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CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN TRANSLATING TEMPORAL EXPRESSIONS FROM ENGLISH INTO UZBEK (A CASE STUDY OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD’S THE GREAT GATSBY)

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Abstract: This article investigates translation difficulties associated with selected temporal expressions in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby. Through qualitative comparative analysis, ten complete English sentences are examined alongside proposed Uzbek renderings. The examples organized into four overlapping problem areas: temporal reference and indefinite anticipation; grammatical aspect and irreversible change; repetition, cultural time and duration contrast, and metaphorical representations of the past and future. The study identifies cases in which direct lexical substitution changes narrative perspective, makes indefinite time unnecessarily exact, weakens aspectual meaning, or removes literary imagery. Context-sensitive Uzbek equivalents are proposed and assessed for semantic and stylistic adequacy. The results indicate that translation decisions should prioritize the relations expressed by temporal units and their narrative functions rather than isolated dictionary equivalence. The Uzbek versions in this article are research proposals, not quotations from a published translation.

Keywords: temporal expressions, English-Uzbek translation, temporal deixis, aspect, temporal metaphor, literary equivalence.

INTROCUCTION

Temporal meaning in literary language extends beyond calendar time. It may indicate the narrator’s position in relation to an event, the duration or recurrence of an action, the social meaning of an occasion, or the imaginary movement of the past and future. These functions are particularly important in The Great Gatsby, where desire is repeatedly presented as an effort to approach, recover or resist time. A sentence can contain an apparently simple expression such as “some afternoon” or “forever”, yet its function depends on the surrounding scene. A formally close Uzbek substitute may therefore reproduce the words while changing the implied chronology or emotional significance.

Translation equivalence is contextual rather than purely lexical. Baker (2018) considers grammatical, textual and pragmatic issues alongside word-level meaning, while Newmark

(1988) distinguishes the preservation of semantic detail from the communication of an equivalent effect. The present analysis uses these perspectives to investigate whether Uzbek rendering can retain both temporal reference and literary function. Figurative descriptions are considered in light of the relationship between metaphor and conceptualization described by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The objective is to identify recurrent difficulties and offer justified solutions, not to declare a single translation universally correct.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research material comprises ten purposively selected complete sentences from Fitzgerald’s English novel. The examples were selected because they create meaningful differences between English temporal constructions and idiomatic Uzbek expression. The analysis proceeds from the original sentence to the precise translation problem and then to a complete proposed Uzbek rendering with an explanation of the chosen strategy. Cases are grouped thematically rather than presented in order of appearance. The study is qualitative and interpretive; it does not estimate the frequency of the difficulties in the whole novel or compare the proposed renderings with an established Uzbek publication.

RESULTS

3.1. Relative temporal reference and indefinite anticipation

Fitzgerald writes: “*Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth—but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered ‘Listen,’ a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour.*”[27] The translation problem is that “just a while since” and “in the next hour” locate two loosely defined intervals around Daisy’s voice. The expressions suggest a recently experienced pleasure and a possible pleasure very soon to come. Rendering “the next hour” as a strictly measurable period, for example “keyingi bir soat ichida”, can make the voice’s attraction sound like an exact schedule. The temporal opposition is rhetorical and should not be made artificially precise.

A proposed Uzbek translation is: “*Uning chehrasi g‘amgin-u go‘zal, ko‘zlari yorqin, lablari esa ehtirosli edi; biroq ovozidagi hayajonni uni sevgan erkaklar unutolmasdi: bu ovoz go‘yo kuydek o‘ziga tortar, «Quloq sol» deb pichirlar, Deyzi yaqindagina zavqli, hayajonli voqealarni boshdan kechirganini va hademay yana shunday voqealar yuz berishini va’da qilayotgandek edi.*” The choices “yaqindagina” and “hademay” preserve proximity to the remembered past and anticipated future without specifying a clock interval. This is pragmatic modulation rather than a word-for-word substitution. It also keeps the expectation connected to the impression created by Daisy’s voice, which is the central narrative purpose of the sequence.

Fitzgerald writes: “*He had waited five years and bought a mansion where he dispensed starlight to casual moths so that he could ‘come over’ some afternoon to a stranger’s*

[27] F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Planet eBook PDF), p. 12.

garden.”[28] The translation problem is the contrast between “had waited five years” and “some afternoon”. The first expression identifies a long and measurable period completed before the narrated situation, while the second identifies an unspecified hoped-for occasion. If “some afternoon” is translated as a particular appointed afternoon, Gatsby’s extravagant preparation becomes more certain and less ironic than in the source text. The English past perfect also cannot be mirrored mechanically by one fixed Uzbek tense form.

A proposed Uzbek translation is: “*U besh yil kutgan va tasodifan kelib-ketadigan parvonalar uchun yulduz shu’lasini sochib turadigandek ko‘ringan bir hashamatli uy sotib olgan edi — bularning bari qaysidir bir tushdan keyin begona odamning bog‘iga «kirib o‘tish» uchun edi.*” “Besh yil kutgan ... sotib olgan edi” expresses retrospective anteriority through context and the auxiliary “edi”, whereas “qaysidir bir tushdan keyin” preserves the indefinite occasion. The solution retains the disproportion between five years of preparation and an almost casual visit. The uncertainty is meaningful for the characterization of Gatsby’s desire and must not be eliminated for grammatical convenience.

3.2. Aspectual continuity and irreversible temporal change

Fitzgerald writes: “*In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I’ve been turning over in my mind ever since.*”[29] The translation problem is that “I’ve been turning over ... ever since” expresses a continuing and recurrent mental activity extending from a remembered point in youth to the narrator’s present. English perfect progressive grammar and the adverbial operate together. Using only an Uzbek past tense such as “o‘yladim” would close the interval and weaken the long-term relevance of the father’s advice. Furthermore, “turning over” is an idiom for reflection, not literal movement.

A proposed Uzbek translation is: “*Yoshroq va ta’sirchanroq bo‘lgan kezlarimda otam menga bir maslahat bergan edi; o‘shandan beri men o‘sha maslahatni xayolimda qayta-qayta o‘ylab kelaman.*” The sequence “o‘shandan beri ... qayta-qayta o‘ylab kelaman” redistributes temporal meaning between a starting-point adverbial, repetition and the continuative construction “-ib kelmoq”. This structural change is necessary because grammatical aspect is expressed differently in the two languages. It preserves the sense of continuing reflection without imitating the English perfect progressive form.

Fitzgerald writes: “*Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever.*”[30] The translation problem is that the combination “now vanished forever” conveys a changed present within a retrospective narrative and a consequence understood as irreversible. A literal sequence such as “hozir abadiy yo‘qoldi” may misplace “now” in the reader’s present and awkwardly combine a moment with eternity. Moreover, the sentence concerns the lost significance of the green light, not the disappearance of the physical light.

A proposed Uzbek translation is: “*Balki u o‘sha chiroqning ulkan ahamiyati endi batamom, qaytmas bo‘lib yo‘qolganini anglagandir.*” “Endi batamom, qaytmas bo‘lib

[28] F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Planet eBook PDF), p. 85.
[29] F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Planet eBook PDF), p. 3.
[30] F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Planet eBook PDF), p. 100.

yo‘qolganini” interprets “now” as the point at which a new state has been reached and “forever” as an enduring result. The opening “Balki” also retains Fitzgerald’s epistemic uncertainty. The phrase slightly explicates the consequence, but it avoids confusing symbolic loss with a literal event and preserves the narrator’s retrospective viewpoint.

3.3. Repetition, culturally defined time and contrast of duration

Fitzgerald writes: “*The city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its first wild promise of all the mystery and the beauty in the world.*”[31] The translation problem is the deliberate tension between “always” and “for the first time”. A city cannot literally be seen for the first time on every occasion, but the sentence creates precisely this paradox to convey continually renewed wonder. A rigid rendering of “always” as an unqualified habitual assertion, detached from the simile, could turn the artistic paradox into a logical inconsistency.

A proposed Uzbek translation is: “*Kvinsboro ko‘prigidan qaraganda shahar har safar xuddi birinchi marta ko‘rilayotgandek tuyuladi: unda olamdagi barcha sirlar va go‘zallikning ilk hayajonli va’dasi bor.*” “Har safar xuddi birinchi marta ko‘rilayotgandek” interprets the habitual element through “har safar” while preserving the imaginative comparison with “xuddi ... -dek”. The result is idiomatic in Uzbek and keeps the intended experience of repeated novelty. The translator should not simplify the sentence into “shahar doim chiroyli ko‘rinadi”, because such a paraphrase removes its temporal paradox.

Fitzgerald writes: “*At the grey tea hour there were always rooms that throbbed incessantly with this low sweet fever, while fresh faces drifted here and there like rose petals blown by the sad horns around the floor.*”[32] The translation problem is that “tea hour” names an occasion through an English social practice and not a universally defined numerical hour. The adjective “grey” simultaneously suggests muted light and atmosphere; “always” marks habitual repetition, while “incessantly” describes ceaseless intensity within that recurrent scene. A phrase like “choy soati” could sound too rigid or technical in Uzbek, whereas simply “kechqurun” would erase the cultural activity.

A proposed Uzbek translation is: “*Xira tortgan choy mahali xonalar doimo shu past, mayin hayajondan tinimsiz titrab turgandek bo‘lardi, yangi chehralar esa g‘amgin cholg‘ular sadosi ostida xona bo‘ylab uchib yurgan atirgul yaproqlaridek suzardi.*” “Xira tortgan choy mahali” retains the tea-related social frame without imposing an exact clock time or insisting that the gathering necessarily occurred in the evening. The accompanying “doimo” and “tinimsiz” distinguish repeated occasions from continuous activity within them. This example illustrates a limited cultural adaptation that keeps the temporal function and the period atmosphere.

Fitzgerald writes: “*Perhaps some unbelievable guest would arrive, a person infinitely rare and to be marvelled at, some authentically radiant young girl who with one fresh glance at Gatsby, one moment of magical encounter, would blot out those five years of unwavering*

[31] F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Planet eBook PDF), p. 74
[32] F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Planet eBook PDF), p. 161.

devotion.”[33] The translation problem is the contrast between “one moment of magical encounter” and “those five years of unwavering devotion”. The short moment is imagined as powerful enough to “blot out” five years, so the numerical expressions carry psychological opposition rather than merely counting units of time. Translating “blot out” simply as “forget” would reduce the force of the imagined erasure and weaken the imbalance on which the sentence depends.

A proposed Uzbek translation is: “*Ehtimol, aql bovar qilmaydigan, hayratga loyiq bir mehmon — chinakam maftunkor yosh qiz kirib kelar, Gatsbiga birgina yangi nigoh tashlashi, sehrli uchrashuvning bir lahzasi bilan uning besh yillik sadoqatli muhabbatini go‘yo o‘chirib tashlashi mumkin edi.*” “Bir lahzasi” and “besh yillik” reproduce both scales, while “go‘yo o‘chirib tashlashi” preserves the erasure metaphor. The conditional meaning remains important: Fitzgerald describes a possible encounter rather than an accomplished event. In this case numerical details should be retained accurately, since their sharp opposition is itself the literary mechanism.

3.4. Personification and spatial movement of time

Fitzgerald writes: “*He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand.*”[34] The translation problem is that the abstract “past” acquires the action of a living creature through “were lurking” and becomes spatially close yet physically unreachable. An explanatory translation such as “u o‘tmishni esladi” would communicate remembrance but remove the personification and the protagonist’s struggle with the inaccessible past. A purely literal rendering, on the other hand, may falsely suggest the presence of a tangible being.

A proposed Uzbek translation is: “*U tevarakka bezovta alangladi, go‘yo o‘tmish uyining soyasida bekinib yurgandek, qo‘l cho‘zsa ham unga yetolmaydigandek edi.*” “Go‘yo o‘tmish ... bekinib yurgandek” presents the past as a hidden presence, and “qo‘l cho‘zsa ham unga yetolmaydigandek” keeps the spatial image of proximity without access. The simile markers signal the fictional nature of the personification. In this passage semantic equivalence must include the relationship between time and imagined physical distance.

Fitzgerald writes: “*Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us.*”[35] The translation problem is that “the future that year by year recedes” represents the future as a destination moving away from the observer. “Year by year” marks incremental, repeated withdrawal rather than the ordinary passing of years. Translating “recedes” simply as “o‘tib ketadi” would reverse the direction of the metaphor; the future is not passing behind Gatsby but becoming increasingly difficult to reach.

A proposed Uzbek translation is: “*Getsbi yashil chiroqqa — ko‘z o‘ngimizda yil sayin tobora uzoqlashib boradigan jo‘shqin orzularga to‘la kelajakka — ishonardi.*” “Yil sayin tobora uzoqlashib boradigan ... kelajak” preserves progressive distancing. The expression “jo‘shqin orzularga to‘la” is an interpretive expansion of “orgastic”, emphasizing heightened

[33] F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Planet eBook PDF), p. 117.
[34] F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Planet eBook PDF), p. 118.
[35] F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Planet eBook PDF), p. 193.

aspiration rather than a simple lexical match; it should therefore be recognized as a stylistic decision. The important temporal effect is that the desired future remains ahead while continuously withdrawing.

Fitzgerald writes: “*So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.*”[36] The translation problem is that Fitzgerald’s final sentence combines forward effort with involuntary backward movement. The sequence “beat on”, “against the current” and “borne back ceaselessly into the past” treats the past as an overpowering force, while “ceaselessly” makes the reversal ongoing. A flat paraphrase such as “we keep remembering the past” would lose the conflict between human intention and temporal movement, and a purely lexical translation might obscure who controls that movement.

A proposed Uzbek translation is: “*Shunday qilib, biz oqimga qarshi suzayotgan qayiqlardek oldinga intilamiz, ammo tinimsiz o‘tmishga qaytarilaveramiz.*” “Oldinga intilamiz, ammo tinimsiz o‘tmishga qaytarilaveramiz” makes the opposition natural in Uzbek. “Qaytarilaveramiz” combines passive displacement with repeated continuation, while “tinimsiz” retains persistence. The image of boats resisting the current is preserved, so the reader perceives time through motion rather than receiving an abstract statement about memory.

DISCUSSION

The examples demonstrate four recurrent forms of non-equivalence. First, English temporal expressions sometimes mark proximity or possibility without specifying an exact interval. In Daisy’s voice and Gatsby’s uncertain “some afternoon”, the translator’s task is to retain indeterminacy, not to turn rhetorical anticipation into calendar precision. Second, English perfect and perfect progressive constructions package relationships between earlier events and a later point of relevance. Uzbek often requires a combined expression consisting of a temporal adverbial and an aspectual construction. Thus “o‘shandan beri ... o‘ylab kelaman” and “endi ... qaytmas bo‘lib” represent relations that cannot be preserved by single-word substitution.

Third, time may function as a social convention or a paradoxical comparison. “Tea hour” calls for a culturally intelligible occasion rather than a numerical hour, whereas “always ... for the first time” asks the translator to preserve repeated novelty instead of removing an apparent contradiction. The comparison between one moment and five years shows that precision is sometimes indispensable: the figures themselves establish the emotional stakes. Fourth, the past and future become moving or personified entities. These passages require the preservation of metaphorical direction, agency and repetition. Uzbek comparisons and verbal forms may reconstruct such imagery even where English grammatical packaging differs.

These solutions involve different degrees of intervention. Some retain a close lexical form, while others introduce words such as “hademay”, “qaytmas” or “go‘yo” to make implicit relations accessible. Such additions are defensible only when they preserve a contextual function without creating an unsupported fact. The ten examples are purposefully selected

[36] F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Planet eBook PDF), p. 193.

difficult cases, not a representative sample; the proposed translations have not been tested against a published Uzbek version or reader responses. The conclusions therefore concern transparent translation reasoning, not a quantitative ranking of alternatives.

CONCLUSION

Selected temporal expressions in The Great Gatsby resist direct English-Uzbek equivalence when their meanings depend on narrative viewpoint, aspectual continuity, cultural occasion, disproportionate durations or conceptual metaphor. Ten complete sentences reveal that the major risk is not the absence of Uzbek time vocabulary but the loss of relations between time and literary meaning. Effective solutions preserve relevant reference points, distinguish literal duration from figurative imminence, express ongoing and irreversible states through Uzbek resources, and reconstruct temporal imagery without unnecessary explanation. Further work could compare these research proposals with published Uzbek translations and evaluate their reception.

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