



## STYLISTIC PROBLEMS IN DIRECT TRANSLATION

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### ABSTRACT

*Direct translation, also known as literal translation, involves rendering the source text into the target language on a word-for-word or phrase-for-phrase basis without accounting for idiomatic, contextual, or cultural variations. While this method may serve certain technical or pedagogical purposes, it frequently produces stylistically awkward, semantically distorted, or pragmatically inappropriate target texts. This article examines the principal stylistic problems arising from direct translations, including issues of register inconsistency, syntactic rigidity, idiomatic interference, collocational infelicity, and rhetorical mismatch.*

### Introduction.

Translation is far more than a mechanical substitution of words across linguistic systems. It is an act of cross-cultural mediation that demands sensitivity to meaning, form, pragmatic intent, and aesthetic effect. Among the many approaches to translation, direct or literal translation occupies a particularly contested position. Proponents argue that it preserves the formal features of the source text and avoids the translator's interpretive interference. Critics, however, point out that direct translation consistently fails to account for the stylistic dimensions of language, producing texts that, while denotatively accurate, are expressively impoverished or culturally dissonant. The study of acquired words has its own tradition.[9]

Stylistic problems in direct translation are not merely aesthetic inconveniences. They can distort the communicative impact of a text, mislead readers about the register or genre of a document, and obscure the rhetorical strategies employed by the original author. In professional, literary, and diplomatic contexts alike, such problems carry serious consequences. Speech interaction is one of the most attractive areas of research.[10]. This article provides a systematic analysis of the stylistic difficulties that arise when translators rely excessively on direct equivalence, drawing on a range of textual examples to illustrate each problem category. Stylistic features including register, tone, formality level, and rhetorical devices often failed to transfer consistently through translation chains.[11]

### **Defining direct translation**

Direct translation, in its strictest sense, refers to a procedure in which the translator maps source language units onto their closest formal equivalents in the target language without restructuring syntax, adjusting idiom, or modifying register.

It is important to distinguish between direct translation as a deliberate technique — employed, for instance, in interlinear glosses or legal instruments requiring formal correspondence — and direct translation as an unexamined default arising from limited competence or insufficient stylistic awareness. The stylistic problems discussed in this article are primarily associated with the latter case, though they may occasionally arise even in informed literal translation practice.

### **Major stylistic problems in direct translation**

#### **1. Register Inconsistency**

Register refers to the variety of language appropriate to a particular social situation, purpose, and audience. One of the most pervasive stylistic problems in direct translation is register mismatch — the failure to replicate the formal, informal, technical, or colloquial tone of the source text. When a translator renders a casual conversational exchange from English into Uzbek using formal lexical items, or translates an official document with colloquial phrasing, the target text signals an inappropriate social identity that distorts the communicative situation.

For example, the English phrase “Could you possibly give me a hand?” rendered directly as the Russian “Могли бы вы, возможно, дать мне руку?” is not only semantically misleading (taking “hand” literally) but also registers with excessive formality compared to the original's friendly informality. The stylistic texture of the request — its politeness strategy, its embedded humor, its social register — is entirely lost.

#### **2. Idiomatic Interference**

Idioms present a well-known obstacle to direct translation, but the problem extends beyond simple misunderstanding. When a translator renders an idiom literally, the result is typically opaque or absurd in the target language. The English idiom “to kick the bucket” translated literally into any language would produce an image of physical violence to a container rather than the intended meaning of death. However, the stylistic dimension of the problem is equally significant: idioms carry connotations of informality, cultural embeddedness, and expressive economy that no literal equivalent can reproduce.

Beyond individual idioms, direct translation is prone to idiomatic interference at the phrasal and clausal levels. A translator working from Uzbek into English may carry over syntactic patterns that are idiomatic in Uzbek but produce non-idiomatic English, such as the calqued construction “He from this book much learned” (from Uzbek “U bu kitobdan ko'p narsa o'rgandi”), which is grammatically possible in English but stylistically marked as foreign.

#### **3. Syntactic Rigidity and Unnatural Word Order**

Languages differ substantially in their preferred word orders, information-structural conventions, and syntactic flexibility. Direct translation frequently produces syntactically rigid target texts that preserve the source language's sentence architecture at the expense of target-language naturalness. Languages with fixed subject-verb-object order (such as English) and languages with freer word order governed by topic-comment or

theme-rheme principles (such as Russian, Uzbek, or German) are particularly prone to this mismatch.

The German sentence “Gestern habe ich in der Bibliothek ein altes Buch gefunden” follows a verb-second rule with temporal adverbial fronting. A direct translation into English — “Yesterday have I in the library an old book found” — is not merely awkward but is syntactically incorrect and stylistically alien. Even when the direct translation produces grammatical output, it may impose an information structure that misrepresents the emphasis and focus of the original.

#### 4. Rhetorical and Textual-Level Mismatches

Stylistic problems in direct translation are not confined to the word or sentence level. At the textual level, different languages employ different rhetorical conventions — for structuring arguments, establishing cohesion, signaling discourse relations, and organizing information across paragraphs. Kaplan (1966) famously illustrated these differences in his contrastive rhetoric framework, arguing that different cultural traditions favor distinct patterns of textual organization.

When a directly translated academic text retains the connective and cohesive devices of the source language rather than those conventional in the target, readers may perceive the text as poorly organized or stylistically immature. For instance, Arabic expository prose frequently employs paratactic coordination and repetition for emphasis — features that are stylistically marked as redundant or informal in English academic writing. A direct translation that preserves these rhetorical patterns will produce a text that feels rhetorically alien within its target genre.

#### English-uzbek translation challenges

English-Uzbek translation provides a compelling illustration of the stylistic problems arising from direct methods, given the significant structural, lexical, and cultural distance between the two languages. English is an analytic language with relatively fixed word order, extensive use of prepositions, and a strong preference for conciseness. Uzbek is an agglutinative language with a verb-final SOV order, a rich system of postpositions and case suffixes, and rhetorical conventions shaped by both Turkic and Persianate literary traditions. there are comments on the scientific-theoretical and comparative analysis of direct and indirect translation from a foreign language to Uzbek in linguistics. [12]

Consider the English sentence: “The decision was made after extensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders.” A direct Uzbek rendering might preserve the passive voice and bureaucratic register, but Uzbek strongly favors active constructions and does not use the passive with the same frequency or stylistic effect as English. The result is a text that reads as over-formal, even pompous, to an Uzbek audience, where the same communicative content would be more naturally rendered in active voice with different lexical choices.

Similarly, English metaphorical expressions related to time (“time is money,” “deadline,” “time management”) reflect specific cultural assumptions about temporality and productivity that do not map directly onto Uzbek cultural schemas. Direct translation of such expressions produces not only semantic confusion but also stylistic incongruity, importing foreign value systems into the target text without the cultural mediation that would make them meaningful.

### Conclusion

Direct translation, while occasionally appropriate for specific technical or pedagogical purposes, consistently generates stylistic problems when applied as a general translation strategy. Register inconsistency, idiomatic interference, collocational infelicity, syntactic rigidity, and rhetorical mismatch collectively undermine the communicative effectiveness and aesthetic quality of directly translated texts. These problems are not peripheral concerns but affect the fundamental task of translation: enabling texts to function as intended within their target cultural and communicative contexts.

Stylistic competence — the ability to perceive, analyze, and reproduce the expressive, tonal, and rhetorical qualities of a source text — must be recognized as a core dimension of translator training alongside linguistic accuracy and cultural knowledge. As translation practice continues to evolve in response to globalization, digital communication, and cross-cultural dialogue, the ability to navigate the stylistic dimensions of language difference will only become more vital.

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