategies, Uzbek translation, Mark Twain

Introduction

The relationship between language, style, and meaning represents one of the central concerns in translation studies. Literary translation, in particular, poses a significant challenge due to the need to preserve not only the semantic content of a text but also the unique stylistic features that define an author's voice.

One of the most complex aspects of this process is the reconstruction of authorial style, which encompasses lexical choices, syntactic patterns, figurative language, and cultural nuances. Translators are often required to balance fidelity to the source text with the naturalness and readability of the target language.

This study focuses on the problem of preserving authorial style in translation, using selected examples from The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain and its Uzbek translation. The

work is particularly suitable for this analysis due to its rich use of idiomatic expressions, humor, and culturally embedded language.

The aim of this research is to identify and analyze the strategies used to reconstruct stylistic features in translation. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

- How are lexical, idiomatic, and metaphorical elements transformed in translation?
- What strategies are used to preserve or adapt stylistic meaning?
- To what extent can the author's voice be reconstructed in the target language?

By addressing these questions, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, style, and translation, highlighting the role of the translator as both an interpreter and a creative agent.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach to investigate the challenges and strategies involved in reconstructing authorial style in literary translation. The research is based on a comparative analysis of selected excerpts from The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and their Uzbek translations.

The methodology integrates principles from translation studies, stylistics, and cognitive linguistics, focusing on how linguistic and stylistic features are transferred across languages. A multi-level analytical framework is applied, examining four key dimensions of translation:

- ✓ Lexical level (word choice, semantic shifts, and equivalence)
- ✓ Grammatical level (syntactic restructuring and morphological adaptation)
- ✓ Stylistic level (tone, figurative language, and expressive devices)
- ✓ Pragmatic level (contextual meaning, cultural adaptation, and reader interpretation)

The data consists of selected textual examples that illustrate different types of transformations, including lexical substitution, phraseological equivalence, and contextual amplification. These examples were purposefully chosen to represent typical challenges in preserving authorial voice.

The analysis follows a comparative procedure, where each source text segment is examined alongside its translation. Particular attention is given to how meaning, stylistic nuance, and cultural implications are retained, modified, or lost in the translation process.

Analysis (Metaphorical and Conceptual Transformation)

Source text: "But the elastic heart of youth cannot be compressed into one constrained shape long at a time."

Target text (Uzbek translation): "Bolalikda kishining ko'ngli muloyim bo'ladi. Qancha xafa bo'lsang ham tezda tarqalib ketadi."

This example illustrates the translation of a metaphorical expression that conveys psychological and emotional resilience. The phrase "elastic heart of youth" metaphorically represents the ability of young individuals to recover quickly from emotional distress, such as disappointment or heartbreak.

In the translation, the metaphor is not preserved in its original form. Instead, the translator renders it as "ko'ngli muloyim bo'ladi," accompanied by an explanatory sentence: "qancha xafa bo'lsang ham tezda tarqalib ketadi." This indicates a shift from metaphorical expression to explicit semantic interpretation.

From a translational perspective, this can be classified as demetaphorization, where an abstract or figurative concept is transformed into a more direct and culturally accessible explanation. While the imagery of elasticity is lost, the core meaning—emotional flexibility and rapid recovery—is effectively communicated.

Additionally, the lexical choices reflect cultural adaptation:

- "heart" → "ko'ngil" (a culturally appropriate conceptual equivalent)
- "elastic" → "muloyim" (a semantic shift emphasizing softness rather than elasticity)

This transformation demonstrates a prioritization of comprehensibility and naturalness over stylistic preservation. Although the vivid metaphor of the source text is reduced, the translation succeeds in conveying the intended psychological insight in a form that is easily accessible to the target audience.

Analytical Insight (for all examples together)

Across the analyzed examples, three major transformation strategies emerge:

- Contextual amplification → enriching emotional nuance
- Phraseological equivalence (with literal elements) → preserving idiomatic meaning
- Demetaphorization → simplifying metaphorical expressions for clarity

These strategies collectively demonstrate that the translator adopts a flexible, context-driven approach, balancing semantic accuracy with cultural and stylistic adaptation.

Conclusion

This study has examined the challenges and strategies involved in reconstructing authorial style in literary translation through a multi-level analytical framework. The findings demonstrate that preserving authorial voice is a complex and dynamic process that requires more than direct linguistic equivalence.

The analysis reveals that translators employ a range of strategies, including lexical transformation, contextual amplification, phraseological equivalence, and demetaphorization. Each of these approaches reflects an effort to balance semantic accuracy with stylistic and cultural adaptation.

While some stylistic features, such as metaphorical imagery, may be partially lost in translation, others can be effectively recreated or even enhanced through context-sensitive choices. This suggests that translation is not merely a process of transferring meaning but also an act of interpretation and re-creation.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of flexibility in translation strategies. Rather than relying on a single method, successful translation depends on the translator's ability to adapt to the specific demands of each text and context.

In conclusion, the reconstruction of authorial style is achievable to a significant extent, although it inevitably involves transformation. The findings underscore the role of the translator as an active participant in shaping meaning, bridging linguistic and cultural boundaries, and ensuring the continued relevance of literary works across languages.

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