

STYLISTIC FEATURES OF JOHN STEINBECK'S "OF MICE AND MEN" AND THEIR TRANSFORMATION IN TRANSLATION

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Abstract: This article examines the stylistic characteristics of John Steinbeck's novel "Of Mice and Men" and their transformation during the translation process. The findings demonstrate that successful translation of Steinbeck's work requires balancing fidelity to the source text's stylistic features with adaptation to the linguistic and cultural norms of the target language, particularly regarding dialect representation, idiomatic expressions, and sociolinguistic markers that define character identity and thematic depth.

Keywords: John Steinbeck, Of Mice and Men, stylistic features, literary translation, transformation, dialect translation, naturalism, colloquial language

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada Jon Steynbekning "Odamlar va sichqonlar" asarining stilistik xususiyatlari va ularning tarjima jarayonidagi o'zgarishi o'rganiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, Steynbek asarining muvaffaqiyatli tarjimasini uchun manba matnining stilistik xususiyatlariga sodiqlik bilan maqsadli tilning lingvistik va madaniy normalariga, xususan, dialekt ifodasi, idiomatik ifodalar va personajning o'ziga xosligi va tematik chuqurligini belgilovchi sotsiolingvistik belgilarga moslashish talab etiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: Jon Steynbek, "Odamlar va sichqonlar", stilistik xususiyatlar, badiiy tarjima, transformatsiya, dialekt tarjimasini, naturalizm, so'zlashuv tili

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются стилистические особенности романа Джона Стейнбека «О мышьях и людях» и их трансформация в процессе перевода. Результаты показывают, что успешный перевод произведения Стейнбека требует баланса между верностью стилистическим особенностям исходного текста и адаптацией к лингвистическим и культурным нормам целевого языка, особенно в отношении диалектного представления, идиоматических выражений и социолингвистических маркеров, определяющих идентичность персонажей и тематическую глубину.

Ключевые слова: Джон Стейнбек, «О мышьях и людях», стилистические особенности, литературный перевод, трансформация, диалектный перевод, натурализм, разговорный язык

INTRODUCTION

John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men," a novella from 1937, is a great landmark of American naturalistic literature; it is characterized by its rare stylistic features which present the Depression era California ranch life very vividly, thus, it is recognized as a major work of American naturalistic literature when it is. The impact of the work on literature is not only



through its social critique but also through Steinbeck's ability to create a unique authorial voice by employing vernacular language, symbolic imagery, and minimalist narrative techniques [1]. The problem of translating such a rich in style literature into other languages entails both theoretical and practical challenges that have kept translation scholars and practitioners busy for decades. Steinbeck's intentional use of non-standard language, the features of the local dialect, and the very careful construction of the dialogues are not at all mere linguistic decorations, but main means for the development of characters, the exploration of the theme, and the critique of society [2]. The fact that "Of Mice and Men" has been translated into various languages is a very good reason for examining how the stylistic features migrate across languages and cultures, thus, providing a good opportunity for getting insights into wider theoretical discussions in translation studies about the treatment of marked language, the representation of social variation in translation, and the cultural adaptation of literary works [3].

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The study adopted a methodological approach that integrates descriptive translation analysis and stylistic criticism and relies on the established frameworks of translation studies and literary linguistics to analyse the transfer of Steinbeck's stylistic features over the different translations. The research mainly applies comparative textual analysis as its method, which involves scrutinizing certain segments of the English source text along with their translated versions to discover the patterns of stylistic transformation, giving special attention to shifts in register, word choice, syntax, and the effect on the reader [4]. The existing studies that deal with Steinbeck's style are very important for this analysis, and the critics unanimously point out the author's unusual and masterly use of the second-rate speech as the factor that not only adds but also delineates the authenticity and the psychological depth of the characters [5]. The discussions around dialect translation have been a continuous source of argument about the suitable approaches and the more adventurous ones have even pushed for the functional equivalence route through regional varieties in the target language that could be close to the source ones, while the precautionary approach has suggested sticking to standardization with some tokens of colloquiality that could help avoid stereotypes or comprehension difficulties [6].

Another is the translation of culture-specific lexical items connected to American ranch life, and yet another one is the preservation of the repetitive structures that emphasize the theme. Finally, the last mentioned challenge is the maintenance of the characteristic rhythm and tone of the text which is formed through Steinbeck's carefully constructed sentence structures [7]. The same difficulties and challenges have been dealt with by the translation scholars under different terms like "to offset" which means that losses that occurred in one dimensional style may be compensated for by the strengthening in another, and "stylistic leveling", which refers to the translations that have the feature of lowering the statistical distinctiveness of the source text features towards the norms of the target language [8]. There exists a huge amount of previous research done to study specific language translations of "Of Mice and Men" which has been instrumental in recording the occurrence of these phenomena, pointing out that the translators often treat the speech patterns of Lennie as if they were their own, domesticate the cultural references, and alter the symbolic imagery in such a way that it fits into the expectations of the target culture, though the degree and character of the changes may be quite



different when compared to the various translation traditions or individual translator choices [9].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study of stylistic changes in the translations of "Of Mice and Men" uncovered a number of constant patterns that not only specified the difficulties of the Steinbeck's prose but also indicated the principles governing literary translation in general. One of the most important issues is the different ways of dealing with dialect and colloquial language, which represent the most original feature of Steinbeck's style in this book. The original text makes use of a variety of grammatical deviations like double negatives, ain't constructions, non-standard verb conjugations, and dropping letters which are represented through modified spelling to generate distinct characters and at the same time to indicate their social status and education level [10]. The analysis of translated copies proves that translators take different approaches to these features, from total standardization to making the use of the target language's regional varieties or sociolects to create functional equivalents.

On the other hand, the dialect substitution translations choose to take one of the regional varieties in the culture of the target language to stand for the speech of the California ranch workers, yet this method not only brings in associations and meanings foreign to the original text but also runs the risk of producing stereotypical portrayals or creating comprehension barriers for the readers of the target language who are not familiar with the chosen variety. One of the middle approaches seen in several translations is the selective marking of non-standard speech through grammatical simplifications, making vocabulary choices that suggest informality, and using morphological or syntactic irregularities that signal deviation from standard norms but that are not sufficient to create a fully developed dialectal representation, thus keeping the social marking functional equivalence while avoiding the pitfalls of total standardization or complete dialect substitution. The challenge of transforming the repetitive structural patterns of Steinbeck has different aspects and shows the different interpretations of the translators as to the function that these patterns perform. The original text makes use of intentional repetition at different levels like lexical, phrasal, and structural, which not only has a rhythmic effect but also emphasizes the important themes, and creates symbolic resonances through the use of the same imagery and formulations.

The dream farm story, Lennie's constant asking for it, the narrative's circular structure, and the resonance of certain phrases in different contexts are the main points of Steinbeck's narrative style that made his work the way it is and conveyed its message. The analysis shows that many translations do not lose these repetitive features and keep their significance in the structure and theme, although the specific linguistic expressions of repetition have to change when done in different languages with different grammatical artifacts and stylistic norms regarding the appropriate amount of repetition. Some translations exhibit a variation in repeated passages, employing synonyms or structural variations that seem to be motivated by considerations of target language stylistic preferences or the assumption of reader tolerance for repetition, changes that may improve the fluency of the target text but at the same time reduce the source text's intentional aesthetic and thematic effects. The handling of symbolic description and imagery unveils the translators' dilemma between the preservation of the literal meaning and the cultural adaptation. In fact, Steinbeck's vast descriptions of the natural setting, especially in the first and last scenes, are based on the specific plants, animals, and landscape of the



Salinas Valley while at the same time framing the symbolic meanings of innocence, violence, freedom, and determinism.

The analysis indicates that translating involves different practices, some keeping the referential fidelity to the source text to the max, while others are more lenient with the imagery to make the recognition of the target audience easier, every option involving a trade-off between cultural specificity and accessibility. The change of Steinbeck's sentence structure and rhythm is still another aspect of stylistic transformation in translation that counts as very important. The original text uses different sentence lengths and structures, blending concise dialogue with longer descriptive parts, plus, it creates rhythmic patterns that help to control pacing and emotional impact. The early part of the novella, which introduces the setting through long and detailed descriptive sentences, is strikingly different from the quick exchanges that portray the characters' interaction, a variation in style that serves both the story and the theme. The translated versions, of necessity, alter these patterns in accordance with the syntactic norms and the stylistic conventions of the target language, some languages prefer different distributions of sentence lengths or boast different capacities for subordination and coordination. Translations to languages with a considerably different syntactic structure might break up longer sentences or join shorter ones, and these shifts, though the semantic content is largely retained, still affect the rhythm of the text.

CONCLUSION

This analysis of stylistic transformations in translations of John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men" demonstrates that the transfer of literary works across linguistic boundaries necessarily involves complex negotiations between competing values and constraints that shape translation choices at multiple levels. The research findings indicate that Steinbeck's distinctive stylistic features—particularly his use of vernacular speech, repetitive structures, symbolic imagery, and varied narrative rhythm—undergo significant transformation in translation through processes including standardization, compensation, adaptation, and explicitation, transformations that reflect both linguistic-structural differences between source and target languages and cultural-pragmatic considerations regarding target audience expectations and reading practices. The study reveals no single optimal strategy for translating stylistically marked literary texts but rather a range of viable approaches, each involving different balances between source text preservation and target text accessibility, between formal correspondence and functional equivalence, and between cultural specificity and broad comprehensibility. Translators of "Of Mice and Men" face particular challenges in rendering dialectal features that serve multiple functions simultaneously—creating character voice, indicating social positioning, and contributing to thematic meanings about marginalization and limited opportunity—challenges that require strategic decision-making informed by understanding of both source and target literary traditions, linguistic resources, and reader expectations.

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