

# AUTHOR AND TRANSLATOR: THE PROBLEM OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Umirziyaev Umidjon Makhamadjonovich  
English Teacher, Fergana State University, Uzbekistan

Rakhmonova Madinakhon Ilkhomjonovna  
Student of Foreign Languages Faculty, Fergana State University

## Abstract

Knowing the characteristics of both languages implies thoroughly studying the original text, working on its vocabulary and cultural references, which is very important for the translator. This also, to some extent, requires the translator to be a scholar and a researcher.

**Keywords:** Intuition, imagination, emotion, subtlety

## Introduction

In Uzbek, there is a multi-meaning expression 'til topish' (literally: 'finding a language'). It is used to describe finding a way into someone's unopened heart. It also refers to two people understanding each other well in life, especially when working together on something or solving a problem. The phrase also conveys meanings of mutual agreement and making a pact. There must also be a kind of mutual understanding—or 'finding a common language'—between the translator and the author whose work is being translated. In this context, 'til topish' means deeply understanding the author's uniqueness and the artistic features of the specific work, and organizing the translation process accordingly. When the translator truly loves the author and their work, and realizes the great spiritual benefit it can bring to the reader, this mutual understanding can lead to significant creative rewards.

## Main Part

One of the greatest European writers of the 20th century—whose works have been translated into many world languages, and who himself also worked as a translator and even explained what translation is, providing insightful examples from his own creative laboratory—Umberto Eco, in his book *Saying Almost the Same Thing: Experiences in Translation*, still begins with the question: What is translation? "What does it mean to translate? — asks Umberto Eco, who knew very well from his own practice what translation is. — The first satisfactory answer might be this: to say the exact same thing in another language — that is translation." This is a very basic, very simple, and at the same time the most accurate definition of translation. At first glance, this definition seems to strip translation of all its mystery—of its nature as an art and a creative act. However, despite its simplicity, this definition in no way denies that translation is in fact a deeply mysterious, extremely complex, and demanding field.



The very fact that a world-renowned writer with great literary experience is giving such a description shows that translation is indeed a mysterious field. Jorge Luis Borges, the famous writer from Brazil and Argentina, is one of the most enchanting and mysterious figures in world literature. Regarding the language and style of his works, the Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa writes the following words: "Borges's stories and essays could only have been written in such an intelligent, ironic, mathematically precise, and measured language. There is not a single unnecessary word. They reflect a calm coldness, elegance, and aristocratic courage. In them, intellect and wisdom prevail over emotions and experiences."

Now, let us reflect on these words in the context of our translation practice. So, how can Borges's language—where intellect and knowledge prevail over emotions and experiences, where aristocratic courage and an extreme cold elegance are reflected—be rendered into modern Uzbek? After all, such a language has never existed in our literature, which has been nurtured in the spirit of centuries-old Eastern traditions! In recent years, some of the translations of Borges into Uzbek have turned out to be quite plain, with little of Borges left in them. This shows that any translator faces an extremely difficult—perhaps even impossible—task when working with Borges. When we say that translation is a mysterious thing, we also mean phenomena that seem almost impossible to translate. However, overcoming what seems to be an insurmountable wall is not impossible—it is achievable. The key lies in deeply knowing both languages—in this case, Spanish and Uzbek. Let us recall how the poet Shavkat Rahmon specifically learned Spanish in order to translate Lorca, and how he translated him directly from Spanish into Uzbek. And most importantly—finding that deeply ironic and aristocratic tone of Borges. 'Finding the language' can truly be the key to successful translation. Only when a translator, like a writer, possesses broad imagination and the ability to fantasize about events, phenomena, and the human psyche—and when this ability is supported by deep knowledge—can their work be trustworthy, comprehensible, and attain high artistic expression and emotional impact.

A lack of deep and nuanced knowledge about life, superficial understanding of the original work and its author's biography, creativity, artistic style, and worldview—as well as ignorance of the critical discussions and debates surrounding the original work—undoubtedly has a strongly negative impact on the overall artistic quality of a translation.

Before starting the translation, thoroughly studying the work to be translated from all aspects—its vocabulary and literary features, working in advance on these elements, analyzing the internal structure of the work, its characters, the socio-historical context in which the heroes act, the artistic imagery, and the style—helps create a solid foundation for a successful translation.

Just as a writer gathers material in a systematic way to write a new work, the translator-writer also collects material in the same manner and creates their own reference notebook about the work and its author.

The Russian translator Nikolai Lyubimov used the term "writer-translator." He viewed translation as inherently connected to creativity and artistic expression. The phrase "writer-translator"—or more precisely, "translator-writer"—places a great deal of responsibility on the professional. When recreating a work in another language, the translator, in a sense, assumes



the responsibility of the original author, becoming their representative or ambassador in a different linguistic environment. One might wonder: will those who read the translation receive it the same way as those who read the original?

Or perhaps the spirit of the work is lost in translation, and readers are deprived of being emotionally moved by it? The translator is responsible to readers of another language for the artistic level and quality of the work. Preparation for translation is a major creative process.

Abdulla Kakhor, before starting the translation of Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, visited Russia and familiarized himself with the places where the events depicted in the novel took place, with environments reminiscent of where the characters lived. He studied these surroundings and looked deeply into the life that inspired Tolstoy, feeling within himself the sources of that inspiration. He posed the question: *How would Leo Tolstoy have written War and Peace in 20th-century Uzbek?*

That is why Tolstoy's portrayal of Russian life, and all the subtleties, elegance, and beauty of the inner and outer worlds of Russian people, were artistically and deeply reimagined through the means and richness of the Uzbek language.

When daring to translate Dostoevsky's novels into Uzbek, the author of these lines personally experienced at every step how crucial and profoundly significant it is, from a creative standpoint, to thoroughly study the work in advance, to delve into Dostoevsky's techniques of depiction, and to sharpen one's imagination and understanding. How should one recreate the linguistic atmosphere and spirit of Dostoevsky's 19th-century world? After all, the spirit and flow of the linguistic environment of that time is vastly different from the spirit of our present-day language (the linguistic atmosphere of the 1960s in Uzbekistan), isn't it? So how can that be conveyed? When Cho'ipon translated Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in the 1930s, he didn't archaize the language without reason—he was, in some way, trying to reflect the spirit of Shakespeare's era through linguistic means.

When I sat down to translate *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, a modernist and enchanting novel by Colombian writer and Nobel laureate Gabriel García Márquez, I deeply regretted not having had the chance to visit Colombia or other Latin American countries, to personally observe events and environments similar to those depicted in the novel. In many places, I struggled greatly to convey the local color. I realized that only by approaching the text with natural intuition could I find a way out of these difficulties. It was under the shadow of the human and cultural need to bring one of the most beautiful examples of magical realism literature to Uzbek readers that I dared to undertake this immense task.

It is only when creative dedication is strong that a translation can truly come to life.

### Conclusion

Great results in translation can be achieved through natural intuition—that is, the power of strong intuition. However, even with intuition, a translator cannot overcome all difficulties. In this process, knowledge and experience hold special importance.

There is nothing more valuable—or even equal—to thoroughly studying the work in advance, consulting dictionaries, referring to various supplementary materials, and preparing annotations.



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