

Classification of Translation Transformations and Their Practical Application in “To Have and Have Not”

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Abstract: *This article explores J. C. Catford’s theory of translation transformations and its practical application. Ernest Hemingway’s To Have and Have Not and its Uzbek translation have been chosen as the object of study. A comparative analysis of the source text and the target text is carried out to identify the lexical and grammatical transformations employed, which are examined in the light of J. C. Catford’s classification of translation shifts. Furthermore, the article discusses issues of preserving the author’s style, the degree of semantic equivalence, and the reconstruction of linguistic features in the process of translation. The findings highlight the significance of transformation theory in translation studies and demonstrate effective ways of applying transformations in the translation of literary works.*

Key words: *Shift, level shift, category shift, unit, structure, class and intra-linguistic shift. J. C. Catford, translation theory, translation transformations, lexical transformation, grammatical transformation, literary translation, equivalence, linguistic features, Ernest Hemingway, To Have and Have Not.*

(Introduction). In today’s era of globalization, translation has entered almost every person’s daily life. The twentieth century and the first quarter of the twenty-first century have been the period in human history when the largest number of translations were carried out. During this time, translators rendered scientific, literary works, manuals, technical instructions, and many other types of texts into different languages. Alongside this, linguists also conducted a number of studies on how to ensure accurate translation. Among them, the introduction of J. C. Catford’s theory of “Translation Shift” into the field of translation studies made a significant contribution to the development of practical translation. Later, these studies were continued by a number of scholars and also laid the foundation for the emergence of modern technology-based translation, namely computer translation.

Literature review. As we mentioned above, the concept of translation transformation was first introduced into the field of translation studies by J. C. Catford in 1965 in his work *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* under the term “translation shift.” His definition of transformation is based on two notions: textual equivalence and formal correspondence. According to him, formal correspondence is manifested when elements of sentences in two languages appear in the same position, while textual equivalence refers to texts in two languages that are equal in meaning.

Considering that translation transformations were studied to achieve accurate translation, it is of great importance for us to be aware of J. C. Catford’s views on translation, as well as those of his contemporaries. J. C. Catford defines translation as follows: “Translation is the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language” [1; pp. 73–83]. Nida and Taber, on the other hand, expressed the view that “Translation consists of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style” [2; pp. 2–12].

According to Larison, a translator always strives to recreate the source-language text in the target language. In doing so, the translator not only reads the source text but also analyzes it, because in order to produce a good translation, the meaning of the source text must be re-expressed through the available means of expression in the target language [3; pp. 3–16]. This task is not an easy one, since every language has its own rules that cannot always be mirrored in another language. Taking these facts into account, it becomes clear that finding exact equivalents of the source text and reproducing its forms of expression in the target language often poses significant difficulties for the translator. It is precisely in such situations that the importance of translation transformation in achieving high-quality translation becomes evident.

Research Methodology. In the course of the research, transformational analysis and comparative analysis methods were applied. The transformational analysis method, which is widely used in translation studies, is aimed at identifying and analyzing the linguistic changes (transformations) that occur when comparing the source text with its translation. Based on this method, lexical, grammatical, and stylistic changes in translation are systematically classified and scientifically explained. The main task of transformational analysis is to show which linguistic means the translator used and what changes were introduced when transferring the meaning of the source text into another language. This method serves to reveal the internal mechanisms of the translation process.

The comparative analysis method, also known as the comparative method, is one of the most commonly used approaches in translation studies. It is based on directly comparing the source text with the translated text. The main purpose of this method is to identify similarities and differences between the two texts and to explain the essence of the means employed in translation. In comparative analysis, lexical, grammatical, stylistic, and semantic units in the source text are compared with their corresponding units in the translated text. This process allows a scientific explanation of what changes occurred during the translation, and to what extent the meaning was preserved or altered [5, p. 278].

Analysis and results. In the process of translation, the translator must determine whether meaning or form should be given greater priority in order to preserve the original sense. Accordingly, the translator conveys the content of the text in a natural or communicative manner. According to J. C. Catford, transformation arises in the course of producing natural translation and translation equivalents, and it is always reflected in the grammar, structure, groups, and systems of the text.

J. C. Catford conditionally divides translation transformations into two major groups: **level shifts** and **category shifts**. By level shift, Catford refers to cases where a unit operating at one linguistic level in the source language is rendered at a different level in the target language. In other words, a level shift occurs when the linguistic level used to express a certain meaning in the source language (for instance, morphology or grammar) is transferred to another level (lexis or phrases) in the target language. For example, a grammatical form in the source language, such as a verb tense, may be translated as a single word or a phrase in the target language.

To illustrate level shift, Catford refers to the Russian and English aspectual distinctions that express continuous, iterative, and completed actions: *pisal* and *napisal*. In Russian, the imperfective and perfective aspects (*pisal* and *napisal*) are distinguished, whereas in English this distinction is expressed through the simple and continuous forms (*wrote* and *was writing*). From this example, we can see that the Russian word *pisal* can be translated as either *was writing* or *wrote* in English. However, the Russian *napisal* cannot be rendered by *was writing*.

“What was Beltov doing during these ten years? Everything, or almost everything. What did he do? Nothing, or almost nothing.”

In this example, the imperfective *delal* is contrasted with the perfective *sdelal*. As shown in the table above, *delal* can be translated as *did* or *was doing*. However, translating the sentence as “*What was he doing?*” would sound awkward in English. Since the question implies what he managed to accomplish, it would be more appropriate to use the verb *achieve*, which expresses the meaning of completion in English:

“What did Beltov do during these ten years? Everything, or almost everything. What did he achieve? Nothing, or almost nothing?”

According to J. C. Catford’s theory, a **level shift** occurs when a grammatical element in the source language (e.g., tense or aspect) is rendered in the target language by lexical means (such as adverbs, phrases, or explanatory expressions). This is necessary to compensate for the differences between linguistic levels (grammar ↔ lexis) in the source and target languages.

In Hemingway’s simple and minimalist style, sentences are often expressed in the **past simple** and **past continuous** tenses. Since Uzbek does not have aspectual distinctions, these are adapted to the inflectional grammar of Uzbek through the use of adverbs of time. This phenomenon illustrates Catford’s notion of level shift.

For example, in *To Have and Have Not*, sentences from the opening chapter clearly demonstrate this mechanism. The examples are taken from the shooting scene and the subsequent dialogues, since they require dynamic grammar.

In the first example, we can observe how grammatical sequencing expressed through the past simple in English is transferred into lexical intensification in Uzbek.

English (SL):

“The first thing a pane of glass went and the bullet smashed into the row of bottles on the showcase wall to the right. I heard the gun going and, bop, bop, bop, there were bottles smashing all along the wall.” [3; p. 8]

Uzbek (TL):

“Яна бири эса унг томондаги витринада турган бир қатор шишаларни чил-чил қилди. Милтиқнинг пад-пад овози қулогимни тешиб юборардай бўлар, шишалар эса бутун деворга сочилиб, нарча-нарча бўлиб, ерга тушарди.” [4; p. 9]

In the English text, the **past simple tense** (*went, smashed*) grammatically conveys a sequence of sudden actions, which creates the dynamic pace of Hemingway’s action scene. Here, grammar itself reflects the swiftness of events.

In Uzbek, aspect is not grammaticalized, and therefore through a **level shift** grammatical sequencing is rendered as **lexical intensification** and **onomatopoeic expressions** (“*пад-пад овози қулогимни тешиб юборардай... сочилиб, нарча-нарча*”). This example demonstrates how level shift transfers grammatical sequencing into lexical description, thereby enhancing the emotional effect of the shooting scene, although the original brevity is slightly expanded. For instance, the English sentence uses 18 words, while the Uzbek translation uses 25 words.

The application of this transformational shift preserves equivalence: the reader still perceives the rapidity of the action, but the text is at the same time adapted to the descriptive nature of the Uzbek language. This type of shift corresponds to Catford’s definition of “**grammar-to-lexis transfer**”, since the grammatical tense in English is rendered by lexical devices in Uzbek.

Category Transformations

The scholar (Catford) divides this type of transformation into four subgroups: **unit, structure, class, and intra-system transformations**.

1. Unit transformation.

Texts in all languages are composed of units. More specifically, a text is made up of sentences, which in turn consist of clauses, words, and morphemes. To understand Catford’s idea of transformations at the level of units, we can point out cases where an entire sentence in the source text is rendered as a single clause or phrase in the target text.

For example, in Hemingway’s *To Have and Have Not* and its Uzbek translation *To‘qchilik va yo‘qchilik*, we observe unit transformation:

SL (English):

“Where were you?” I asked him.

“On the floor.”

“Did you see it?” Johnson asked him. [p. 4; 3]

TL (Uzbek):

“- Qayerda qolib ketding? – deya tergadim men uni.

➤ Qimirlamay yerda yotgandim.

➤ Hammasini ko‘rdingizmi? – so‘radi Jonson undan.” [p. 11; 5]

Here, the source text sentence “*On the floor*” is expanded in the target text into a full clause “*Qimirlamay yerda yotgandim.*”

2. Structure transformation.

Structural transformation is the most frequently observed type. It occurs when the target language uses different structural devices compared to the source language, or when similar devices are arranged in a different order.

Example from *To Have and Have Not*:

SL: “Johnson screwed the drag down and came back on the rod.” [p. 7; 3]

(*subject + predicate + object, predicate + object*)

TL: “Jonson tutqichni bo‘shatib, qarmoqni torta boshladi.” [p. 18; 4]

(*subject + object + predicate, object + predicate*)

Here, the change in word order creates dynamic equivalence, providing a fluent and natural rendering in Uzbek.

3. Class transformation.

This type of transformation occurs when a word in the source language belongs to one grammatical class, but in translation it is rendered by a different class. For instance, the English noun phrase “*a medical student*” [p. 79] is rendered in French as “*un étudiant en médecine*” [p. 79], where the English adjective *medical* is translated with a prepositional phrase in French.

Example from *To Have and Have Not*:

SL: “Can’t you put on a bait like that, captain?” Johnson asked me.

“Yes, sir.”

“Why do you carry a nigger to do it?” [p. 4; 5]

TL: “– Qarmoqqa xo‘rakni ilintirish o‘zingizning qo‘lingizdan kelmaydimi, kapitan? – deb so‘radi Jonson mendan.

➤ Keladi, ser.

➤ U holda nega habashni yollab olgansiz?” [p. 5; 13]

Here, the affirmative word “*Yes*” is replaced by the verb “*Keladi*” (“I can”), showing class transformation (interjection → verb).

4. Intra-system transformation.

In Catford’s theory, the concept of “system” is more restricted than in structural linguistics, where it may refer to the entire network of a language. In translation, intra-system transformation occurs when both languages possess equivalent systems, but a non-corresponding choice is made in the target text.

For example, in English the plural noun “trousers” is translated into French as the singular “le pantalon.”

From *To Have and Have Not*:

SL: “That’s eighteen days at thirty-five dollars and ninety-five extra.” [p. 3; 12]

TL: “Demak, o‘n sakkiz kun o‘ttiz besh dollar va yana ikki yuz to‘qson besh dollar.” [p. 27; 4]

Here, the English “eighteen days” is rendered in Uzbek as “o‘n sakkiz kun.” The difference lies not in meaning but in adapting to the stylistic and grammatical norms of the target language.

Conclusion/Recommendations. In this article, Ernest Hemingway’s *To Have and Have Not* and its Uzbek translation were analyzed, with particular attention to the lexical-grammatical transformations and translation shifts examined within the framework of J. C. Catford’s theory. The research has revealed that both **level shifts** and **category shifts** (structure, class, unit/rank, and intra-system) regularly occur in the text.

First, level shifts are mainly manifested in cases where grammatical units in English are rendered by lexical means in Uzbek. Second, structural shifts appear in the transformation of passive constructions into active forms or in changes to syntactic word order. Third, class shifts are often associated with the conversion of adjectives into nouns or other parts of speech. Fourth, unit shifts occur when a single word in one language is translated by a phrase or a clause in another. Finally, intra-system shifts arise within grammatical systems common to both languages (e.g., the category of singular–plural), where different forms are employed.

The analysis demonstrates that such obligatory changes in translation are often explained by the typological differences between the two languages. At the same time, in certain cases, translation transformations also reflect the translator’s individuality, stylistic preferences, and consideration of cultural-ethnic factors. Thus, achieving equivalence in literary translation requires not only formal correspondence but also functional, semantic, and stylistic adequacy.

On this basis, it can be concluded that J. C. Catford’s theory of translation shifts provides an effective methodological framework for the systematic analysis of changes that occur during translation. This approach plays an important role in identifying levels of equivalence in literary translation, evaluating translation quality, and justifying the translator’s linguistic decisions.

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