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ANTHROPONYMS IN THE TEXT “BABURNAMA” AND THEIR REPRESENTATION IN TRANSLATION

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Abstract

This article examines anthroponyms in the text “Baburnama” and their representation in translation. It analyzes how personal names are rendered in three well-known translations by Leyden–Erskine, A. Beveridge, and V. Texton, comparing them with the original source text. Particular attention is given to the anthroponyms “Shaikh Mazidbek,” “Umarshaikh Mirza,” “Babur Mirza,” and “Ali Mazidbek Kavchin,” which are selected for detailed analysis.

Keywords: Anthroponyms, transliteration, adaptation, archaism, semantic shift, receptor, Baburnama, translation studies, proper names, linguoculturology.

Introduction

Scholars both abroad and in Uzbekistan have carried out certain studies on the translation of anthroponyms, the specific issue of anthroponyms in “Baburnama” and their linguocultural features has not been sufficiently addressed.

In the opening pages of Baburnama, the author speaks about his father, Umarshaikh Mirza. In this context, Babur also provides brief but rich information about the princes and nobles who served under his father. For example, «Яна бир Шайх Мазидбек эди, манга аввал бек атка ани қилиб эдилар. Забти ва тузуки хейли яхши эди. (Абулқосим –М.М.) Бобур мирзоға хизмат қилғондур. Умаршайх мирзо қошида андин улугроқ бек йўқ эди. Фосиқ киши эрди»

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(Baburnama. 2002; 41), at the same time, he describes not only the commander's competence in governing the state and his loyal service to his rulers, but also certain personal shortcomings characteristic of his personality. In addition, this passage summarizes the key features of anthroponym representation in Baburnama translation. In order to identify the problems of anthroponym translation and demonstrate possible solutions, the above-mentioned excerpt will be subjected to analysis. In Leyden-Erskine translation it is rendered as "There was another named Sheikh Mazid Beg, who was first appointed my governor. His arrangements and discipline were excellent. He had been in the service of Babur Mirza. No man stood higher in the esteem of Omer-Sheikh Mirza than himself. He was, however, of grossly libidinous habits..." (Leiden-Erskine II; 1826; 22-23).

When considering the translation of anthroponyms, the name "Sheikh Mazid Beg" is rendered in the target text as "Sheikh Mazid Beg". In this translation, the element "Beg" is separated from "Mazid". In Uzbek tradition, the addition of the word beg to male personal names expresses respect and honor. From a Baborian perspective, this anthroponym also indicates that the person was one of the begs, i.e., a member of the ruling elite. In this context, it is also noted that Babur himself was referred to as bek atka a tutor or mentor appointed to princes or princesses, typically selected from among the begs due to their high responsibility and trustworthiness [1; 90]. The anthroponym "Umar-Sheikh Mirza" is translated as "Omer-Sheikh Mirza", where it is presented in three components. However, the hyphen is used to show the connection between "Umar" and "Sheikh" indicating their structural unity within the name. The anthroponym "Babur Mirza" is reproduced through transliteration as "Babur Mirza". In addition to this, the author also pays attention to the characterological and psychological features of these historical figures. The sentence "Умаршайх мирзо қошида андин улўғроқ бек йўқ эди" is translated as "No man stood higher in the esteem of Omer-Sheikh Mirza than himself". This translation is rendered quite accurately. The phrase "in

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the presence/esteem of Omer-Sheikh Mirza” within the sentence adds a descriptive and expressive nuance to the text, which the translator has effectively captured. However, such a form of praise does not prevent the narrative from indicating Babur’s critical remark regarding the moral weakness (*fosiq*) of Mazid Beg. The word *fosiq* is defined in dictionaries as “a person who engages in evil deeds, follows a corrupt path, is immoral, and involved in sinful actions” [2,72]. At first glance, the mention of this flaw may create the impression that it nullifies all the positive qualities associated with Mazid Beg. However, if Babur’s intention is correctly understood, the issue becomes clearer. In this context, Babur’s aim was to emphasize Mazid Beg’s influence at his father’s court and his usefulness as a servant of the state. In this sense, the problem is resolved once the authorial intent is properly interpreted. It appears that the Leiden–Erskine translation team correctly grasped this underlying intention within the text. As is well known, “before undertaking translation, it is necessary to thoroughly study the work to be translated, conduct preliminary research on its vocabulary and artistic features, and prepare materials and reference data on its internal structure, imagery, socio-historical context, artistic devices, and style; such preparation contributes to a successful translation” [4; 8]. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Leiden–Erskine approached the text in precisely this manner.

In A.Beveridge translation, “Shaikh Mazid Beg was another, my first guardian, excellent in rule and method. He must have served (*khidmat qilghandur*) under Babur Mirza (Shahrukhi). There was no greater beg in Umar Shaikh Mirza’s presence. He was a vicious person...” (A.Beveridge. 1921; 26). In this passage, the anthroponym “Shaikh Mazid Beg” is transferred into the translation as “Shaikh Mazid Beg”. Here, the translator again renders the name in a three-component structure, separating “Mazid” and “Beg”. This approach reflects an attempt to convey, at a pragmatic level, that Shaikh Mazid was one of the begs, i.e., a member of the ruling elite, in a way that is understandable to the target

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reader. The anthroponym “Umar-Shaikh Mirza” is translated as “Umar Shaikh Mirza”, which is identical to the Leiden–Erskine rendering. In the case of “Babur Mirza” the translator uses transliteration and renders it as “Babur Mirza (Shahrukhi)” [1;582], adding “Shahrukhi” in brackets. This addition serves a pragmatic function, helping the target reader understand that Babur was the grandson of Shahruk. However, A. Beveridge’s translation of the sentence “Умаршайх мирзо қошида андин улугроқ бек йўқ эди” as “There was no greater beg in Umar Shaikh Mirza’s presence” removes the comparative force of the original text. The omission of “than” results in a loss of comparative meaning, leading to a translation error. The descriptive phrase “фосиқ киши эрди” referring to Mazid Beg is translated as “He was a vicious person” which shifts the interpretation significantly. This rendering portrays him as a politically hostile or malicious figure, whereas Babur intended to indicate moral weakness rather than political opposition or enmity.

In W. Texton’s translation, the passage is rendered as follows: “Another was Shaykh Mazid Beg. He was appointed my first beg atākā. His management and administration were unquestionable. He had served Abu’l-Qasim Babur Mirza. There was no greater beg in Umar Shaykh Mirza’s service than he, but he was a vicious” (W. Texton, 1996: 48). The phrase “...фосиқ киши эрди” is translated as “he was a vicious man” which corresponds to “a corrupt/immoral (wicked) person”. The anthroponym “Babur Mirza” in the source text is rendered as “Abu’l-Qasim Babur Mirza” where the addition of “Abu’l-Qasim” allows the reader to fully understand the historical and nominative form of Babur Mirza’s identity. In translating “Shaikh Mazid Beg” and “Umar Shaykh Mirza”, the translator follows a similar strategy to the other translators, reproducing the names through transliteration while preserving their structural form. In this translation, anthroponyms are also conveyed with pragmatic adequacy. W. Texton correctly interprets the meaning of the sentence expressing Mazid Beg’s status at the court of Umar Shaykh Mirza “there was no greater beg than him”

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and translates it as “There was no greater beg in Umar Shaykh Mirza’s service than him”, which accurately reflects the comparative meaning of the original text. Thus, in this passage, Texton demonstrates an attempt to render anthroponyms in accordance with the source text, while also preserving the characterological and psychological portrayal of Mazid Beg.

In the practice of translating classical texts, translators encounter a wide range of challenges. Classical textual features such as symbolic and allegorical elements, allusions, archaisms, semantic shifts, and semantic expansion require careful interpretation. A translator who fails to properly understand these aspects especially in Uzbek classical prose will find it difficult to fully reveal the essence of the work. G. Salomov accurately identifies and interprets such issues in translation practice. He notes: “For a translator, the difficulty of word selection is even greater. Because when rendering a work into another language, the translator cannot freely choose any preferred words from among dozens of alternatives to express the described phenomenon... The translator has the freedom of word choice only within the limits of faithfully reproducing the author’s intended meaning in the target language. If the chosen word corresponds to the original, the meaning hidden within that word will come alive in our language; otherwise, it may become vague and unclear” [3; 166]. It becomes clear that the translator’s task and, in a sense, their mastery is reflected in finding the most appropriate solutions to the challenges encountered in the translation process. In resolving these issues, the translator must deeply understand the essence of anthroponyms, event descriptions, and character portrayal in the source text. This requires not only dictionary-based knowledge but also a profound familiarity with the history, folklore, literary sources, and linguistic features of the author’s cultural environment.

The brief description of Ali Mazid Beg Qavchin in Baburnama enables a direct comparison with Sheikh Mazid Beg. As a result, the reader, through logical comparison, comes to understand how diverse the character traits of the begs

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serving under Umar Shaykh Mirza were, as well as their positions within the Timurid court.

It appears that Umar Shaykh Mirza consistently attempted to preserve the tradition of hereditary succession within administrative positions in the Timurid state (i.e., the transfer of certain ranks from father to son). Babur clearly perceives this situation and implicitly describes the psychological dynamics and conciliatory political strategies involved in this process.

From the very first sentence describing Ali Mazid Beg Qavchin, Babur's mastery in revealing key aspects of character psychology becomes evident. This figure had twice shown hostile actions against the realms of Umar Shaykh and Babur—once in Akhsi and once in Tashkent. Babur explicitly records this within a defined temporal and spatial framework: “Another was Ali Mazid Beg Qavchin. He became an enemy twice: once in Akhsi and again in Tashkent. He was a hypocrite, immoral, ungrateful, and a wicked man” (Baburnama, 2002: 41). Although the comparison with the previously mentioned beg is not explicitly stated in the narrative, the text naturally encourages the reader to make a logical juxtaposition. At the same time, it contributes to the narrative coherence of the work. The reader forms a unified understanding of the events surrounding Umar Shaykh Mirza through a comparative perception of individual psychological portrayals.

In Leiden–Erskine's translation, this aspect is reflected as follows: “Ali Mazid Beg Kuchin was another. He twice rebelled, once in Akhsi and once in Tashkend. He was a libidinous, treacherous, good-for-nothing hypocrite” (Leiden–Erskine II; 1826: 23). The anthroponym “Ali Mazid Beg Qavchin” is reconstructed as “Ali Mazid Beg Kuchin”. In this rendering, the translator appears to interpret “Qavchin” not as an ethnonym or tribal affiliation, but as part of a personal name. At the same time, the element “Beg” is separated from the name, making it clear for the target reader that the referent belongs to the class of begs. In the source text, however, Babur emphasizes that Ali Mazid Beg belonged to the Qavchin

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group and served Babur with loyalty. The author highlights his hypocrisy through expressions such as “he rebelled twice”, “hypocrite”, “ungrateful” and “worthless person” expressed in the phrase: “...мунофиқ ва фосиқ ва ҳаромнамак ва ярамас киши эди”. This is translated as: “He was a libidinous, treacherous, good-for-nothing hypocrite”, which corresponds to “an immoral, betraying, worthless hypocrite”. In this case, the translator does not exaggerate or diminish the meaning; instead, special attention is given to the descriptive expressions that convey the psychological and character-related portrayal of the figure in the original text.

In A. Beveridge’s translation, the passage is rendered as: “Ali-mazid Quchin was another; he rebelled twice, once at Akhsi, once at Tashkint. He was disloyal, untrue to his salt, vicious and good-for nothing” (A. Beveridge, 1921: 26). The anthroponym “Ali Mazid Beg” is translated as “Ali-mazid Quchin”. In this case, the translator combines “Ali” and “Mazid” into a single lexical unit, while also treating the tribal designation “Quchin” as part of the personal name. As a result, the term “Qavchin” is rendered as a nominal element rather than as an ethnonym. In the source text, however, “Beg” clearly indicates a noble rank, showing that Mazid Beg belonged to the class of begs. In this translation, the moral characterization “... мунофиқ ва фосиқ ва ҳаромнамак ва ярамас киши эди” is rendered as “He was disloyal, untrue to his salt, vicious and good-for nothing”. The phrase “untrue to his salt” is a literal translation of “haromnamak”, preserving its cultural and idiomatic meaning within English.

Thus, although the translator successfully reproduces the descriptive and evaluative components of the original text, the reconstruction of anthroponyms shows certain shifts in naming structure and ethnocultural interpretation. B. Texton’s translation, by contrast, more explicitly separates the elements of the name and clarifies the Qavchin affiliation, making the ethnic identity more transparent for the target reader. Overall, both translations attempt to preserve the pragmatic and semantic features of Babur’s characterization of Ali Mazid Beg

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Qavchin, although with different strategies and varying degrees of cultural precision.

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