

COGNITIVE AND STYLISTIC ASPECTS OF TRANSLATING SIMILE WITH STRATEGIES AND EXAMPLES

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Abstract

This paper examines how similes are identified and translated in modern fantasy literature, using Leigh Bardugo's novel *Crooked Kingdom* as a case study. In fantasy, similes are not just decorative elements also they are essential tools that help readers understand unfamiliar, invented worlds by comparing them to real-life experiences. With studying a number of strategies, a translator may choose which one will be appropriate in each situation. It explores how original images and ideas change when moving into a new language and culture. Ultimately, the paper shows how a translator can keep the author's unique style while making sure the story remains natural for the target reader.

Keywords: Modern fantasy, simile translation, *Crooked Kingdom*, cognitive linguistics, translation strategies, world-building.

Introduction

Аннотация

В данной статье исследуются особенности перевода сравнений в современной литературе фэнтези на примере романа Ли Бардуго «Продажное королевство» (*Crooked Kingdom*). В жанре фэнтези сравнения — это не просто украшение текста. Они помогают читателю понять вымышленный мир, проводя параллели с реальным жизненным опытом. Изучая какие переводческие стратегии наиболее эффективны при работе с образной речью. В работе рассматривается, как исходные образы меняются при переходе в другую языковую и культурную среду. В итоге статья описывает, как переводчику сохранить уникальный стиль автора и при этом сделать текст понятным для читателя.

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada zamonaviy fentezi adabiyotidagi o'xshatishlarni tarjima qilish muammolari Li Bardugoning "Sotqinlar saltanati" (*Crooked Kingdom*) romani misolida ko'rib chiqiladi. Fentezi janrida o'xshatishlar shunchaki matn bezagi emas, balki kitobxonga xayoliy dunyoni real hayotiy tajriba orqali tushunishga yordam beruvchi muhim vositadir. Tadqiqotda murakkab ko'chma ma'noli gaplar uchun qaysi tarjima strategiyalari samarali ekanligi tahlil qilinadi. Maqola yakunida tarjimon muallif uslubini saqlab qolgan holda, asarni yangi kitobxon uchun tabiiy qilish yo'llari ko'rsatib berilgan.

Ключевые слова: Современное фэнтези, перевод сравнений, «Продажное королевство», когнитивная лингвистика, стратегии перевода, создание художественного мира



Kalit so‘zlar: Zamonaviy fentezi, o‘xshatishlar tarjimasini, “Sotqinlar saltanati”, kognitiv lingvistika, tarjima strategiyalari, badiiy olam yaratish

Introduction

When we talk about language, the first that comes to our mind is that it serves as a tool for communication. When people communicate simple, basic conversations in daily life they use language to express their thoughts, ideas, feelings and hopes. However, language plays a great role as the primary vehicle for creative world-building. Within the landscape of literary fiction, writers rely on figurative language to construct meaning that fully occupies literal definitions. Among various types of figurative devices, the metaphor and the simile occupy central role. The both stated as a comparison, to emphasize comparative relationship between two different objects, they do so through distinct grammatical and cognitive pathways.

In a simile comparison is explicitly stated, in different literary works authors use *like* or *as* to show this device. While metaphors, conversely, dispense with these explicit markers, establishing a direct, implicit identification that can frequently be structurally unpacked or rewritten as a simile. As Larson notes, the foundational essence of both devices remains rooted in the discovery and expression of some underlying likeness between two concepts which may be really used by author.[1]

The task of understanding, analyzing, and translating these figures of speech may become complicated when a narrative moves outside the boundaries of realistic fiction. In modern fantasy literature—a genre characterized by the construction of secondary worlds, illusions, mythologies, and unfamiliar magical—figurative language changes its function. It starts to be a decorative luxury and becomes a cognitive necessity which not really interpreted only by words but with meaning.

To create similar atmosphere which will connect reader’s real life with fantasy, author uses such devices. Similes act as these connector points, mapping familiar real-world experiences onto fantasy concepts, unreal or imaginary components.

The correct interpretation and transfer of a simile do not merely depend on replacing source words with target-language equivalents. Rather, it is important to identify the topic, the image, and the point of similarity of devices. When a translator fails to understand these components properly, or when the cultural or cognitive framework of the target language lacks an equivalent conceptual structure, the figurative link may break down as a reader could not catch meaning.

Theoretical foundations of translation

The discipline of translation studies the textual changes between a Source Language (SL) and a Target Language (TL). Historically, these methodologies have been between two opposing sides: the desire to remain absolutely faithful to the linguistic form of the original text, and the desire to make the text sound stylistically natural to the reader.

Nida and Taber (1982) offer a foundational definition, stating that:

"Translating consists in producing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent to the SL message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style." [2] This perspective places immense weight on preserving the core message while ensuring that the resulting text reads naturally in the target culture.



The structural and cognitive nature of similes

To analyze how a simile expresses during translation, one must first dismantle it structurally and understand how it functions as a cognitive process. Far from being a simple stylistic device, a simile requires simultaneous processing of different conceptual realities.

Simile is when two objects are expressed with the likeness between them. Unlike a metaphor, which operates through conceptual understanding, a simile preserves the separate identities of the items being compared, linking them with a clear comparative marker and with the help of them it is more easy to find this device.

According to Pierini (2007), a simile is built upon a distinct tripartite (three-part) semantic structure. To understand this structure mostly considered as vital part as it will help to choose which strategy can be chosen in translation:

The Topic: The object, or psychological state that is being described in the narrative. This is the real-world or secondary-world element that the author wants to clarify.

The Image: The figurative device to which the topic is being compared. This is the illustrative image brought in from outside the immediate context to highlight on the topic.

The Similarity Feature: The specific property, quality, or characteristic that the topic and image hold in most cases.[3]

Linguistic markers of comparison

To find simile throughout the text mostly is not that complicated because of special comparison features, the most important to catch the meaning and translate it properly. These markers are not restricted to simple prepositions but they include multiple grammatical categories: Prepositions: like, as (swift as a shadow, burning like fire), Verbs: seem, look like, act like, sound like, resemble, remind (it sounds like a trap), Adjectives: similar to, the same as, identical to; Nouns: a sort of, a type of, some kind of; Conjunctions: as if, as though, as when (he ran as if a ghost were pursuing him)

Strategies for translating

A translator may use different translation strategies, prioritizing the cultural, contextual, and stylistic implications of each choice.

1. **Literal Translation.** This strategy preserves both the structural form of the simile and its original imagery, transferring into the target language. This is highly effective when the point of similarity relies on human experiences or cross-cultural concepts. Newmark (1981) supports this approach when the core image is universal, noting that it produces a natural, unforced transfer. [4]

2. **Replacement of the Image.** When a source object sometimes will be joined to the target language fully because of cultural context or idioms and in these cases, a literal translation will fail. In such moments, the translator replaces the source object with a standard, culturally adjusted one in the target language. Larson (1984), explains that a translator will frequently want to substitute a different simile that carries an identical functional meaning, ensuring the original emotional flavor is not lost.

3. **Reduction of the Simile.** If a simile is deeply idiomatic or textually connected, and preserving the image would result in an awkward in target structure. The simile is reduced to a



straightforward statement of its underlying meaning.

4. Retention of the Same Image plus Explication of Similarity Features. When a translator wishes to keep an original source image, but fears the target reader will fail to grasp the point of similarity, they choose explication. This strategy involves keeping the object but explicitly adding descriptive components to clarify the comparison. Chesterman (2000) identifies explication as a core translational strategy where implicit source elements are made explicit in the target text. [5,9,10]

For instance, from *The Crooked Kingdom* :

What has Van Eck been planning all along? He's been buying up jurda farms so that when the secret of jurda parem is unleashed, he'll control the jurda supply. He wins no matter who has Kuwei. So, think like him, think like a merch.[6,11]

Translation: «Что Ван Эк замышлял всё это время? Он скупал фермы юрды, чтобы, когда тайна юрда парем станет известна, контролировать поставки юрды. Он выиграет независимо от того, у кого окажется Кувей. Поэтому думай как он, думай как торговец.» Translation Strategy: Literal Translation. The expression "think like him" is translated directly as "думай как он". The simile marker "like" is rendered by its direct Russian equivalent "как", preserving both the comparative structure and the original meaning.. Since the comparison remains natural and fully comprehensible for the target audience, this example shows literal Translation.

Kaz tilted his head, watching a gull arc above them, wings spread wide. "Tell Jesper he's missed. Around the Slat." Inej raised a brow. "Around the Slat." From Kaz that was as good as a bouquet of flowers and a heartfelt hug—and it would mean the world to Jesper.

Translation: Каз склонил голову набок, наблюдая, как чайка описывает дугу над ними, широко расправив крылья.

— Скажи Джесперу, что по нему скупают. Вокруг Слэта. Иней приподняла бровь.

— Вокруг Слэта. Для Каза это было почти то же самое, что букет цветов и искренние объятия, и для Джеспера это значило бы очень много.

The simile "as good as a bouquet of flowers and a heartfelt hug" is translated by preserving the original image and comparative meaning.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of figurative language within modern fantasy literature reveals that devices like the simile are much more than simple stylistic decorations. In addition, they allow the author to build an immersive world, explore the unique psychology of characters without interrupting the narrative flow. For a translator, navigating these explicit comparisons requires a sophisticated approach that balances linguistic precision with structural flexibility. As demonstrated through the frameworks of Larson, Newmark, and Pierini, a translator must understand the internal tripartite architecture of every simile before selecting an appropriate transfer strategy.

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