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PAPER

EXPRESSING THE INNER WORLD: TECHNIQUES FOR TRANSLATING PSYCHOLOGICAL STATES IN UZBEK LITERARY TEXTS INTO ENGLISH

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Abstract

This article explores the translation of units expressing psychological states from Uzbek literary texts into English, focusing on the principles of artistic-psychological adequacy. Psychological states in Uzbek texts are often conveyed not through direct lexical nomination but via contextual cues, descriptive details, somatic metaphors, and speech-intonation markers. Through illustrative analysis of excerpts from Oybek's Bolalik (Childhood, translated by Carolyn Wei), Shukur Xolmirzayev's O'zbek xarakteri (Character of Uzbek, translated by H. Allanazarova), and O'tkir Hoshimov's Dunyoning ishlari (Affairs of Life, translated by O. Mo'minov), the study demonstrates how translators render these nuanced states in English using strategies such as semantic interpretation, functional equivalence, expansion, compensation, and modulation. The analysis highlights the role of descriptive/analytical predicative structures, metaphorical expressions, and emotion-masking strategies in preserving the psychological intensity, pragmatic connotations, and stylistic impact of the original text. The study confirms that successful translation of psychological state units requires a creative approach that goes beyond lexical equivalence, emphasizing semantic, stylistic, connotative, and pragmatic alignment between source and target texts. Ultimately, the article illustrates how the translation process bridges cultural-psychological meaning and preserves the aesthetic-emotional effect of the original literary work.

Key words: psychological state, Uzbek literary text, translation strategies, semantic interpretation, functional equivalence, pragmatics, emotional connotation, artistic translation.

Introduction

The inner world of an individual—comprising emotions, feelings, psychological tension, anxiety,

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aspirations, suffering, doubt, and hope—serves as one of the central semantic drivers in both speech and textual meaning. Linguistic units that express psychological states belong to one of the most sensitive layers of the language system, as they shape the emotional-expressive background of a text and vividly reconstruct the inner portrait of a subject in the reader's perception.In literary discourse, such units are rarely conveyed through direct nomination; instead, they are often embedded in contextual cues, figurative expressions, somatic metaphors, and pragmatic signals. This complexity significantly increases the difficulty of translating them into another language. The translator must go beyond finding simple lexical equivalents and instead strive to preserve not only the denotative meaning but also the emotional coloring, connotative nuances, stylistic features, and cultural codes inherent in the source text.Within the framework of translation theory, meaning is understood as a multidimensional construct that includes denotative, connotative, stylistic, and contextual components. Therefore, the translation of psychological state units requires a creative and interpretative approach. As noted by translation scholars, literary translation is inherently a form of artistic creation, where the translator reconstructs the text in the target language in a way that is both natural and pragmatically appropriate for the recipient. Furthermore, the translation of such units becomes particularly challenging when dealing with typologically different languages, such as Uzbek and English. Differences in linguistic structure, cultural worldview, and expressive means often lead to semantic shifts, stylistic transformations, and the necessity for various translation strategies. In this context, lexical transformations—such as modulation, concretization, generalization, compensation, and descriptive translation—play a crucial role in achieving equivalence.

This article aims to analyze the translation of linguistic units expressing psychological states from Uzbek into English, focusing on their semantic, stylistic, and pragmatic features. Through illustrative examples drawn from Uzbek literary works and their English translations, the study explores how translators reconstruct emotional meaning and maintain the psychological depth of the original text. The research highlights the importance of semantic interpretation and adaptive strategies in ensuring the adequacy and effectiveness of literary translation.

Materials and Methods

As translation scholar G‘. Salomov emphasizes:“In the translation of literary texts, it is impossible to operate within a fixed set of rules. After all, translation is itself a part of artistic creation, and the translator of a literary text edits the text produced in the target language, adapting it stylistically and pragmatically to the recipient. In the process of adaptation, not only a single lexeme undergoes transformation, but an entire fragment of the text may be subject to complex transformation.” Below, the approaches used in rendering units with the seme of psychological state in the Uzbek language (not limited to verbs: including nouns, adjectives, phraseological units, psychophysiological reactions, etc.) into English are demonstrated through illustrative analysis.

First, let us turn to excerpts from Oybek's work “Bolalik” and its translation (“Childhood” translated by Carolyn Wei).

“Bobom o‘siq qoshlari tagida yashiringan ko‘zlarini yolg‘ondaka olaytirib, ko‘rsatgich barmog‘i bilan po‘pisa qiladi, men hassalarni tixirlik bilan egalariga qaytaraman. Keyin bobomning tizzasini quchoqlayman...” (Oybek, “Bolalaik”) – “My grandfather half-seriously bulged out his eyes from under bushy eyebrows and threatened me with his index finger. I stubbornly returned the walking sticks...” (Oybek, “Childhood” translated by Carolyn Wei)

In this passage, the psychological state is not expressed directly by naming fear or anxiety; rather, the pragmatic background of inner tension is conveyed through gaze (staring), tone, and gesture. In translation, the seme of yolg‘ondaka is rendered through the analytical marker half-seriously, preserving the tone of psychological duality and playfulness. In this case, the translator prioritizes semantic interpretation and pragmatic equivalence, transferring not the exact “name” of the psychological state but its communicative signals.

In the next passage, the psychological state becomes more explicit through an adjective and a predicative construction:

"Zerikib do'ppimni osmonga otaman... Bobom do'ppimni qoqib kiygizib qo'yadi." (Oybek, "Bolalaik") – "Tired of this, I threw my duppi hat to the sky... My grandfather was unhappy..." (Oybek, "Childhood" translated by Carolyn Wei)

Here, the lexeme zerikib (a psychological state—passive manifestation of fatigue/restlessness) is functionally reproduced in English by the construction tired of this; the state of displeasure is not verbalized directly but rendered through was unhappy (a predicative structure), preserving the stable negative coloring of the Uzbek expression. Thus, some psychological states are not translated into verbs but are equivalently conveyed through the model of predicative + adjective/noun.

In another passage, the psychological state is expressed with a nuance of inner resistance:

"Men jindak tixirlik qilgandan so'ng to'tiday g'ujillab beraman." (Oybek, "Bolalaik") – "I stubbornly recited a little while." (Oybek, "Childhood" translated by Carolyn Wei)

Although tixirlik may be interpreted as a behavioral trait, in context it also carries meanings of inner psychological resistance, discomfort, and self-restraint. In translation, it is rendered by the adverb stubbornly, preserving the dynamic of inner resistance followed by release; here a lexical-grammatical transformation (noun + auxiliary verb → adverb + verb) occurs.

In the example of Shukur Xolmirzayev's work "O'zbek xarakteri" and its English translation ("Character of Uzbek" translated by H. Allanazarova), we observe the context-dependent interpretation of psychological state:

"— Shu ukamiz hech narsa tatimadi-da...

— Yo bizni pisand qilmayaptilarmi? —

E, nimaga...

— Olovim chiqib ketdi...

— ...Bo'lmasa ovqatdan ham tortinadimi odam! — Ha, ishtaham yo'qroq..." (Sh.Xolmirzayev "O'zbek xarakteri")

— "This young brother did not taste anything...

— ...Why?

— I felt a burning inside...

— ...how can a human being be so shy in front of a meal?

— ...I have little appetite..." (Sh.Kholmirzayev "Character of Uzbek" translated by H. Allanazarova)

Here, the psychological state is expressed through a phraseological unit (olovim chiqib ketdi), sociopragmatic evaluation (pisand qilmaslik), and an inner condition hidden behind an external sign (lack of appetite). In translation, not the denotative meaning but the internal explosive tension (a mixture of anger and embarrassment) is conveyed through the descriptive model I felt a burning inside. This demonstrates the necessity of choosing an expanded (descriptive) equivalent, i.e., representing the psychological state not by direct naming but by depicting the inner process.

The novella "Dunyoning ishlari" by O'tkir Hoshimov and its English translation ("Affairs of life" translated by O. Mo'minov) frequently reconstruct psychological states—such as emotional pain, regret, gratitude, guilt, and longing—around the concept of inner suffering. These are expressed through both lexical units (nouns like dard, armon, ko'ngil g'ashligi) and phraseological expressions (yuragi uvishmoq, ko'ngli buzilmoq, ko'ziga yosh qalqimoq). For example:

"Onamning jimligi menga og'ir botdi: ko'nglim g'ash tortdi, ichimdan bir narsa uzilgandek bo'ldi; aytmoqchi bo'lgan gapim tomog'imga tiqildi." ("Dunyoning ishlari", O'tkir Hoshimov) – "My mother's silence weighed on me: a heaviness rose inside, as if something snapped; the words I meant to say stuck in my throat." ("Affairs of life" translated by O. Mo'minov)

Here, og'ir botdi (pragmatic evaluation), ko'nglim g'ash tortdi (emotional background), ichimdan bir narsa uzilgandek (metaphorical shock/pain), and gapim tomog'imga tiqildi (physiological reaction) all belong to a single field of psychological state; in English, a complex transformation occurs through weighed on me / heaviness rose / something snapped / stuck in my throat. The form changes, but the psychological intensity is preserved.

In the following lines, we observe personification as a stylistic device reflecting psychological states:

"Oymoma esa bu sehrli qo'shiqni yana bir eshitgisi kelgandek, muallaq to'xtab qolar,

yulduzlar o‘ychan ko‘zlarini tikib muloyim boqib turishar, onam ertak aytar edi.” (“Dunyoning ishlari”, O‘tkir Hoshimov) – “The moon used to stop sailing as if it wanted to listen to this enchants again, stars glanced with sad eyes, and mother used to tell fairy-tales.” (“Affairs of life” translated by O. Mo‘minov)

The author animates the moon and stars, portraying a childlike tenderness and thoughtful gaze. The same stylistic device is preserved in translation; however, rendering o‘ychan ko‘zlar as sad eyes creates an unintended sense of sadness. In fact, the original suggests quiet contemplation. Therefore, thoughtful eyes would be more appropriate.

Another example:

“Ochil. Ochil. Oq toshlar-a, Men onamni ko‘rayin-a, Diydoriga to‘yayin-a.” (“Dunyoning ishlari”, O‘tkir Hoshimov) – “Open up; open up, dear white stones. Let me see my mother again. Let me be satisfied of her face.” (“Affairs of life” translated by O. Mo‘minov)

In translation, the unity of form and meaning is essential for preserving artistic value. As the Russian linguist Yakov Resker notes, the translator must reproduce the content fully and accurately while preserving stylistic and expressive features. Translation integrity implies maintaining the unity of form and meaning. In this poetic fragment, the original rhyme (a-a-a) conveys longing and anticipation, but the translation loses this effect.

In emotionally rich texts like “Dunyoning ishlari,” compensation becomes important: short Uzbek phraseological units may require expansion in English to sound natural. For instance:

“Ko‘zimga yosh kelib, o‘zimni kulgiga soldim.” (“Dunyoning ishlari”, O‘tkir Hoshimov) – “Tears welled up, but I forced a smile to hide it.” (“Affairs of life” translated by O. Mo‘minov)

Here, both the emotional reaction and the pragmatic act of concealment are preserved. This reflects the typical strategy of emotion masking: in Uzbek it may be implied in a single unit, whereas in English it is often split into two components.

Thus, the decisive factor in translating psychological state units from Uzbek into English is lexical choice and semantic interpretation. Techniques such as adaptation, expansion, compensation, and ellipsis help preserve meaning along with connotation, intensity, and pragmatic effect. Sometimes phraseological units are rendered descriptively (felt uneasy / was distressed / was overwhelmed), ensuring functional-psychological equivalence rather than literal correspondence. In other cases, core nouns (sog‘inch, bezovtalik, vahima) or adjectives (xavotirli, iztirobli) are preserved as nominative units without verbalization.

Moreover, psychological states are often expressed indirectly through physiological reactions (ko‘z o‘ngi qorong‘ilashdi, seskanib ketdi, esankirab turdi). These are translated through metaphor, bodily reaction equivalents, and lexical modulation, focusing on the emotional core rather than external signs.

If contextual features—emotional tone, intensity, duration, evaluative coloring, and stylistic register—are not considered, semantic mismatches may arise. Conversely, proper lexical adaptation and semantic interpretation restore psychological impact and enhance reader engagement. Transformations such as phraseological substitution, concretization/generalization, modulation, expansion, and compensation build a cultural-psychological bridge between languages.

Results and Discussion

This article has analyzed the translation of psychological state units from Uzbek into English based on criteria of artistic-psychological adequacy. The findings show that such states are often expressed indirectly in Uzbek through context, imagery, somatic metaphors, and intonation. Therefore, relying solely on dictionary equivalents may weaken the expressive and communicative effect. Translation, especially of psychological states, requires creativity. As noted in Uzbek translation studies: “Translation is entirely a creative field; the translator must always be a creator.”

Similarly, in English translation theory, Eugene Nida and Charles Taber define translation as reproducing “the closest natural equivalent ... first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style.” Thus, both meaning and stylistic effect must be

preserved.

Mona Baker also highlights the issue of non-equivalence at word level, noting that the target language may lack direct equivalents. Uzbek expressions such as ichi kuydi, yuragiga g‘ulg‘ula tushdi, ko‘ngli xira bo‘ldi carry strong connotative and expressive meanings, requiring paraphrase, explanation, or compensation in translation.

Therefore, translating psychological state units involves not only lexical equivalence but also the reconstruction of semantic, stylistic, connotative, and pragmatic layers. The success of literary translation lies in recreating the psychological effect of the original with an equivalent aesthetic-emotional impact in the target language.

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