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TRANSLATION SPECIFICS OF GREAT GATSBY INTO KAZAKH LANGUAGE

Abstract. *The aim of the article is to explore the linguistic, cultural, and stylistic challenges involved in translating F. Scott Fitzgerald’s classic novel “The Great Gatsby” into Kazakh language. As a seminal work of American literature, the novel presents unique difficulties for Kazakh translators due to its rich use of symbolism, period-specific idioms, and culturally bound references to 1920s American society. This study employs research methods as theoretical analysis of literary translation, comparative translation analysis and textual analysis. It also analyzes strategies used to convey the nuances of social class, identity, and the American Dream to a Kazakh-speaking audience, highlighting the role of explanatory techniques such as footnotes and adaptive equivalence. The results of the study showed how key elements—such as Fitzgerald’s lyrical prose, character-specific speech patterns, and central metaphors (e.g., the green light, the valley of ashes)—are rendered in Kazakh preserving both meaning and literary tone. The research underscores the translator’s role not only as a linguistic mediator but also as a cultural interpreter, and it contributes to broader discussions on the localization of Western literature in Kazakh language contexts.*

Key words. Literary translation, Great Gatsby, translation of similes, translation of idioms, translation of metaphors, cultural adaptation, translation strategies.

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«ҰЛЫ ГЭТСБИДІ» ҚАЗАҚ ТІЛІНЕ АУДАРУ ЕРЕКШЕЛІКТЕРІ

Аңдатпа. *Мақаланың мақсаты – Ф.Скотт Фицджеральдтың «Ұлы Гэтсби» классикалық романын қазақ тіліне аударуға байланысты лингвистикалық, мәдени және стилистикалық мәселелерді зерттеу болып табылады. Американдық әдебиеттің іргелі туындыларының бірі, сол кезеңге тән символизмді, идиомаларды және 1920-жылдардағы американдық қоғамға мәдени сілтемелерді қолдануға байланысты қазақ аудармашылары үшін ерекше қиындықтар туғызады. Бұл зерттеуде көркем аударманы теориялық тұрғыдан талдау әдісі, салыстырмалы аударма талдауы және мәтіндік талдау секілді зерттеу әдістері қолданылды. Сондай-ақ, мақалада әлеуметтік таптың сәйкестілігі мен Американдық арманның ерекшеліктерін қазақ тілді аудиторияға жеткізу үшін қолданылатын аударма стратегиялары талқыланып, аударманың эквиваленттілігі сараланды. Зерттеу нәтижелері Фицджеральдтың лирикалық прозасы, кейіпкерлерге тән сөйлеу мәнері және метафоралар (мысалы, «green light», «ash valley»), тенеулер сияқты негізгі элементтердің қазақ тілінде әдеби үні мен мағынасын сақтай отырып аударылғандығын көрсетті. Зерттеу аудармашының тілдік тұлға ғана емес, сонымен*

қатар қос мәдениет арасын байланыстыратын тұлға ретіндегі рөлін көрсетеді және Батыс әдебиетін қазақ тілі контекстінде локализациялау мәселелерін кеңірек талқылауға ықпал етеді.

Кілт сөздер. Көркем аударма, Ұлы Гэтсби, теңеулерді аудару, идиомалар аудармасы, метафоралар аудармасы, мәдени бейімдеу, аударма стратегиялары.

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ОСОБЕННОСТИ ПЕРЕВОДА «ВЕЛИКОГО ГЭТСБИ» НА КАЗАХСКИЙ ЯЗЫК

Аннотация. Цель настоящего исследования — выявление и анализ лингвистических, культурных и стилистических трудностей, возникающих при переводе романа Ф. Скотта Фицджеральда «Великий Гэтсби» на казахский язык. Являясь одним из ключевых произведений американской литературы XX века, роман представляет собой особую трудность для казахских переводчиков из-за насыщенного использования символизма, идиоматических выражений, характерных для эпохи, а также многочисленных культурных отсылок к американскому обществу 1920-х годов. В данном исследовании используются такие методы, как теоретический анализ практик художественного перевода, сравнительный переводческий анализ и текстовый анализ. В статье также анализируются стратегии, используемые для передачи нюансов социального класса, идентичности и «американской мечты» казахскоязычной аудитории, с акцентом на роли таких пояснительных техник, как сноски и адаптивная эквивалентность. Результаты исследования показали, как ключевые элементы — такие как лирическая проза Фицджеральда, характерные для персонажей речевые модели и центральные метафоры (например, «green light», «ash valley») — передаются на казахском языке с сохранением как смысла, так и литературного тона. Исследование подчеркивает роль переводчика не только как лингвистического посредника, но и как культурного интерпретатора, и вносит вклад в более широкие дискуссии о локализации западной литературы в контексте казахского языка.

Ключевые слова. Художественный перевод, «Великий Гэтсби», перевод сравнений, перевод идиом, перевод метафор, культурная адаптация, стратегии перевода.

Introduction. In the 21st century, the translation of bestselling literary works into a wide range of languages has emerged as a significant global trend, largely fueled by the accelerating processes of globalization and cultural exchange. This phenomenon has provided readers worldwide with unprecedented access to influential texts, regardless of linguistic or geographic boundaries.

Kazakhstan has actively embraced this trend, with an increasing number of bestselling international titles now available in the Kazakh language. This development has contributed to the enrichment of Kazakh literary culture and the diversification of reading materials available to Kazakh-speaking audiences. Prominent publishing houses such as *Steppe & World*, *Pholiant*, and *Mazmundama* have taken the lead in this movement by translating and publishing internationally recognized bestsellers. Notably, F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic novel *The Great*

Gatsby has been translated into Kazakh, offering local readers access to one of the most iconic works of 20th-century American literature. Such translations play a crucial role in bridging cultures and fostering a deeper understanding of global literary heritage within Kazakhstan's multilingual society.

Set against the backdrop of the Jazz Age, the novel presents a vivid portrait of American society in the 1920s, exploring themes of wealth, identity, love, and the disillusionment of the American Dream. Its rich symbolism, lyrical language, and complex character development make it not only a literary masterpiece but also a challenging text to translate—especially into languages and cultures that are distant from its original context. Translating *the Great Gatsby* into Kazakh requires more than linguistic accuracy—it demands deep cultural sensitivity, literary intuition, and stylistic precision.

This paper aims to explore the specific challenges and strategies involved in translating *The Great Gatsby* into Kazakh. It will analyze how key elements—such as symbolism, tone, character voice, and cultural references—are handled in the translation process. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to the growing field of literary translation studies in Kazakhstan and shed light on the translator's role in bridging linguistic and cultural divides. The novel is rich in figurative language, especially similes. Examples include phrases like “like pale flags,” “like a young cadet,” “as drunk as a monkey,” “as close as a star to the moon,” “as a stranger,” and “crazy as hell,” among others.

To assess the semantic proximity between an original and its translation, linguistics relies on the concepts of *equivalence* and *adequacy*. According to A.D. Schweitzer, equivalence refers to how closely the translated text aligns with the original, while adequacy concerns the translation's alignment with specific communicative conditions. Full equivalence involves a comprehensive transfer of the communicative-functional invariant, aiming for maximum fidelity. In contrast, adequacy reflects an optimal correspondence to the communicative goals and context of the translation [1].

Wardle M. studied the translation of metaphors in *Great Gatsby* into Italian language [2].

There are a lot of scientists who studied different aspects of world bestsellers. Gaifullina M.F and et.al. studied the image of the garden in the story «Family happiness» by L.N. Tolstoy, where "inner" and "outer" human characters are researched [3].

Materials and research methods. This study adopts a qualitative research methodology, combining theoretical analysis with comparative translation analysis of the source and target texts.

Theoretical analysis of literary translation practices provides a critical framework for understanding how linguistic, cultural, and stylistic elements are negotiated in the process of translating *Great Gatsby* across languages and cultures. Comparative translation analysis of the English source text and its Kazakh translation allows for the identification of translation strategies, shifts in meaning, and the degree to which the original's literary style, tone, and cultural references are preserved or adapted in the target language.

The research materials include “*The Great Gatsby*” by F. Scott Fitzgerald and its Kazakh translation by Zamanbek Abdeshov (2022), which are analyzed through comparative textual analysis. Particular attention is paid to lexical choices, syntactic structures, cultural references, and the overall fidelity of the translation to the source text. Textual analysis of key features such as figurative language, idioms, character-specific speech, and culturally embedded metaphors provides insight into how these elements are preserved, transformed, or adapted in the Kazakh translation to maintain the original's literary tone and cultural resonance.

Results and Discussion. The analysis of the Kazakh translation of *The Great Gatsby* reveals a generally high level of linguistic fidelity and stylistic nuance, reflecting a strong

commitment to preserving the tone and narrative voice of F. Scott Fitzgerald's original text. The translator demonstrates a careful balance between literal translation and cultural adaptation, successfully conveying the novel's themes of disillusionment, social class, and the American Dream in a manner that is accessible to Kazakh readers.

Analyzing the translation of idioms is really interesting. Effective translation of idiomatic language necessitates more than mere linguistic competence; it demands a high degree of cultural literacy and creative problem-solving. Translators are frequently required to identify culturally analogous expressions, reformulate the underlying conceptual message, or, in certain cases, omit the idiom entirely if no appropriate equivalent exists in the target language.

Example 1.

Source text: Don't ask me, said Owl eyes, *washing his hands of the whole matter*. "I know very little about driving-next to nothing. It happened, and that's all I know [4].

Target text: Менен ештеңе сұрамаңызшы, -деді *жауаптан жалтарған кейіннен*. «Менің көлік жүргізу икемім шамалы, тіпті жоқ десем болады. Болары болды енді [5].

Here the idiom *washing his hands of the whole matter* originates from a Biblical reference and means to disassociate oneself from responsibility or involvement in a matter. The translator chooses not to translate the idiom literally, which is appropriate since a word-for-word translation would be confusing or meaningless in Kazakh. Instead, the idiom is interpreted and rendered as a descriptive phrase that conveys the character's attitude, thus achieving functional equivalence.

Translation theorists have proposed various methodologies for managing idiomatic expressions. Notably, Peter Newmark advocated for the principle of *communicative equivalence*, emphasizing the need to preserve the idiom's intended meaning and emotional resonance rather than adhering to a literal, word-for-word rendering [6]. This approach underscores the importance of conveying the pragmatic effect of the source text within the cultural and linguistic norms of the target audience.

Example 2.

Source text: *I'll tell you God's truth*, I am the son of some wealthy people in the Middle West—all dead now. I was brought up in America, but educated at Oxford, like all my family before me [4].

Target text: Менен естимініңіздің бәрі таза шындық. Ол жазмыштың жазалануына даяр болуға шақырғандай, қолын жігерлене сілтеді. Мен Орта Батыста дәулетті отбасында дүниеге келдім, қазір олардан тірі қалған ешкім жоқ. Америкада өстім, әулет дәстүрімен Оксфордқа оқуға кеттім [5].

In the original phrase "I'll tell you God's truth," Gatsby employs a marked rhetorical and emotional appeal to affirm his sincerity. This expression functions not merely as a declaration of honesty but as a form of oath-taking, invoking divine authority to emphasize the absolute veracity of his forthcoming account. It serves to underscore Gatsby's intense desire to be believed, particularly as he begins to narrate aspects of his life that may initially appear implausible to the listener.

In contrast, the Kazakh translation — *Менен естимініңіздің бәрі шындық* — while semantically accurate, significantly diminishes the original's emotive and rhetorical force. The phrase is rendered in a neutral tone, thereby attenuating Gatsby's deliberate use of religious and moral invocation as a persuasive strategy. In this context, a more culturally and pragmatically equivalent rendering—such as *Аллахтың атымен ант етемін* ("I swear in the name of Allah") or *Құдай куә* ("God is my witness")—would have more effectively conveyed the original's intensity and function. These expressions are both linguistically appropriate and culturally resonant in Kazakh, preserving the performative and emotive dimensions of Gatsby's

assertion. Employing such equivalents would enhance the target text's ability to reflect the protagonist's urgency and his profound need to establish credibility with the listener.

The novel is rich in figurative language, especially similes. Examples include phrases like "like pale flags," "like a young cadet," "as drunk as a monkey," "as close as a star to the moon," "as a stranger," and "crazy as hell," among others.

Example 3.

Source text: I was a bridesmaid. I came into her room half an hour before the bridal dinner, and found her lying on her bed as lovely as the June night in her flowered dress *and as drunk as a monkey* [4].

Target text: Мен қалындықтың құрбысы едім. Үйлену тойы басталар алдында жарты сағат бұрын бөлмесіне кірсем, гүл көмкерген көйлегімен төсегінде жатыр, *өзі өлердей мас* [5].

In the process of translating figurative language from *The Great Gatsby*, the idiom "as drunk as a monkey" presents a particular challenge. While this simile is vivid and humorous in English, it lacks a direct or culturally appropriate equivalent in Kazakh. The Kazakh language does not employ animal-based idioms to describe states of intoxication, and a literal rendering would likely sound unnatural or even comical to a Kazakh-speaking audience. As a result, the translator chose the phrase *өлердей мас* (literally, dead drunk) to convey the character's extreme level of inebriation. This choice exemplifies the strategy of **adaptation**, whereby the translator prioritizes communicative effect and cultural relevance over literal equivalence. By doing so, the translation maintains the emotional intensity and situational tone of the original text, while aligning with the norms and stylistic conventions of the target language.

The translation of metaphors poses a complex challenge, as it requires balancing fidelity to the source text with cultural and linguistic appropriateness in the target language. Both P. Newmark and M.L. Larson offer closely aligned views on this issue. Newmark emphasizes the importance of retaining the metaphorical form used by the original author, recognizing metaphors as key stylistic and semantic elements of a text. However, he also warns that a strictly literal approach can compromise the stylistic integrity and overall harmony of the translation. Similarly, Larson advocates for preserving the intended meaning and rhetorical effect of metaphors while ensuring that they remain comprehensible and culturally relevant for the target audience [6]. Together, their approaches underscore the need for translators to navigate carefully between maintaining the source text's imagery and adapting metaphors in ways that resonate within the cultural and linguistic context of the target language.

Example 4.

Source text: I saw that I was not alone — a figure had emerged from the shadow of my neighbor's mansion and was standing with his hands in his pockets regarding *the silver pepper of the stars* [4].

Target text: Жанымнан өткен мысықтың сұлбасына бұрылып қараған мен жалғыз еместігімді байқадым. Елу қадамдай жерде көрші үйдің алдында біреу қолын қалтасына салып, *самсаған жұлдыздарға* қарап тұр екен [5].

In the original text, the metaphor "silver pepper of the stars" conveys the idea of abundance and the fine, scattered nature of the stars in the night sky. Fitzgerald compares the stars to grains of black pepper sprinkled across a surface, creating a vivid and original image. This metaphor performs an expressive rather than a nominative function, reflecting the author's unique perception of the night sky. Additionally, the description subtly mirrors Gatsby's inner emotional state and mood. Translating this metaphor into Kazakh poses a significant challenge, as the language lacks a direct equivalent or culturally appropriate analogue that would fully convey the author's individual imagery and stylistic intent. Abdeshov Z. translated this

metaphor as *самсаған жұлдыздар*. The Kazakh “самсаған жұлдыздар” (countless stars / clustered stars) is **accurate in imagery**, but it lacks the **original metaphorical inventiveness**.

Example 5.

Source text: Her voice is full of money, he said suddenly. That was it. I’d never understood before. It was full of money – that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals’ song of it [4].

Target text: Онда ақша сыңғырлайды, -деді ол күтпеген жерден.

-Иә, әрине. Бұрын қалай түсінбегем. Оның дауысында ақша сыңғырлаған екен ғой. Оның шексіз құбылуында жанын арбаған тиын сыңғыры, жеңіс сыры [5].

The Kazakh translation of this passage is **semantically faithful** and **stylistically expressive**, capturing the essence of Daisy’s allure through the sound and symbolism of money. In the Kazakh translation, the metaphor is rendered through the expression *ақша сыңғырлаған дауыс*, employing the technique of modulation. However, while the primary metaphor is preserved effectively, the poetic extensions—particularly “the cymbals’ song of it”—are replaced with a different metaphor (“*жеңіс сыры*”) that introduces **new meaning** not present in the original. This results in a **partial loss of stylistic equivalence**, though it may resonate more deeply with a Kazakh-speaking audience’s conceptualization of success and desire.

Example 6.

Source text: Our white girlhood was passed together there. Our beautiful white [4].

Target text: Жас кезімдегі, бақытты, алаңсыз шағымдағы құрбым [5].

The original phrase *Our white girlhood* is **rich in symbolic and racial connotation**: “*White*” refers not only to skin color but also **purity, privilege, and innocence**. In the translation semantic fidelity is partial. The Kazakh translation effectively conveys the nostalgic and emotional essence of the original passage through careful adaptation. However, it omits the racially and socially loaded term “*white*”, which plays a significant symbolic role in the source text especially within the context of Fitzgerald’s critique of class and privilege. While this loss reduces semantic equivalence, it enhances readability and emotional clarity for the target audience, making the translation a successful example of functional adaptation.

Example 7.

Source text: There was music through my neighbor’s house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens, men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars [4].

Target text: Жазғы кештерде көршімнің виласында музыка ойнап жататын. Оның көкпенбек бағында шампан мен жұлдыздар, бәсең дауыстар арасында түнгі көбелектер тәрізді ерлер мен әйелдер сұлбалары көлбеңдейді [5].

The Kazakh translation of this passage demonstrates a strong command of **literary translation techniques**. The translator preserves Fitzgerald’s **rich poetic imagery**, particularly the central metaphor comparing partygoers to *moths*, which conveys a sense of transience, superficiality, and allure. Although there is a slight neutralization in gender connotation (“*girls*” to “*әйелдер*”), this does not significantly detract from the overall effect. The rhythm, tone, and expressive quality of the source text are **effectively rendered**, making this an example of **high stylistic and semantic adequacy**.

The phrase *men and girls came and went like moths* is rendered in the Kazakh translation as *түнгі көбелектер тәрізді ерлер мен әйелдер*, effectively preserving the original metaphor. Notably, the translator introduces the word *сұлбалары* (silhouettes), which adds a subtle layer of meaning. This lexical choice enhances the imagery of impermanence and ethereality, suggesting that the guests in Gatsby’s world are not merely fleeting visitors, but ghost-like

presences—figures that drift in and out of view, evoking the intangible quality of fading memories.

Example 8.

Source text: Gatsby believed in the *green light*, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us... So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past" [4].

Target text: Гэтсби жасыл отқа, жыл өткен сайын әрі жылжып бара жатқан болашақ бақытының жарығына сенді. Бүгін қолдан сусып кеткен шығар, дәнеңе емес, ертең бұдан да жылдамырақ қимылдап, қолымды бұдан әрірек созармын да [5].

The Kazakh translation **preserves the central metaphor** of the "green light" and conveys Gatsby's belief in an elusive future. However, it **omits the novel's final and most philosophically significant sentence**, replacing it with an **interpretative elaboration**. This choice **alters the tone and message**, shifting from a reflection on the inevitability of the past to a more hopeful outlook. While this may enhance readability and emotional resonance for a Kazakh-speaking audience, it significantly reduces the **literary and thematic fidelity** to Fitzgerald's original text.

The analyzed examples illustrate the application of Lawrence Venuti's concepts of **domestication** and **foreignization**, indicating that the translator adopts a **hybrid strategy** [7]. This approach seeks to balance **readability for the target audience** with the preservation of the **cultural and stylistic distinctiveness** of the source text. By selectively domesticating certain elements while retaining others in their original form, the translator maintains both **linguistic accessibility** and a sense of **foreign literary identity**.

Conclusion. This article has explored the linguistic, cultural, and stylistic challenges involved in translating F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* into Kazakh language. Through the analysis of selected passages, it has been shown that the translator employs a range of strategies—including modulation, adaptation, omission, and metaphor preservation—in order to convey the complex imagery, tone, and symbolism of the original text. Particular attention was given to the translation of metaphors, idiomatic expressions, and culturally embedded references, which often required creative recontextualization to resonate with a Kazakh-speaking audience.

While some losses in semantic precision or philosophical nuance are evident—especially in key passages such as the novel's closing lines—the translation generally succeeds in maintaining the emotional and narrative integrity of the source text. The study underscores the translator's pivotal role not only as a linguistic intermediary but also as a cultural negotiator, capable of bridging distant literary worlds. In doing so, the Kazakh translation of *The Great Gatsby* contributes meaningfully to the localization and reception of Western literary classics in Kazakh literary discourse.

The translation of *The Great Gatsby* into Kazakh exemplifies a broader cultural and linguistic trend shaped by globalization, national identity, and the literary marketplace. It demonstrates how translated literature serves as a medium for cultural transmission, enabling Kazakh readers to engage with global narratives while reinforcing the relevance and richness of their own language.

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