QO‘QON DAVLAT PEDAGOGIKA INSTITUTI ILMIY XABARLARI
(2026-yil 10-son)

FILOLOGIYA

PHILOLOGY

https://doi.org/10.70728/b.series.fil.v08.i10.146

THE POETICS OF THE DETECTIVE GENRE AS A TRANSLATION PROBLEM

Shoxidova Mashkhura Kobuljanovna
Senior teacher, Department of English and Literature
Namangan State University
Tel:905969996
mashkhurashokhidova@gmail.com
0000-0002-8835-0990

ABSTRACT This article examines the poetics of classic detective fiction as a complex problem of literary translation from English into Uzbek. The study focuses on narrative architecture, the distribution of clues, the management of suspense, focalisation, characterisation and the language of deduction in selected works by Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie. The research combines narratological analysis with comparative translation analysis. Particular attention is paid to the fact that detective fiction communicates on two levels: it tells a story and simultaneously organizes the reader’s process of inference. A translation may preserve the sequence of events while weakening the evidential function of a clue, disclosing information too early or changing the tone of the detective’s reasoning. The article proposes a functional model for assessing the transfer of genre-forming features. It argues that adequacy in detective translation depends not only on lexical and syntactic correspondence but also on preserving the information structure, temporal rhythm and interpretive uncertainty of the source text. Illustrative Uzbek renderings are identified as the researcher’s own translations rather than as quotations from published editions.

Keywords: detective fiction; poetics; literary translation; narrative structure; suspense; focalisation; clue; English–Uzbek translation

DETEKTIV JANR POETIKASI TARJIMA MUAMMOSI SIFATIDA

ANNOTATSIYA Ushbu maqolada klassik detektiv asarlar poetikasi ingliz tilidan o‘zbek tiliga badiiy tarjima qilishning murakkab muammosi sifatida tadqiq etiladi. Tadqiqot Edgar Allan Po, Artur Konan Doyl va Agata Kristining tanlangan asarlari misolida syujet qurilishi, izlarning taqsimlanishi, keskinlik va qiziqish (suspens)ni boshqarish, bayon nuqtayi nazari, obrazlar yaratish hamda deduktiv fikrlash tiliga qaratilgan. Tadqiqotda narratologik tahlil va qiyosiy tarjimashunoslik tahlili metodlari uyg‘unlashtiriladi. Ayniqsa, detektiv adabiyot ikki darajada kommunikativ vazifani bajarishiga alohida e’tibor qaratiladi: u bir tomondan voqeani hikoya qilsa, ikkinchi tomondan o‘quvchining mantiqiy xulosa chiqarish jarayonini tashkil

etadi. Tarjima voqealar ketma-ketligini saqlab qolgan holda ham muayyan dalil yoki izning funksiyasini susaytirishi, ma’lumotni muddatidan oldin oshkor qilishi yoki detektivning mulohaza yuritish ohangini o‘zgartirishi mumkin. Maqolada janrni shakllantiruvchi xususiyatlarning tarjimada qayta ifodalanishini baholashga qaratilgan funksional model taklif etiladi. Detektiv asarlar tarjimasining adekvatligi nafaqat leksik va sintaktik muvofiqlikka, balki asl matnning axborot tuzilishi, vaqt ritmi va talqin qilishdagi noaniqlik xususiyatlarini saqlashga ham bog‘liq ekanligi asoslab beriladi. Maqolada keltirilgan o‘zbekcha tarjima namunalari nashr etilgan tarjimalardan olingan iqtiboslar emas, balki tadqiqotchining o‘z tarjima variantlari ekanligi alohida qayd etiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: detektiv adabiyot; poetika; badiiy tarjima; narrativ tuzilish; keskinlik; bayon nuqtayi nazari; iz; inglizcha-o‘zbekcha tarjima.

ПОЭТИКА ДЕТЕКТИВНОГО ЖАНРА КАК ПРОБЛЕМА ПЕРЕВОДА

АННОТАЦИЯ В данной статье поэтика классической детективной литературы рассматривается как сложная проблема художественного перевода с английского языка на узбекский. Исследование сосредоточено на особенностях построения повествования, распределении улик, создании и поддержании интриги и напряжения, повествовательной перспективе, характеристике персонажей, а также языке дедуктивного мышления на материале избранных произведений Эдгара Аллана По, Артура Конан Дойла и Агаты Кристи. В исследовании сочетаются методы нарратологического анализа и сравнительного переводоведческого анализа. Особое внимание уделяется тому, что детективная литература выполняет коммуникативную функцию на двух уровнях: с одной стороны, она повествует о событиях, а с другой — организует процесс логического умозаключения читателя. Перевод может сохранять последовательность событий, но при этом ослаблять доказательную функцию улики, преждевременно раскрывать информацию или изменять тон рассуждений детектива. В статье предлагается функциональная модель оценки передачи жанрообразующих особенностей детективного произведения при переводе. Обосновывается положение о том, что адекватность перевода детективной литературы зависит не только от лексического и синтаксического соответствия, но и от сохранения информационной структуры, темпорального ритма и интерпретационной неопределённости исходного текста. Подчёркивается, что представленные в статье узбекские варианты перевода являются авторскими переводами исследователя, а не цитатами из опубликованных изданий.

Ключевые слова: детективная литература; поэтика; художественный перевод; повествовательная структура; напряжение; повествовательная перспектива; улика; перевод с английского языка на узбекский.

INTRODUCTION

Detective fiction is a genre in which narrative form is inseparable from the reader’s intellectual activity. A detective story does not merely represent a crime and its investigation:

it controls the order in which evidence becomes available, encourages hypotheses and delays the final explanation. The translator therefore faces a task that goes beyond transferring plot information. The translation must reproduce, as far as possible, the source text’s carefully managed relationship between knowledge, ignorance and inference.

The relevance of literary translation in Uzbekistan is supported by national policy documents. Presidential Decree No. PF-60 of 28 January 2022 approved the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026 and identified spiritual development and the advancement of the cultural sphere among its priorities [1]. Presidential Resolution No. PQ-451 of 24 July 2024 approved the regulation governing the Muhammad Rizo Ogahiy International Award, providing further institutional detail for the promotion and assessment of literary translation [2]. More directly, Presidential Resolution No. PQ-205 of 4 June 2024 established the Muhammad Rizo Ogahiy International Award in literary translation and explicitly included translations of prose works created in foreign languages into Uzbek among its award categories [3]. These documents provide a policy context for studying the quality of English–Uzbek literary translation; they do not, by themselves, prescribe a particular translation method.

The article aims to identify the genre-forming features of classic detective fiction that create specific translation challenges and to propose criteria for their functional reproduction in Uzbek. Its objectives are to describe the narrative mechanisms of the detective genre; examine how clues, suspense and focalisation operate in selected texts; identify likely linguistic and stylistic risks in English–Uzbek transfer; and formulate a genre-sensitive evaluation model.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical foundation combines narratology, genre studies and translation studies. Todorov’s influential discussion of detective fiction distinguishes the story of the crime from the story of the investigation, showing that the genre often contains two interrelated narrative sequences [4]. This distinction is useful for translation because the order of narration may differ from the chronological order of events. A translator who inadvertently clarifies a temporal relation or makes an implicit connection explicit can alter the reader’s reconstruction of the crime.

Cawelti treats detective fiction as a formulaic literary form whose conventions create reader expectations [5]. Such conventions include the initial disruption, the collection of clues, competing explanations, the detective’s reasoning and the final solution. Formula does not mean artistic uniformity: Poe, Doyle and Christie manipulate the conventions in different ways. Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841) foregrounds analytical reasoning and the reconstruction of apparently impossible events; Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes narratives often dramatise observation and inference through dialogue; Christie’s fiction frequently distributes suspicion across a wider group of characters and uses misdirection as a structural principle.

Translation theory clarifies why formal similarity is insufficient. Nida distinguishes formal correspondence from dynamic equivalence and emphasizes the response of the receptor [6]. Catford describes translation shifts between linguistic systems [7], while Newmark

differentiates semantic and communicative approaches [8]. Baker’s account of equivalence at word, grammatical, textual and pragmatic levels provides a practical framework for analysing the transfer of clues and discourse relations [9]. House’s model of translation quality assessment further encourages attention to register, field, tenor and genre [10]. These approaches collectively suggest that a detective translation should be evaluated by how successfully it reconstructs the source text’s communicative and inferential effects.

Despite the extensive literature on detective fiction and translation equivalence, a genre-specific account of English–Uzbek detective translation requires more explicit attention to the clue as a functional unit. A clue may be a noun, a grammatical tense, a pronoun reference, a repeated phrase, an unusual collocation or a detail whose importance becomes visible only retrospectively. Its value is therefore contextual rather than merely lexical.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a qualitative, text-based design. The primary literary corpus consists of Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841), selected Sherlock Holmes stories by Arthur Conan Doyle, particularly “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” (1892), and Agatha Christie’s The Mysterious Affair at Styles (1920). The corpus is purposive rather than statistically representative: it was selected to illustrate different classical strategies of constructing mystery, evidence and revelation. The texts are treated as English-language source materials. Unless a specific published Uzbek edition is separately identified and bibliographically verified, Uzbek examples in this article are the researcher’s illustrative translations.

The analysis proceeds in five stages. First, each text is segmented into narrative units: crime presentation, investigative encounter, clue introduction, hypothesis formation, misdirection and solution. Second, genre-bearing details are identified, including lexical clues, temporal markers, deixis, repetition, descriptive anomalies and speech patterns. Third, each item is examined for its narrative function: does it provide evidence, conceal evidence, misdirect the reader, characterise a speaker or regulate suspense? Fourth, a possible Uzbek rendering is drafted and compared with the English unit. Fifth, the rendering is evaluated according to semantic accuracy, inferential preservation, stylistic consistency and reader-oriented suspense.

The method uses close reading, narratological analysis, contrastive linguistic analysis and translation transformation analysis. No claims of statistical significance are made because the design is qualitative. The unit of analysis is not simply the sentence; it is the smallest textual segment whose translation may affect the reader’s interpretation of evidence.

RESULTS

The analysis indicates that the poetics of detective fiction is organised around at least five interdependent dimensions: plot architecture, clue management, focalisation, suspense and the detective’s discourse. These dimensions form a functional system. A translation decision in one area may influence the others. For example, changing a pronoun reference can make a clue more explicit, while replacing a marked repetition with a stylistic synonym can weaken the link between an early detail and the final explanation.

Plot architecture is especially sensitive to temporal relations. Detective fiction often presents information in an order designed to postpone understanding. Flashbacks, retrospective explanations and reported speech may distinguish the time of the crime from the time of its narration. English tense and aspect choices can encode these relations compactly. Uzbek may express the same relations through tense, aspectual forms, temporal adverbs or contextual sequencing. The translator should not mechanically reproduce English tense forms; the priority is to preserve the chronology and the degree of certainty available to the reader.

Clues constitute the genre’s evidential infrastructure. A clue can be apparently insignificant at first and become decisive later. The translator must preserve both its initial inconspicuousness and its later interpretive relevance. Over-translation is a particular danger: an explanatory addition may signal that the detail is important before the source text does so. Under-translation is equally risky if a lexical distinction or unusual object description disappears in Uzbek.

Focalisation determines whose knowledge structures a passage. In many Holmes stories, the reader receives information through Watson’s limited perspective, while Holmes notices details that Watson overlooks. If the translation replaces Watson’s uncertainty with an omniscient or overly confident formulation, the narrative contrast is reduced. The translator should preserve epistemic markers such as ‘perhaps’, ‘apparently’, ‘I could not tell’ and their Uzbek functional equivalents.

Suspense depends on pacing, paragraphing, sentence length, dialogue turns and strategic omission. A long explanatory sentence may be grammatically accurate but can accelerate or slow the scene in a way that changes its effect. Short utterances, interruptions and delayed complements often contribute to dramatic tension. The translator should therefore consider rhythm and information release as part of semantic adequacy.

An illustrative example can be constructed from the recurring detective-fiction pattern ‘I noticed a small but significant mark.’ A functional Uzbek rendering might be ‘Men kichik, ammo ahamiyatli bir izni payqadim.’ This is not presented as a quotation from a published translation. The key issue is the contrast between ‘small’ and ‘significant’: if ‘significant’ is intensified into ‘hal qiluvchi’ (‘decisive’), the translation may disclose too much too early. A more restrained equivalent preserves the clue’s status without announcing its final importance.

DISCUSSION

The findings support the view that detective fiction should be translated as a system of readerly inference rather than as a sequence of isolated statements. Nida’s receptor-oriented perspective is relevant because the Uzbek reader, like the English reader, must be able to form and revise hypotheses. However, dynamic equivalence cannot justify arbitrary clarification: in detective fiction, uncertainty is often an intended effect. The translator’s task is not to make every sentence immediately transparent but to reproduce the controlled distribution of transparency and obscurity.

The distinction between the crime story and the investigation story proposed by Todorov offers a useful diagnostic tool. If a translation alters the chronology or makes the investigative narrative reveal information too soon, it may preserve the events but damage the genre’s

architecture. Likewise, Baker’s textual and pragmatic levels of equivalence help explain why cohesion, reference and implicature are crucial. A detective clue may depend on a chain of references across several pages; local fluency cannot compensate for a broken chain.

English and Uzbek differ in grammatical structure, word order, information packaging and the resources used to express evidentiality and interpersonal nuance. These differences make literal transfer unreliable. Yet adaptation must be controlled by textual function. Compensation may be justified when a sound pattern, ambiguity or register contrast cannot be reproduced at the same point, provided that the same narrative effect is maintained elsewhere without adding unsupported evidence.

CONCLUSION

The poetics of classic detective fiction creates a distinctive translation problem because the genre’s meaning includes the reader’s process of solving the mystery. The most important features to preserve are narrative order, clue salience, focalisation, suspense, deductive logic and differentiated character voices. A translation can be lexically accurate and still be inadequate if it changes what the reader knows, when the reader knows it or how confidently the reader is invited to interpret a detail.

Genre feature	Potential translation risk	Functional criterion
Clue	Premature explanation or loss of detail	Preserve ambiguity and later retrievability
Focalisation	Changing limited knowledge into certainty	Preserve viewpoint and epistemic stance
Suspense	Altered sentence rhythm or information order	Preserve pacing and delayed disclosure
Deductive dialogue	Flattened logical relations	Preserve premise–inference–conclusion sequence
Character voice	Uniform register across speakers	Preserve idiolect and social tone

The article proposes a genre-sensitive model with four evaluation dimensions: semantic fidelity, inferential fidelity, narratological fidelity and stylistic-pragmatic fidelity. The model can be applied to published English–Uzbek translations once their editions and translators have been verified. Further research should compare complete parallel texts and include reader-response data to determine whether Uzbek readers reconstruct clues and experience suspense in ways comparable to readers of the English source texts.

REFERENCES

1. O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2022-yil 28-yanvardagi PF-60-son Farmoni. 2022–2026-yillarga mo‘ljallangan Yangi O‘zbekistonning taraqqiyot strategiyasi to‘g‘risida. – URL: https://lex.uz/docs/-5841063 (murojaat sanasi: 30.10.2026).

2. O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2024-yil 24-iyuldagi PQ-451-son Qarori. Badiiy tarjima sohasida Muhammad Rizo Ogahiy nomidagi xalqaro mukofot to‘g‘risidagi

nizomni tasdiqlash haqida. – URL: https://lex.uz/ru/docs/7034715 (murojaat sanasi: 30.10.2026).

3. O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2024-yil 4-iyundagi PQ-205-son Qarori. Badiiy tarjima sohasida Muhammad Rizo Ogahiy nomidagi xalqaro mukofotni ta’sis etish to‘g‘risida. – URL: https://lex.uz/uz/doc-passport/-6951793 (murojaat sanasi: 30.10.2026).

4. Todorov T. The Typology of Detective Fiction // The Poetics of Prose. – Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977. – P. 42–52.

5. Cawelti J. G. Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture. – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976. – 336 p.

6. Nida E. A. Toward a Science of Translating. – Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964. – 331 p.

7. Catford J. C. A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics. – London: Oxford University Press, 1965. – 103 p.

8. Newmark P. A Textbook of Translation. – New York: Prentice Hall, 1988. – 292 p.

9. Baker M. In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation. – 3rd ed. – London; New York: Routledge, 2018. – 368 p.

10. House J. Translation Quality Assessment: Past and Present. – London; New York: Routledge, 2015.