

Folklore Motives in “Kutadgu Bilig” and Problems of their Translation

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Abstract: *The article provides a scientific analysis of folklore motives of proverbs in "Kutadgu bilig". At the same time, the problems of translating articles into foreign languages were discussed. Recommendations for future translations are given.*

Keywords: folklore, ancient turkic literature, proverbs, motives, translation, adequate translation

Introduction

Folklore is oral verbal and musical folk art. In a broader sense, in addition to verbal genres, this includes all folk art, manifestations of the spiritual (and sometimes material) culture of the people - language, beliefs, rituals, crafts [7].

Folklore is the subject of study of folkloristic and ethnology. Small folklore genres include works that are small in volume: proverbs, sayings, signs, riddles, jokes, proverbs, tongue twisters, puns. These genres in scientific literature are called paremia (from the Greek “paroimia” - parable).

Proverbs and sayings, as works of folk art, are close to each other in their artistic characteristics.

Russian folklorists tried to determine what proverbs and sayings are back in the 19th century. F.I Buslaev considered proverbs and sayings as artistic works of the native word, expressing the life of the people, their common sense and moral interests [5].

If folkloristics set the general direction for the study of folklore genres, then a further deeper study of proverbs took on a linguistic bias and took place at the intersection of folkloristics and philology [6].

Events occurring in public life are reflected in people's memory. A proverb is a literary type of expression of folklore attitude towards a particular event created by people. Usually proverbs are created according to the opinions of wise people in society.

Proverbs and sayings have been living in the speech of the people for many centuries. They were born in ancient times and reflect all aspects of people's lives. Collecting and recording proverbs and sayings began a very long time ago. [5].

There is a language, there are proverbs. As the Uzbeks say, “A proverb is the beauty of speech.”

National proverbs are passed down from generation to generation. It is worth noting that each proverb

has its own characteristics in form, style, and meaning. Despite this, they all also bear the character of the ideology of humanity, kindness and justice.

Popular proverbs reflect various aspects of human life: mythological ideas (“a prophetic dream will not deceive”); features of serf life (“here’s Yuryev’s day for you, grandma”); events of enemy invasions and wars (“empty, as if Mamai had passed”); courage, courage and heroism of the people (“the city takes courage”, “to be afraid of wolves, don’t go into the forest”). They capture all aspects of the people’s labor activity, love for the homeland, glorify labor (“Idleness only smokes the sky,” “labor feeds, but laziness spoils”), expresses a sense of deep human dignity (“a goal, but not a thief,” “money not a penny, but fame is good”, "poor, but honest") [8].

The evolutionary development of world literature shows that proverbs play a large and important role in literature. We can also note the works of M.Kashgari, Yusuf Khas Hajib, A.Navai, Babur and many others in Uzbek classical literature, as well as W.Shakespeare, J.Chaucer and Byron in world literature. They skillfully used proverbs in their works, which are considered masterpieces. As academician B. Nazarov noted, in the history of mankind, almost without exception, every state, every empire, every formation of society is reflected not only in its historical works and scientific works, but also in major works of art of an oral and written nature, which gives the future generation bright and clear ideas about the life of society, even in small details, and about the people of the previous era.

One of these masterpieces is “Kutadgu bilig” by Yusuf Khas Khajib, which is the first major written monument of Turkic-language literature of the XI century. The work very often uses folklore proverbs and aphorisms. The influence of folklore in the poetry of “Kutadgu bilig” is great and this can be seen in the structure, genre, rhythm, composition, language and style of the poem.

“Kutadgu bilig” is a work of art with global significance, which has been translated into many languages of the world.

Robert Denkoff, a professor at the University of Chicago, was the first to translate "Kutadgu bilig" into English and published a book called "Wisdom of Royal Glory" in 1993 [2].

Thanks to the efforts of Professor B. Tukhliev, the author of this article and A. Khabibullaev, the second translation of “Kutadgu bilig” made by Walter May was delivered to Uzbekistan from the US library in 2007. This translation was published under the title “Yusuf Balasaguni. Beneficent knowledge” in 1998 in Moscow [4].

The concept of wisdom and virtue are the leading ideas of “Kutadgu bilig”. The author wanted people to continuously gain knowledge throughout their lives. The following quatrain is about the same ideas and it also includes folk proverbs.

Toğa bilge toğmaz kişi öğrenür,
Toğa sözlemez til turu sözlenür.

Kişi öğrenip ötrü bilge bolur,
Bilig bilse ötrü qamuğ iş önür.

Содержание:

“No one is born smart and learns about everything later, a person learns to speak a language when he grows up, a person learns and then becomes wise, all his affairs flourish when he receives knowledge.”

Translation by Robert Dankoff:

Though man is born dumb.

He learns to speak as he grows to size.

Though man is born ignorant.

He can also learn to be wise

When translating the quatrain, the translator tried to put emphasis on the first line “Toğa bilge toğmaz kişi öğrenür – no one is born smart, and learns about everything later” in the general content of the quatrain. But he lost the real content. And also the content of the proverb “Bilig bilse ötrü qamuğ iş önür – a person learns and then becomes wise, all his affairs flourish when he receives knowledge” is not given in the translation. As a result, the content of the quatrain lost its poetic sound for the reader. Of course, we cannot force the translator to translate proverbs as such, with an exact equivalent, sometimes this is impossible. For, as Professor G. Salyamov aptly noted: “There are phraseological units, expressions and proverbs that cannot be translated into foreign languages with equivalents.” [2.163]. But this does not mean that the translator should skip proverbs in the translation. At the very least, it should give the basic content of the proverbs in context.

V. May translated this very quatrain as follows:

No man was born wise, but became so in turn,

And all sense and reason appear when you learn.

You learn about things, thus an expert become,

And once you've the know-how, all things can be done!

Different translations have different styles. It is as if the English reader understood the content of the quatrain. But how? Translator V. Mei missed the full line «Toğa sözlemiz til turu sözlenür- язык человека учится говорить, когда он взрослеет» в переводе. In other lines of V. Mey's translations we can see the introduction and modernization of the “Kutadgu bilig” language. The words “expert” and “now how” are mainly used in specific professions in modern English [1.648]. We think that the use of such words in translations of an ancient Turkic work such as “Kutadgu bilig” is not very appropriate. The translator could have used more suitable words and given the inner poetic spirit of “Kutadgu bilig”. We prefer to use “wise” instead of “expert” and “knowledge” instead of “know how”.

In conclusion, we can say that the translation of phraseological units, expressions and proverbs from different language families is not very easy to carry out. A translator is not always able to translate proverbs with equivalents, since the vocabulary of one language does not allow this. As we analyzed above, the proverbs used in “Kutadgu bilig” have their own special poetic functions in the poetics of the work. And further study of these features of the poem remains important and relevant in further works of Turkologists.

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