

A THEORETICAL EXAMINATION OF TRANSLATION CHALLENGES IN D. MITCHELL'S WORKS

Sarsenbaeva Zoya Jangabay kizi,
PhD in Pedagogical Sciences, Doctoral
degree candidate,
TerSU, Republic of Uzbekistan
E-mail: zoe.sarsenbaeva@list.ru

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14270669>

Abstract: *This article examines various translation challenges encountered in the works of D. Mitchell, a celebrated contemporary author known for his intricate narratives and innovative stylistic techniques. The study focuses on analyzing and comparing the difficulties posed by Mitchell's complex narrative structures and nonlinear storytelling, which often challenge translators in preserving coherence and narrative flow across languages. The article highlights that translators face a critical choice between adaptation and literal translation, depending on the linguistic and cultural context of the target language. Additionally, it explores strategies for translating Mitchell's stylistic features, including his unique use of language, narrative techniques, and linguistic creativity, to retain the essence and artistic integrity of the original text (Venuti, 2008). The findings of the study suggest that collaborative efforts involving native speakers, cultural experts, and professional translators can be an effective approach to addressing these translation challenges. Furthermore, the research conducts a comparative analysis of English novel translations into other languages, exploring the strategies and obstacles faced by translators in conveying the source text's linguistic and narrative intricacies. Thus, by delving into the translation issues in D. Mitchell's works and examining the strategies employed to overcome them, this research offers valuable insights into the complexities of translating sophisticated literary texts.*

Keywords: *comparative, D. Mitchell, literary, translation, narrative, complexities.*

Introduction. When analyzing the concept *translation*, we can see that translation plays an important role in connecting cultures and promoting understanding between different linguistic communities. In our country, translating literary works presents both challenges and opportunities. Some translators often interpret phenomena from other cultures through the lens of their own cultural perspective, which can lead to distortions due to the asymmetry in how different languages like Uzbek, French, and Russian perceive and reflect the world compared to others. This inter-lingual asymmetry is a significant challenge in translation and has garnered much attention from researchers. Comparative analysis of languages in translation might reveal many instances of intercultural asymmetry, especially when dealing with exotic and expressive cultural elements that reflect national characteristics and require careful selection of appropriate equivalents. One of the main difficulties for translators lies in translating referential meanings from the

source text, due to differences in the semantic range of units between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). There may not be a case that two languages have identical semantic units, such as morphemes, words, or phrases, with entirely matching reference values. When the concepts may align, the methods of expression, grouping, division, and combination differ across languages. In the following section, we will explore some of the issues related to translation.

The structure and syntax of Uzbek language are distinct from those of Indo-European languages such as English, Russian, French, and German, as Uzbek language is part of the Turkic language family. These differences could develop significant challenges for translators. For example, Uzbek language's agglutinative nature where suffixes are appended to a root word to convey different grammatical functions, can make direct translations difficult. Translators need to carefully manage these structural differences to preserve the original text's meaning and flow.

The vast vocabulary of Uzbek language, filled with idiomatic expressions and proverbs, makes translation particularly challenging. Translators might often find it difficult to locate equivalent expressions in other languages, which can result in a loss of meaning or cultural nuances. This problem could become even more pronounced when working with older texts that employ archaic language or regional dialects.

Uzbek literature is closely intertwined with the nation's history, traditions, and social norms. Translating these works demands not just language skills but also a profound grasp of the cultural context. Cultural references, historical allusions, and social customs in the text might be unfamiliar to readers from other cultures. Translators will have to find a balance between staying true to the original text and making it understandable and relevant to the new audience.

The themes and messages of a literary work are often shaped by the historical and political context in which it was created. In Uzbekistan, the influence of the Soviet era followed by the period of independence has had a profound effect on literature. To fully understand and convey the nuances of political commentary, social critique, or historical references within a text, it's essential to consider these contextual factors.

Furthermore, translating different literary genres might pose distinct difficulties. For instance, poetry, which relies heavily on rhythm, rhyme, and aesthetic elements, is especially challenging to translate without losing its essence. Likewise, folklore and oral traditions, which are vital to Uzbek literature, must be approached with care to maintain their authenticity and cultural importance.

Literature Review. According to Barkhudarov, semantic correspondences between lexical units in two languages can be divided into three main categories: complete correspondence, partial compliance, and lack of compliance (Barkhudarov, 1975). This means that there is always a chance that a particular lexical unit in the source language might not have an equivalent in the target language. In such cases, translators need to create an equivalent for the missing lexical unit during translation.

It is significant to note that David Mitchell occupies a unique place in modern English literature. His characters often move through different narratives, emphasizing the intertextual nature of his writing. Studying contemporary authors like D. Mitchell is beneficial for understanding the traits of postmodern literature. Mitchell's novels, particularly "Ghostwritten," "Number9Dream," and "Cloud Atlas" (Mitchell, 2004), showcase many characteristics of postmodern literature. He uses postmodernist techniques to portray the events in his works. Through his writing, Mitchell seeks to address existential questions such as "What kind of world is this?" and "What actions should be taken?" in an effort to explore the concept of truth (Karasik, 2009).

One of the first things to notice is that Mitchell writes exclusively in English, except for occasional quotations. This is true even for characters from various backgrounds, like the international crew in "The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet" or Marinus's different reincarnations in "The Bone Clocks" (Mitchell, 2014). Despite the chapters in "The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet" switching between the Dutch outpost of Dejima and the Japanese mainland, the entire novel is in English. This linguistic choice is like an optical illusion, similar to how light tricks the eye into seeing something unexpected by playing with angles and surfaces.

Another interesting way to view this monolingual yet polyglot approach is through Rebecca Walkowitz's idea of a "born-translated novel." In her 2015 article "English as a Foreign Language: David Mitchell and "The Born-Translated Novel," Walkowitz suggests that Mitchell uses English as if it were a foreign language. However, I argue that he uses English as a collection of foreign languages, which is evident in the different variants of English in "Cloud Atlas" (Mitchell, 2004) and the unique teenage slang in "Black Swan Green". Walkowitz also points out that Mitchell's work is designed to be translated and explores translation in a novel way (Larsonneur, 2018).

Moreover, Mitchell's novels approach the history of translation in a distinctive manner: they tell the story of languages rather than simply describing them. Multilingualism is seldom portrayed in his works; instead, English is rendered as a

foreign language by prioritizing the target audience over the source, focusing on audiences rather than authors, and attributing their origins to prior editions and literary works in other languages. His analysis of translation, therefore, centers on the potential for creativity in mediation rather than strict adherence to copying ethics, which brings to mind the ongoing debate between the French and German translation traditions. “The notion of mediated editions instead of sourced manuscripts allows Mitchell to imply that we are reading documents that have been translated in various ways” (Larsonneur, 2018). The plurality of interpretations and compositions emphasized by Walkowitz is another key characteristic of indirect discourse. Translation, for example, involves a range of linguistic and cognitive processes similar to those found in biographies and autobiographies: compensation, transposition, equivalence, adaptation, or reduction. There is both repetition and repurposing, remembering and redacting, with the translator reproducing certain elements while revealing others. This may clarify why a single source text can give rise to numerous translations and retranslations, and why an individual’s life can inspire various autobiographies and biographies. By engaging with the original discourse, whether it's a source text or first-hand testimony, and reworking it through pastiche, adaptation, or variation, auto-bio-fiction shares similarities with the hyper-textual nature of translation as defined by Antoine Berman. He emphasizes that translation and retranslations serve to highlight and revitalize the source; they also represent a form of homecoming or repatriation (Larsonneur, 2018).

Communicativeness by its nature is the acceptance, processing and transmission of information to another recipient. Such a speech chain is usually called interpretation. According to Karasik, a person’s interaction with the world occurs on the basis of background information and personal experience, presented in the form of “a flexible system of interconnected meanings - personally significant and situationally determined ideal entities; understanding of reality is a dialectically interconnected creative bidirectional movement – *inward and outward*” (Karasik, 2009). Such a rather broad formulation makes it clear that interpretation is characterized by diversity. This fact does not deprive researchers of the opportunity to evaluate the results of this process. Thus, Kolshansky believes that “any interpretation of individual cognitive acts expressed in certain linguistic structures can be adequate only if the entire chain of corresponding cognitive acts is taken into account,” that is, “knowledge about actual situations acquired by a person as a basis of their individual experience and social experience, fixed and transmitted in linguistic forms (texts)” (Kolshansky, 2006).

Thus, we could argue that interpretation is a tool through which our subjective ideas about a multivariate and multi-causal world are transmitted. It follows from this that the interpretative process is structured within three paths of action: receiving, processing and communicating information. As mentioned earlier, interpretation is the delivery of information to recipients within and outside the linguistic environment. However, there must be a path along which any statement will follow in order to be conveyed to the necessary subject. In inter-lingual communication, these functions are performed by translation, which is in some way an interpretative process, or recoding from one language to another. Our task within the framework of this article is to consider the interpretative aspects relating to the literary text, namely, the features of its translation (Sarsenbaeva 2022; Sarsenbaeva 2023; Sarsenbaeva 2024).

Discussion. David Mitchell's fiction works present unique challenges for translators due to their intricate narratives, intertextual elements, and linguistic complexity. A comparative analysis of translations of Mitchell's novels reveals recurring translation problems and the strategies employed by translators to address them.

1. David Mitchell's novels, like "Cloud Atlas" (2004) and "The Bone Clocks" (2014), are known for their intricate narratives, non-linear storytelling, and multiple interwoven plotlines. Translators must work hard to keep the narrative clear and smooth in other languages while staying true to the original complexity and depth of the text.

2. Mitchell's writing is filled with cultural references, clever wordplay, and intricate language details, making it challenging for translators to capture the same subtleties and cultural nuances for readers in a different language. Translators need to carefully bridge cultural and language gaps to faithfully convey the original meaning and cultural context in their translations.

3. Interdisciplinary Themes: Mitchell's novels frequently weave together different genres like science fiction, historical fiction, and fantasy. Translators must tackle the difficult task of accurately conveying technical terms, historical details, and fantastical elements while ensuring the translation stays coherent and readable in the target language.

4. Intertextual Elements: Mitchell's writings often include references to other books, historical events, and cultural moments. Translators need to have a thorough grasp of both literary and cultural backgrounds to accurately translate these

references, allowing readers in the target language to fully appreciate the text's richness and depth.

5. Translation Strategies: Translators might employ various strategies to address the translation problems posed by Mitchell's fiction works, including adaptation, creative trans-creation, and cultural localization (Venuti, 2008). By drawing on their linguistic expertise, cultural knowledge, and creativity, translators strive to produce translations that capture the essence and artistic integrity of the original text while resonating with readers in the target language (Smith, 2016).

The analysis of translation problems in the works of D. Mitchell's fiction highlights the complexity and challenges inherent in translating his intricate narratives and intertextual elements.

Conclusion. In summary, the comparative analysis of the translation issues in D. Mitchell's fiction highlights the complex challenges translators face when adapting his intricate narratives into different languages. This study shows that Mitchell's novels, known for their elaborate narrative structures, cultural references, and linguistic subtleties, create significant hurdles for translators who strive to stay true to the original text while ensuring it is readable and culturally relevant in the target language. Translators must handle the intertextual elements, stylistic traits, and thematic complexities of Mitchell's works, requiring a blend of creativity, linguistic skill, and cultural understanding to effectively convey the richness of his storytelling.

Thus, the analysis has emphasized that translation is a dynamic art form, showcasing the various approaches and strategies translators use to address the unique challenges of Mitchell's fiction. By examining these translation complexities, this study enhances our understanding of the intersection of language, culture, and literature, and underscores the importance of skilled and sensitive translation in promoting cross-cultural literary exchange and appreciation. Additionally, collaborative translation efforts can help ensure linguistic precision and cultural relevance, offering a more thorough understanding of the original text.

REFERENCES:

1. Bassnett, S. and Lefevere, A. (1990). *Translation, History, and Culture*. Routledge.
2. Barkhudarov, L.S. *Language and translation (Issues of general and particular theory of translation)*. M.: International. relations, 1975. 240 p.
https://kpfu.ru/staff_files/F774356854/perevod_v_menyajuschemsya_mire.pdf
3. Karasik V.I. *Language keys*. M.: Gnosis, 2009. 405 p.
<https://interscience.uz/index.php/home/article/download/2353/1769/6215>
4. Kolshansky G.V. *An objective picture of the world in cognition and language*. M.: KomKniga, 2006. 128 p.

5. Larssonneur, C. B., (2018) “Oblique Translations in David Mitchell’s Works”, C21 Literature: Journal of 21st-Century Writings 6(3), 1-16. doi: <https://doi.org/10.16995/c21.53>
6. Mitchell, D. (2004). Cloud Atlas. Random House.
7. Mitchell, D. (2014). The Bone Clocks. Random House.
8. Smith, J. (2016). Lost in Translation: Challenges of Translating D. Mitchell’s Novels into French. Journal of Translation Studies, 10(2), 123-140.
9. Venuti, L. (2008). The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation. Routledge.
10. https://elar.urfu.ru/bitstream/10995/78095/1/978-5-7996-2755-3_010.pdf
11. Sarsenbaeva Z., Uteshova Z. Principles of Teaching Karakalpak Students English Speech Etiquette //Humanising Language Teaching. – 2022. – Т. 24. – №. 4.
12. Сарсенбаева З. Modernism in Uzbek literature and interpretation of images //Зарубежная лингвистика и лингводидактика. – 2024. – Т. 2. – №. 1. – С. 193-199.
13. Sarsenbaeva Z. Comparing linguistic devices in English and Uzbek non-realistic works //Молодые ученые. – 2023. – Т. 1. – №. 15. – С. 32-34.
14. Sarsenbaeva Z. A systematic comparison of selected texts by d. Mitchell //Interpretation and researches. – 2024.
15. Sarsenbaeva Z. Descriptions of imagery, symbolism, and non-realistic elements //Conference Proceedings: Fostering Your Research Spirit. – 2024. – С. 409-414.