TRANSLATION OF FAIRY TALES: LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL CHALLENGES

Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages

Theory and Practice of Translation 2st-Year Student

Group 201 **Marifova Muslima**

Scientific Supervisor: **Abduraxmanov To'raxon**

Lecturer at the Department of Guiding Intercultural

Communication, and Translation Studies

Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages

ANNOTATION

This article examines the linguistic and cultural challenges involved in the translation of fairy tales from one language into another. Fairy tales represent an important part of literary heritage, reflecting the traditions, beliefs, customs, values, and cultural identity of different societies. Their translation requires not only a strong understanding of linguistic structures but also the ability to preserve cultural meanings, literary expressions, and artistic elements. The article focuses on the main difficulties translators encounter when translating idiomatic expressions, cultural references, traditional characters, symbols, humour, and folklore-specific vocabulary. Particular attention is given to the importance of maintaining the original meaning, narrative style, emotional effect, and cultural atmosphere of fairy tales. Furthermore, the study explores different translation strategies that can help overcome linguistic and cultural barriers while making translated texts understandable and meaningful for foreign readers. The article aims to highlight the importance of cultural awareness, linguistic competence, and creativity in producing effective and culturally appropriate translations of fairy tales.

Keywords: Fairy Tales, Literary Translation, Linguistic Challenges, Cultural Differences, Translation Strategies, Cultural Heritage, Folklore, Equivalence, Translation Techniques.

INTRODUCTION

Fairy tales occupy an important place in the literary and cultural heritage of different nations. They reflect the traditions, beliefs, values, customs, and imagination of societies and are often used to transmit moral lessons and cultural knowledge from one generation to another. Through their interesting characters, symbolic events, and imaginative narratives, fairy tales contribute to children's intellectual, emotional, and cultural development. They also provide valuable material for studying the linguistic and cultural characteristics of different languages.

The translation of fairy tales is a complex process that requires more than simply replacing words and expressions from one language with their equivalents in another. Translators must consider linguistic differences, cultural references, traditional expressions, idioms, symbols, and the specific characteristics of the original text. Certain words, phrases, and cultural elements may not have direct equivalents in the target language, which makes it difficult to preserve their original meaning and emotional impact. Therefore, translators need to select appropriate methods to maintain both the content and artistic value of the source text.

Another important aspect of fairy tale translation is the preservation of cultural identity. Names of characters, traditional objects, historical references, and national customs often carry meanings that are closely connected with the culture in which the story originated. If these elements are translated without considering their cultural significance, important aspects of the original narrative may be lost or misunderstood by foreign readers.

This article aims to examine the main linguistic and cultural challenges in fairy tale translation, analyse the difficulties associated with transferring cultural meanings between languages, and explore effective translation strategies. It also highlights the importance of

linguistic knowledge, cultural awareness, and creativity in producing accurate, natural, and meaningful literary translations.

MAIN BODY

Fairy tale translation is a significant branch of literary translation that requires a combination of linguistic knowledge, cultural awareness, and creative ability. Unlike ordinary informative texts, fairy tales contain imaginative descriptions, symbolic expressions, traditional elements, and culturally specific meanings. Their main purpose is not only to entertain readers but also to communicate moral values, cultural traditions, and important lessons about human behaviour. Therefore, translating fairy tales requires careful attention to both linguistic accuracy and literary quality.

One of the main linguistic challenges in fairy tale translation is the differences between grammatical and lexical systems of languages. Every language has its own vocabulary, sentence structures, idiomatic expressions, and stylistic features. A word or expression in the source language may not have an exact equivalent in the target language. As a result, translators must find appropriate expressions that communicate the original meaning naturally. For example, traditional openings such as "Once upon a time" are widely recognised in English fairy tales. When translated into Uzbek, the expression "Bor ekan, yo'q ekan" provides a culturally familiar and stylistically appropriate equivalent. This example demonstrates that successful translation sometimes requires replacing literal meanings with established expressions in the target culture.

Another important linguistic difficulty involves idioms, metaphors, and figurative language. Fairy tales frequently contain expressions that cannot be translated word for word without losing their original meaning. Metaphors are often used to describe characters, emotions, natural events, and imaginary situations. Translators must understand the intended meaning of these expressions and select suitable alternatives in the target language. In this process, preserving the artistic effect and emotional atmosphere of the original text is just as important as maintaining its basic meaning.

Cultural differences represent another major challenge in translating fairy tales. Every nation has its own traditions, customs, beliefs, historical experiences, and social values. These cultural elements are often reflected in fairy tale characters, settings, objects, and events. For instance, traditional clothing, national food, family relationships, and wedding customs may be familiar to readers of the source culture but unfamiliar to foreign audiences. Translators must decide whether to preserve these elements in their original form, explain them through the context, or use culturally understandable equivalents. Such decisions require a deep understanding of both cultures.

Names of characters and culturally significant objects also create difficulties during translation. In many fairy tales, names are not chosen randomly; they may describe a character's appearance, personality, behaviour, or special abilities. Translating these names requires consideration of their symbolic and descriptive functions. If a character's name has a particular meaning in the original language, a literal translation or an appropriate adaptation may help preserve its significance. However, changing names unnecessarily can weaken the connection between the translated version and the original cultural environment.

Furthermore, fairy tales often include symbols and traditional images that have different meanings across cultures. Animals, colours, numbers, and natural elements may represent particular qualities or ideas. For example, a fox is frequently associated with cleverness and cunning, while a lion may symbolise strength and courage. However, symbolic associations are not always identical in every cultural tradition. Therefore, translators should consider the cultural context before selecting equivalent expressions. Preserving symbolic meaning helps maintain the deeper message of the original story.

One of the most important aspects of fairy tale translation is maintaining the original literary style. Fairy tales generally use simple, expressive, and imaginative language that makes them attractive to readers, especially children. Repetition, dialogue, descriptive expressions, and rhythmic patterns are common stylistic features. These elements create a special atmosphere and make stories easier to remember. If a translator uses excessively

complicated vocabulary or changes the narrative structure, the translated version may lose its original charm. Consequently, translators should maintain an appropriate balance between linguistic accuracy and readability.

Several translation strategies can be applied to overcome these difficulties. One of the most common methods is literal translation, which involves transferring the original meaning while maintaining a similar grammatical structure whenever possible. This method is useful when the source expression has a clear equivalent in the target language. However, it may not be effective when translating idioms, metaphors, or culturally specific expressions.

Another strategy is adaptation, which involves adjusting certain cultural or linguistic elements to make the translated text more understandable for the target audience. Adaptation is particularly useful when the original text contains unfamiliar cultural references. Nevertheless, translators should avoid excessive changes that may distort the author's original intention or remove important cultural characteristics.

Equivalence is also an important translation technique. It focuses on expressing the same meaning or communicative effect through different linguistic structures. For example, traditional greetings, proverbs, and fixed expressions may require completely different wording in the target language. The main objective is to ensure that readers of the translated version experience a similar meaning and emotional effect to those reading the original text.

In addition, transliteration and transcription are frequently used when translating proper names, geographical names, and culturally significant terms. These methods help preserve the original form of certain words while making them accessible to readers of another language. In some cases, a short explanation may be necessary to clarify the cultural meaning of an unfamiliar term.

Another significant challenge is preserving the moral and educational messages of fairy tales. Many traditional stories communicate lessons about honesty, kindness, courage,

friendship, responsibility, and justice. These messages are often expressed indirectly through the actions and experiences of characters. Translators must ensure that the moral meaning remains clear without introducing unnecessary explanations or changing the original message. This is especially important in children's literature because fairy tales often contribute to the formation of moral values and social understanding.

The translation of humour and emotional expressions also requires particular attention. Some fairy tales contain humorous situations, wordplay, exaggeration, and expressions that depend on the specific characteristics of the source language. Such elements may lose their effect when translated directly. In these situations, translators need to identify the communicative purpose of the original expression and find an alternative that produces a similar reaction in the target audience.

Moreover, the age and cultural background of the intended readers should be considered during the translation process. Children's literature requires clear, understandable, and engaging language. At the same time, translators should not oversimplify the text to the extent that its literary and cultural richness disappears. A successful translation should maintain the balance between accessibility, artistic expression, and cultural authenticity.

Modern translation studies also emphasise the importance of the translator's cultural competence. A translator should be familiar with the historical background, folklore, social traditions, and literary conventions of both the source and target cultures. Reading original fairy tales, studying cultural references, consulting reliable dictionaries, and comparing different translations can help translators make more accurate decisions. These practices contribute to producing translations that are linguistically natural and culturally meaningful.

Overall, the translation of fairy tales is a creative and intellectually demanding process. It requires translators to consider vocabulary, grammar, stylistic features, cultural references, symbolic meanings, and the expectations of the target audience. By applying

appropriate translation strategies and maintaining a balance between the original text and the target language, translators can preserve the literary beauty and cultural significance of fairy tales while making them accessible to readers from different linguistic backgrounds.

Conclusion

In conclusion, translating fairy tales is a complex process that requires more than a simple transfer of words from one language into another. It involves preserving the original meaning, literary style, cultural elements, and emotional impact of the story. Linguistic differences, idiomatic expressions, cultural references, symbolism, and traditional beliefs may create difficulties for translators. Therefore, translators must carefully select appropriate strategies to make fairy tales understandable and meaningful to readers from different cultural backgrounds.

The study demonstrates that successful fairy tale translation depends on a balance between faithfulness to the original text and adaptation to the target language and culture. Translators should preserve the main ideas and moral lessons while adjusting certain expressions and cultural references when necessary. Their knowledge of both languages, cultures, and literary traditions plays an essential role in achieving this balance.

Ultimately, the translation of fairy tales contributes to cultural exchange and helps preserve literary heritage across generations. By overcoming linguistic and cultural challenges, translators make traditional stories accessible to international audiences and allow readers to discover the values, traditions, and imagination of different societies.

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