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INDIRECT TRANSLATION OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN DAILY LIFE AND OBJECT IMAGERY IN REMARQUE'S DER WEG ZURÜCK: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN RUSSIAN AND UZBEK TRANSLATIONS

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Abstract

This study examines how figurative language depicting everyday objects in Erich Maria Remarque's novel Der Weg zurück is translated into Russian and Uzbek, focusing on the effects of indirect (relay) translation on stylistic nuance. The novel's ordinary items – chairs, clothing, candles, mirrors, bread, coffee – carry symbolic weight, reflecting postwar trauma, peace, and absurdity in the source texts. We conduct a comparative structural-semantic analysis of selected passages containing metaphors, similes, grotesque imagery, metonymy, irony, hyperbole, and symbolism. By aligning the German source with its Russian translation and the Uzbek re-translation (via Russian), we identify shifts, losses, and substitutions in figurative expressions. The results show that while some stylistic devices (similes, basic symbolism) are preserved across translations, others (metaphors, subtle irony) undergo significant modulation or loss. We interpret these shifts through the lens of translation theory – including Catford's shifts, Nida's equivalence, skopos theory (Vermeer) and Nord's loyalty principle – to understand the influence of linguistic, cultural, and relay factors. The discussion highlights that indirect translation can compound the dilution of figurative meaning, posing challenges for style preservation and cross-cultural equivalence.

The paper concludes with implications for maintaining literary style and symbolic resonance in indirect translation practice.

Keywords: Indirect translation; figurative language; stylistic devices; translation shifts; cross-cultural equivalence; postwar literature

Background

Erich Maria Remarque's novel Der Weg zurück (1928) depicts the difficult homecoming of German soldiers after World War I, portraying the psychological and social turbulence of the postwar period. A distinctive feature of this novel is Remarque's use of everyday life scenes and mundane objects not merely as realistic detail, but as vehicles of rich figurative meaning. Ordinary items – a chair, a shirt, a candle, a mirror, a loaf of bread, a cup of coffee – are elevated into symbols of life, peace, longing, loss, or memory for the war-torn characters. Through such objects, Remarque's narrative merges the banal with the profound, conveying the inner anguish of individuals and the instability of their social environment in the aftermath of war. These subtle layers of symbolism create a figurative resonance: everyday materials become metaphors or emblems reflecting the soldiers' trauma, hopes, and altered values.

Translating Remarque's figurative language poses a challenge, as the translator must capture not only the literal content but also the stylistic devices and connotations that imbue ordinary objects with deeper significance. This challenge is amplified in the case of indirect translation, where the target text is produced from an intermediate translated version rather than the original. In our case, the Russian translation of Der Weg zurück serves as an intermediate source for the Uzbek translation, a scenario common in Soviet-era Central Asia. Historically, many Western literary works, including Remarque's novels, were introduced to

Uzbek readers via Russian translations, due to linguistic accessibility and institutional mediation. This relay process risks compounding translation shifts: as one adage suggests, "if something is lost in translation, then something is doubly lost in indirect translation" (Güércio, 2022). The background context of this study thus involves both the literary significance of Remarque's imagery and the translation-historical practice of indirect translation from German to Uzbek through Russian.

Previous research in translation studies highlights several theoretical frameworks relevant to this problem. J. C. Catford's concept of translation shifts defines shifts as "departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL to the TL" (Venuti, 2000), providing a lens to categorize changes in form or meaning that occur in translation. Eugene Nida's theory of equivalence distinguishes formal correspondence from dynamic equivalence, where the latter "aims at complete naturalness of expression" and seeks to relate the message to the receptor's cultural context (Venuti, 2000). Nida emphasized that slavish adherence to the source form can "kill the spirit" of the message (Venuti, 2000), underlining the need to preserve effect even if form changes. Functionalist approaches, especially Skopos theory (Vermeer) and Nord's loyalty principle, add that translators choose strategies based on the purpose of the translation and the expectations of target readers while maintaining ethical loyalty to the source author's intent (Nord, 1991). In literary translation, this often means balancing the original stylistic effect with target-culture readability and genre conventions. Stylistics scholarship, such as G. W. Pan's Deutsche Stilistik, further provides definitions of the devices in question: for example, a metaphor is described as the transfer of an image from one referent to another based on similarity, "merging [the elements] or seeing them as identical," thereby enriching and vivifying the expression (Pan, 2010).

Against this backdrop, our study focuses on how Remarque's figurative depictions of daily-life objects have been handled in a Russian translation and an Uzbek translation (the latter indirectly via Russian). By examining specific textual examples, we aim to understand to what extent the symbolic and emotional content survives the journey through two languages, and what this reveals about cross-cultural equivalence in indirect literary translation.

Motivation and Objective

The primary motivation for this research is the observation that translations, especially indirect ones, may exhibit noticeable shifts in figurative language that could alter the reader's experience of a literary work. Der Weg zurück provides an illustrative case: its subtle interweaving of literal daily realities with figurative subtext (postwar angst, yearning for peace, grotesque humor) is integral to its artistic impact. If these nuances are diluted or lost in translation, the target audience might receive a significantly different narrative tone or thematic emphasis. This is not merely a linguistic loss but a cultural and emotional one, as the imagery of everyday objects in the novel carries universal human resonances (hunger, home, safety, disillusionment) that are key to the novel's message about the aftermath of war.

The objective of this study is therefore to conduct a detailed comparative analysis of figurative language translation in Der Weg zurück, specifically:

- To identify examples of figurative expressions in the source text that involve daily life objects or settings (metaphors, similes, personifications, grotesque descriptions, hyperbole, symbols, and ironic or sarcastic tones).
- To compare these instances across the German original, the Russian translation, and the Uzbek translation, highlighting any shifts in meaning, tone, or stylistic device.

- To analyze the nature of these shifts: Are they omissions, reductions in imagery, substitutions with different images, or additions? Do they stem from linguistic constraints, cultural considerations, or the relay translation process?
- To apply translation theory insights to interpret the findings. For example, we consider whether observed changes can be seen as obligatory shifts due to structural differences (Catford) or as optional shifts reflecting the translator's strategy; whether they indicate a tilt towards dynamic equivalence (naturalization) at the expense of literal content or vice versa; and how the translators' decisions align with or diverge from the skopos (intended function) of the translation.
- Ultimately, to assess the implications of indirect translation on preserving an author's style and to formulate recommendations for translators and researchers. If certain types of figurative content are systematically lost in relay translation, this points to the need for greater awareness or different methodologies (such as consulting the source text or using annotations to convey lost nuances).

This research is additionally motivated by a gap in the literature on Uzbek translation studies. While translation of Russian and Western literature into Uzbek during the 20th century is well-documented, detailed case studies of how stylistic features fare in indirect translation are scarce. By focusing on a German-Russian-Uzbek sequence, we contribute to understanding the transference of literary style in a triangular translation scenario, relevant not only for Central Asia but for any context where translations often pass through lingua franca mediators.

In summary, our study is driven by both a descriptive aim (to document and understand what happened to Remarque's imagery in Russian and Uzbek) and a prescriptive aim (to use these findings to reflect on best practices for achieving cross-cultural and cross-linguistic equivalence in figurative meaning when direct translation is not possible).

Statement of Contribution and Methods

Contribution: This paper offers a novel comparative case study of indirect literary translation, combining close textual analysis with theoretical interpretation. The central contribution lies in uncovering how multilayered figurative meanings in a source text can be affected by relay translation. By systematically examining multiple stylistic devices in Der Weg zurück and their fate in two target languages, we provide empirical evidence of the kinds of shifts that occur and the potential cumulative loss of meaning. The study bridges German literary analysis, Slavic and Turkic translation practice, and general translation theory. To our knowledge, this is the first in-depth analysis focusing on the Uzbek translation of Remarque in comparison with its Russian intermediary, thereby adding to the body of knowledge in translation studies about lesser-studied target languages and the influence of Russian-English mediation in world literature transfer. Furthermore, by integrating perspectives from Catford, Nida, Vermeer, Nord, and Pan, we contribute a multidisciplinary discussion on how to evaluate equivalence and style in translations that are once or twice removed from the original.

Methods: Our methodology is qualitative, grounded in comparative textual analysis. We first selected key passages from Der Weg zurück that exemplify Remarque's use of figurative language involving everyday objects or ordinary scenes. These passages and phrases (identified through close reading of Remarque's original German text as well as its Russian and Uzbek translations: Remarque, 1928/2021/2022) cover a spectrum of stylistic devices:

- Metaphor (e.g. the bar counter with "teeth"),
- Simile (e.g. clothing puffing up "like a balloon"),
- Grotesque or composite imagery (e.g. a doorman likened to "half hussar, half bishop"),
- Metonymy/Symbolism (e.g. church copper plates turned into grenades),

- Irony/Sarcasm (e.g. threatening violence in a friendly tone),
- Hyperbole (e.g. exaggerated rounds of drinks "raining" like a storm), and
- Embedded symbol (e.g. small fish in a glass as a metaphor for captured youth and memory).

For each selected instance, we obtained the corresponding text from the Russian translation (Remarque, 2021) and the Uzbek translation (Remarque, 2022), which was likely based on the Russian version. The primary data sources were compiled manually into a document that aligned excerpts from the German original (Remarque, 1928), the Russian version, and the Uzbek version for each key passage. Additionally, a secondary document contained analytic commentary (in Uzbek) on these excerpts and their stylistic features. We cross-verified that the Uzbek translation was indeed done via Russian by noting that certain choices in Uzbek mirror the Russian text even in cases of deviation from the German (e.g., the use of a Russian idiom's equivalent).

Our analysis proceeded by first describing the figurative meaning and function of each source text example, drawing on literary analysis and existing interpretations. We then mapped the translations: noting how the Russian rendered the figurative expression and how the Uzbek rendered it, comparing both to the original. Special attention was paid to changes in imagery, tone, or intensity. We documented whether a stylistic device was preserved (e.g., a metaphor translated as the same or a comparable metaphor), modified (e.g., turned into a simile or a plain description), or omitted. We also observed any instances of compensation, where the translator added a figurative element elsewhere to make up for a loss, or cultural substitution, where an image was replaced by a culturally familiar one.

To interpret the findings, we applied relevant theoretical concepts:

- We identified shift types in Catford's terms (structural shifts, class shifts, level shifts, etc., or more generally, changes that are obligatory vs. optional (Venuti, 2000)).
- We evaluated equivalence effect: did the translation aim for a similar response in the reader (dynamic equivalence), even if the image changed, or did it preserve formal similarity at the cost of effect? This was informed by Nida's notion that a dynamically equivalent translation should evoke the same feelings and understanding as the original (Venuti, 2000).
- We considered the skopos of each translation. The Russian translation, produced in the early 20th century USSR, might have prioritized broad intelligibility and swift publication over stylistic subtlety, given its likely intended mass readership. The Uzbek translation, as a relay, might have had the purpose of making world literature accessible to Uzbek readers in their native language, possibly simplifying some imagery under the assumption that it was "foreign" or overly novel. We used Nord's concept of loyalty (Nord, C. 1991) to question whether the translators maintained loyalty to Remarque's artistic intent or felt justified in altering stylistic elements to suit target norms.
- We also referenced stylistic theory (Pan's definitions) to gauge the significance of a lost device. For example, understanding that a metaphor "presents things in new and unusual perspectives" (Pan, G. W. 2010) helped us assess the creative loss when a metaphor is replaced by a literal phrase.

Throughout our analysis, we cited specific examples directly from the texts to support each observation, using the line references to the provided documents. By combining these methods – close reading, comparative alignment, and theoretical reasoning – we ensured a comprehensive approach to tracing and

explaining the transformations of Remarque's figurative language in indirect translation.

Results

Our comparative analysis revealed a range of outcomes for Remarque's figurative imagery in the Russian and Uzbek translations. In some cases, the vividness and meaning of the original were well preserved; in others, there were clear shifts resulting in loss or change of effect. We present the findings according to the type of stylistic device, with illustrative examples:

1. Metaphor (Animalistic Aggression): Remarque uses a striking metaphor in a chaotic bar scene: "Die Zähne der Theke blitzen." This literally means "The bar counter's teeth flash," comparing the row of beer taps on the counter to sharp teeth gleaming (Remarque, 1928) Remarque – Russian translation (2021). The metaphor personifies the bar as a beast with bared teeth, subtly implying a sense of menace or wildness beneath the merriment. This imagery conveys that even in peacetime revelry, a lurking aggression or primal energy remains – a reflection of postwar psychological unrest. In the Russian translation, however, this metaphor is lost. The line is rendered as "На стойке сверкают пивные краны." – "On the counter, the beer taps sparkle" (Remarque, 2021). The Russian translator explicitly mentions the taps (краны) and describes them literally as sparkling, removing the animate "teeth" image. The tone shifts from ominous to neutral: a bar counter with shining taps is a far less threatening image than a creature flashing its fangs. Consequently, the symbolic hint that the soldiers perceive even a bar as a dangerous, beastly environment is diminished. The Uzbek translation, working from Russian, follows the same literal approach: "Peshtaxtada pivo kranlari ko'zni oladi," meaning "On the counter, the beer taps dazzle (the eye)" (Remarque, 2022). Like the Russian, it names the taps and says

they glint brightly, with no mention of "teeth." The Uzbek phrase ko'zni oladi ("takes the eye") is an idiomatic way to say something is very bright or catches one's gaze, which aligns with "sparkle." Thus, both translations converted the metaphor into a straightforward visual description. Implication: A translation shift has occurred – specifically a category shift from metaphorical language to non-metaphorical language. In Catford's terms, this is a departure from formal equivalence (Catford, 1965), and it results in a loss of the metaphor's connotative meaning (the lurking threat). The change might be influenced by a preference for clarity: perhaps "teeth of the counter" was deemed too odd or unintelligible if translated word-for-word. From Nida's perspective, the translators opted for natural phrasing in the target language but sacrificed the dynamic equivalence of mood and implication. Nord might argue that this violates loyalty to the author's intent, as an element of Remarque's message (the persistence of violence in everyday life) is weakened (Nord, 1991). Notably, neither the Russian nor Uzbek translator attempted to compensate for this loss elsewhere – the feral aura simply evaporates. This confirms the notion that something "doubly lost" can occur in relay translation: once the Russian text removed the metaphor, the Uzbek could not reintroduce it without direct reference to the German original (Güércio, 2022).
2. Simile (Comic Relief and Absurdity): In another scene, Remarque introduces a bit of dark humor: a character's beer-soaked pants billow out "wie ein Luftballon" – "like a balloon" (Remarque, 1928). This simile vividly conveys the image of trousers puffing up with liquid, adding a moment of grotesque comedy in an otherwise tense scuffle. It also metaphorically suggests the absurdity of mundane mishaps juxtaposed with a man's furious reaction (he "brüllt vor Wut" – roars with rage). The simile here is straightforward and culturally accessible, and both translations manage to preserve it well. The Russian version states, "штаны... надуваются воздушным шариком," using the phrase "naduvayutsya

vozdushnym sharikom" – literally "inflate like a balloon" (Remarque, 2021). The Uzbek translation similarly says, "shini pufakday shishib," meaning "his pants swelled up like a balloon" (Remarque, 2022) (with pufak meaning a balloon or bubble). In this instance, the imagery of a balloon is retained across languages; the translators found direct equivalents (vozdushny sharik, pufak) that convey the same visual and comic effect. The consistency suggests that no strong cultural or linguistic barrier prevented the transfer; a balloon is a universally known object, and the idea of puffing up is easily understood. The Uzbek translator, likely calquing from the Russian, did not dilute the simile despite working indirectly – indicating that when the first translation preserves a figurative device, the relay can carry it through intact. According to the stylistic commentary in the second analytic file (containing a detailed comparison of the German original with the Russian and Uzbek translations), this unexpected and concrete simile "stands out by its clarity and evokes sympathy through humor," merging absurd aesthetics with the characters' inner turmoil. Indeed, both target texts succeeded in delivering that clarity and humor. We also note that the Uzbek translator went a step further a few sentences later: when describing how rare good beer is, the German says "it is hard to get such good beer nowadays," which Russian translated literally, but Uzbek injected an idiomatic simile: "bunday toza pivo – anqoning urug'i," literally "such good beer is as rare as the phoenix's seed" (Remarque, 2022). This colorful Uzbek expression (comparable to "hen's teeth" in English) was not in the original at all. It represents a stylistic substitution – adding a figurative phrase where the original had a plain statement. This suggests the Uzbek translator felt free to embellish in places, perhaps to compensate in tone for other losses or simply to use a culturally resonant metaphor for rarity. Such a move aligns with dynamic equivalence aiming for natural expressiveness (Venuti, 2004), and it demonstrates that indirect translation can sometimes

introduce new stylistic flourishes. However, additions like these also slightly shift the literary style away from Remarque's and towards the translator's voice or the target culture's idiomatic richness.

3. Grotesque Imagery (Composite Character Portrayal): Remarque often mixes incongruous elements to create a grotesque or ironic effect. A notable example is the description of a porter (doorman) at a dance hall: "Phantasieuniform des Portiers – halb Husar, halb Bischof." The porter wears a "fantasy uniform" looking "half like a hussar (cavalry officer) and half like a bishop" (Remarque, 1928). This bizarre combination of a military and ecclesiastical appearance encapsulates the novel's critique of postwar society: former soldiers and old institutions jumbled together, producing an absurd image. The German phrasing is concise and punchy, using halb… halb… to juxtapose the two roles within one figure. The Russian translation renders this as: "швейцар, похожий то ли на гусарского полковника, то ли на епископа," which means "a doorman, who looks either like a hussar colonel or like a bishop" (Remarque, 2021). The Russian expands the structure slightly ("either… or") but faithfully conveys the two components of the simile. The Uzbek translation likewise says: "darbon... suvoriylar polkovnigigayam, yepiskopgayam o'xshab ketadigan," effectively "a doorman who resembles both a cavalry colonel and a bishop" (Remarque, 2022). Both translations thus preserve the grotesque comparison, ensuring that the target readers see the same absurd image of a man who is simultaneously a garish military figure and a pious clergyman. What changes in translation is mostly the form: the German's elegant half–half construction becomes a more explicit simile in Russian/Uzbek (using "looks like…" constructions), which is a minor transposition for grammatical naturalness. Importantly, the meaning is intact. Our analysis notes that this image symbolically "combines high spirituality (bishop) and violence (hussar) in one figure, clashing opposite semes". Both translations

convey that clash. The phonetic nuance in German – the alliteration and rhythm of "halb Husar, halb Bischof" (with the h and b sounds) – is inevitably lost, as Russian and Uzbek use different wording. Such sonic effects rarely survive translation, especially not through an intermediate. Nonetheless, functionally the grotesque humor and the underlying message (society's incongruous blending of militarism and religion) remain accessible to the target audience. This suggests that where imagery is clear and essential, translators (even in relay) strive to maintain it. In Skopos terms, if the purpose was to produce a comparable literary impression, preserving this striking character description was necessary. The Uzbek translator had the benefit that the Russian text retained the simile, making it easier to carry over. Had the Russian simplified it, the Uzbek might have too. Here, indirect translation did not hinder stylistic equivalence; the pipeline worked smoothly for this example.

4. Metonymy and Symbolism (Objects as War and Peace): One of Remarque's powerful symbolic motifs is the transformation of material from peaceful use to war use, encapsulated in the line: "Die Kupferplatten sind zu Granaten eingeschmolzen worden." – "The copper plates have been melted down into grenades." (Remarque, 1928). In the novel, this refers to the copper roofing of a church's towers, removed and repurposed for making munitions. This stark factual statement is loaded with metonymic significance: the sacred (church roof) is literally converted into the profane (weapons of destruction). It stands as a metaphor for how war perverts culture and faith – sanctuary turned to ammunition. The Russian translation delivers this nearly word-for-word: "Медь переплавили на гранаты." – "They smelted the copper into grenades." (Remarque, 2021). Russian uses a general word "med'" (copper) since in context it's clear it refers to the copper sheets, and preserves the notion that it was transformed into "granaty" (grenades). The Uzbek translation is slightly more

interpretative: "Mis tunuka chig'anoq shaklida qayta quyilgan." (Remarque, 2022). This roughly translates to "The copper sheet was remolded in the shape of a shell." The word chig'anoq in Uzbek literally means "shell" (as in a seashell), but in context it appears to imply an artillery shell or some kind of ordnance – essentially equivalent to a grenade or bombshell. The translator might have chosen a term that he believed more familiar to Uzbek readers or was trying to avoid a direct borrowing for "grenade." Although phrased differently, the core idea remains: the church's copper became war material. The symbolic metamorphosis is thus preserved across both translations, with only minor semantic shift (grenade vs. shell casing) that does not change the overall message. Our analysis, informed by the dissertation excerpt, highlights this as a metonymic image carrying broad ideological weight: "the transformation of the church's copper plates into a weapon – grenades – signifies a massive symbolic metamorphosis: sacredness → destruction, object of faith → instrument of violence". Both the Russian and Uzbek texts convey that metamorphosis clearly. The Uzbek wording might require the reader to infer "shell for weapons" from "shell shape," but given the war context, it is understandable. Here we see an example of a literal translation of content with full preservation of underlying symbolism. Unlike the metaphor of the bar's "teeth," which was perhaps too novel, this statement is straightforward enough that translators did not feel the need to alter it. It also represents a factual plot point (materials of a church were used for war), which translators tend to handle faithfully. The successful transfer of this device means that the cross-cultural equivalence of this symbol is achieved – readers of the translations can grasp the same commentary on war's sacrilege. In terms of translation shifts, there is virtually none in Russian (a direct translation) and only a minor lexical shift in Uzbek ("grenade" to "shell") which could be seen as an adaptation possibly for clarity.

5. Hyperbole (Excess and Escapism): The novel depicts the soldiers' attempt to drown their sorrows, often using exaggeration to highlight their desperation. One scene has the protagonists engaging in a drinking bout: "Wir schmeißen selbst eine Runde Bier mit Schnaps. Darauf hagelt es sieben weitere Runden von den andern." (Remarque, 1928). This translates as, "We ourselves treat (them) to a round of beer with schnapps. After that, it hails seven more rounds from the others." The phrase "hagelt es sieben weitere Runden" is a metaphorical hyperbole; "hageln" (to hail) implies that rounds of drinks are coming down like a hailstorm – fast, abundant, and perhaps destructive. It humorously exaggerates how the other group retaliates by buying seven rounds in return, creating an image of an onslaught of alcohol. The Russian translator preserved this figurative idiom closely: "В ответ градом сыплются еще семь «на всех». (Remarque, 2021). The key words gradom syplyutsya literally mean "fall by hail" – a direct parallel to the German "hageln." Russian retains the hyperbolic nature (drinks pouring like hailstones) and even the specific number seven. The rest of the sentence explains they are rounds for everyone ("na vseh"). The Uzbek translation conveys the content but slightly changes the imagery: "Keyin tin olmay… yetti marta bir qo'l-bir qo'ldan otamiz." (Remarque, 2022). This can be interpreted as "Then, without a break, we launch seven times, one after another." The phrase bir qo'l-bir qo'ldan otmoq is not a standard idiom; it literally suggests passing something hand to hand or doing one round after another. The translator's wording indicates a rapid succession of seven rounds, preserving the numeric hyperbole, but it does not explicitly liken it to a hailstorm. In other words, the Uzbek translator dropped the meteorological metaphor present in both German and Russian, and opted for a more literal description of sequential rounds. The intensity is still there (seven rounds, continuously), but the imagery of hail – which carries a sense of uncontrollable, nature's fury – is absent. Our analysis of this hyperbole notes that

through "excessive depiction beyond reality," Remarque exposes the society's "psychological mechanism of self-annihilation through intoxication". The "one round" vs "seven rounds raining" contrast symbolizes loss of will and a collective descent into oblivion. The Russian translation, by keeping gradom (hail), maintained the metaphor of an unpreventable, mechanical downpour – hinting at the lack of control. The Uzbek still implies lack of control (seven back-to-back rounds is frenzied), but it becomes a straightforward narrative of heavy drinking. This is a subtle example of how indirect translation might normalize a figurative expression: the Russian provided a target-language equivalent for the German idiom, but perhaps that idiom didn't translate smoothly into Uzbek. Instead of inventing a new metaphor (which could risk sounding unnatural in Uzbek), the translator described the effect plainly. We can classify this as a partial loss of figurative language – the quantity exaggeration remains (seven rounds), fulfilling the hyperbolic content, but the lively metaphor of "hail" is not explicitly in the Uzbek text. The overall scene of drunken excess still comes across to the Uzbek reader, so the narrative meaning is preserved, though with a bit less flair. The functional impact is arguably similar: readers understand the protagonists are drinking far too much. But from a stylistic viewpoint, one layer of Remarque's expressive technique has been thinned. This pattern resonates with what translation studies often find: secondary translations tend toward explicitation or simplification. The more a text is translated, the more its unusual turns of phrase risk being smoothed out. Our example confirms that risk. However, this is not a dramatic failure; one could argue the hyperbole survives in spirit if not in exact wording. According to the dissertation analysis, this scene's comedic veneer (a "merry drinking" facade) masks aggression and lack of control similar to the earlier ironic threat. Both Russian and Uzbek deliver the content that the men are

unrestrainedly drinking, thereby implicitly showing their inner void and resistance to reality, even if Uzbek readers don't visualize hail.

7. Symbolic Object (Peace and Memory in Nature): At one climactic reflective moment, the protagonist catches two "Stichlinge im Glas" – stickleback fish in a glass – while revisiting a childhood pond (Remarque, 1928). He holds them gently, feeling as if he has "captured his youth" in that glass, carrying it with him[50]. This entire episode is rich with symbolism: the clear water, the tiny fish, the act of preservation in a glass vessel – all represent the fragile remnants of innocence and the hope of peace that the character yearns to protect amidst a ruined world. The phrase "Stichlinge im Glas" (sticklebacks in the glass) itself is simple, almost like a caption to a still life, yet it encapsulates a universe of emotion. The Russian translation portrays the scene with equivalent detail: the protagonist catches колюшки (sticklebacks), puts them "в банку" (into a jar), and observes them (Remarque, 2021). The Russian chooses banka (a jar or large glass container) instead of a drinking glass, perhaps finding it more plausible that someone would use a jar to hold fish. Other than that slight shift (glass to jar), it retains the imagery: the clarity of the water, the sun reflections, the protagonist's breathless awe at the beauty, and the notion that he has caught his childhood and is carrying it home (Remarque, 2021). The Uzbek translation follows the Russian faithfully: he puts baliqchalarni (the little fish) into his banka (jar) and gazes at them (Remarque, 2022). Uzbek also uses banka (borrowed from Russian, meaning jar) since that was in the Russian text. The subsequent descriptions of the natural scene (salamanders, beetles, frog, memories of the past etc.) are rendered in detail in both translations. The symbolic import – that this small glass/jar with fish represents the cherished yet delicate corner of one's soul (memories, hopes) – is conveyed nearly identically. The final line in Uzbek even explicitly says "this small world… has more hidden than can be seen – memories

of days gone by, sorrowful and happy days" (Remarque, 2022), matching the Russian "I look and look; here there is more than can be seen, here there are memories, sadness and happiness of the past" (Remarque, 2021). Hence, the symbolism of the glass as a vessel of youth and peace remains intact. The only notable translation shift is the choice of container: German Glas (which might mean a drinking glass) versus Russian/Uzbek banka (a jar). This could be considered a minor pragmatic adaptation – perhaps the Russian translator pictured the scene more realistically with a jar, or misunderstood Glas as jar. In any event, this does not change the symbolic function: a transparent, fragile container holds something precious. In our analysis, im Glas (in the glass) as a locative phrase implies a "protected, closed-off space," and the small fish being "stored" there intensifies the metaphor of a small object holding great meaning. The translations preserve this nuance (a closed jar in Uzbek implies containment as well).

The very brevity of the phrase "Stichlinge im Glas" is part of its poetic impact – in German it stands alone as a short sentence, like a title of an image (Remarque, 1928). Russian and Uzbek embed it in narrative sentences, but one could argue the visual is still prominent. The Uzbek text even describes the sound environment: "Stichlinge im Glas — s, sh, l tovushlari … shovqinsiz muhitni ifoda etadi," noting that the alliteration of sibilant sounds in that phrase evokes a quiet atmosphere (Remarque, 2022). Of course, those specific alliterations are language-specific and don't carry into Russian or Uzbek ("kolyushki v banke" or "baliqchalar bankada" have different sounds). This phonetic loss is nearly unavoidable in translation.

However, the essence of the symbol – the purity, stillness, and emotional weight of that glass with fish – emerges strongly in all languages. This suggests that core symbols, being more conceptual and less language-tied than wordplay or idioms,

stand a good chance of survival even through indirect translation. The translators recognized the moment's importance and rendered it with care. If anything, the Uzbek version's slight explicitation (mentioning "this small world" and spelling out the presence of memories and feelings) might even make the symbolic message more overt to the reader than the German original, which leaves some inference to the reader. Such explicitation can occur in translations to ensure the reader catches the point. In doing so, the Uzbek (and Russian) texts fulfill what Nida would call transferring not just the signs but the meanings in a way the audience can readily grasp (Venuti, (Ed.) 2000). Given that this concluding image ties back to the novel's themes of longing and the possibility of regeneration (the cyclical nature, as implied by seasons in the scene), the translations successfully keep Remarque's vision intact.

Discussion

The results highlight several key issues and implications regarding figurative language translation, especially in an indirect translation scenario. Here we discuss these findings in the context of translation theories and broader cross-cultural considerations:

a. Translation Shifts and Their Accumulation: Using Catford's framework, many changes we observed can be classified as shifts – some at the lexical level (e.g., Zähne "teeth" → краны "taps"), others at the grammatical or structural level (German nominal metaphor → Russian full clause), and others at the stylistic level (implied meaning → explicit or omitted) (Venuti, (Ed.) 2004). Each individual shift might be justified by the translator's need to produce a fluent target sentence. However, in an indirect translation, shifts can accumulate. The Russian translator made certain choices (dropping a metaphor, adding a clarifying word, etc.), and the Uzbek translator, using the Russian text as a source, did not

have the opportunity to recover what was dropped and generally followed those choices, adding a few of their own adjustments. The result is a multi-stage filtering of the source text's style. This aligns with the notion that indirect translation can compound the loss of nuance (Güércio, 2022). From a quantitative perspective, if we consider how much of the figurative imagery was preserved: the majority of the identified devices survived in some form (which is encouraging), but the ones that did not were arguably among the most salient metaphors in terms of original tone (the "teeth" metaphor, the hail metaphor partially, etc.). This suggests a pattern: highly non-literal expressions that lack a readily accessible equivalent in the target language are most at risk. In our case, the Russian translator might have considered "teeth of the counter" too oblique, thus replaced it with a plain description, a classic example of a translation shift due to semantic complexity or presumed audience comprehension. The Uzbek translator had no trace of the original metaphor to work from, illustrating how a shift at Stage 1 is cemented at Stage 2.

b. Equivalence vs. Adaptation – A Delicate Balance: The translations exhibit a tension between faithfulness to the source image and adaptation to the target culture's language norms. On one hand, in instances like the "half hussar, half bishop" or the fish in the glass, the translators were quite faithful, preserving even fine details (the number seven in the hyperbole, the count of fish, the descriptive sequence of nature). On the other hand, where they adapted (like replacing metaphor with literal), it was likely out of concern for clarity or naturalness. According to Nida's typology, the Russian and Uzbek translators occasionally leaned toward dynamic equivalence, prioritizing a natural rendering over a formally equivalent one (Venuti, (Ed.) 2004). For example, making the bar scene read smoothly in Russian took precedence over maintaining the metaphor. The effect on the Russian reader – they would understand the bar is bright and noisy

– is achieved, but not the eerie feeling of a beast lurking. This raises the question: did the translator achieve dynamic equivalence (the same impact on the reader)? Probably not fully, because the impact of Remarque's line on a German reader includes subtle foreboding, whereas the impact on the Russian reader is just a vivid bar scene without foreboding. This is where equivalence becomes tricky: formal equivalence was broken, and dynamic equivalence is arguably weakened. In the framework of the 1960s-70s theorists, this might be seen as a slightly "under-translated" element. However, one must consider the constraints: perhaps the metaphor would have simply confused or amused Russian readers if rendered literally as "teeth."

c. Functional Considerations (Skopos and Loyalty): From a Skopos theory perspective, we ask: what was the purpose of these translations? The Russian translation likely aimed to introduce Remarque's work to Soviet readers in an accessible way. The skopos might have emphasized readability and straightforward storytelling, given the general readership of foreign novels in translation at that time. If so, the translator might have deliberately toned down experimental metaphors to align with target language norms or editorial expectations (Soviet translations in mid-20th century often favored standard language and clarity). The Uzbek translation, being produced presumably under similar cultural circumstances (perhaps by state publishing for classic literature), would share that purpose: making the novel readable for Uzbek audiences who mostly would not be familiar with German literary styles. The loyalty principle advocated by Christiane Nord holds that the translator has a responsibility to both the source author and the target audience (Nord, 1991). In these cases, the translators seem to have prioritized loyalty to the target readers (ensuring comprehension) a bit more than loyalty to Remarque's stylistic idiosyncrasies. Nord emphasizes that a translator should "not falsify the author's intention"

(Nord, 1991). – an intention here was to embed certain meanings in figurative language. We see that intention partly diluted. One might critique the translators for that loss, but one could also argue that pragmatic constraints (maybe tight deadlines, absence of footnotes or explanations in popular editions, etc.) compelled these choices.

The concept of intertextual coherence in Skopos theory posited by Vermeer suggests that the target text should make sense in its own culture and context (Venuti, (Ed.) 2004). The Russian translator may have thought "teeth of the bar" would break coherence for readers (they might pause and puzzle over it), so he ensured coherence by replacing it with "taps sparkle," fully coherent albeit less evocative. Vermeer also notes that a translator should be aware of the consequences of their choices on the target audience's reception (Venuti, (Ed.) 2004). In our case, the consequence was a slight shift in tone – something possibly deemed acceptable to fulfill the main communicative function (tell the story of soldiers coping after war). The target readers still get the anti-war message and the narrative, even if some literary coloring is paler.

d. Cultural and Linguistic Challenges: The differences we observed also highlight inherent disparities between languages and cultures. German often allows condensed and personified imagery (e.g., in one punchy noun phrase "Theke blitzen" with an implied metaphor). Russian and Uzbek, in conveying the same idea, might feel more comfortable unpacking or normalizing it. For instance, Russian and Uzbek do not commonly refer to inanimate objects with body parts unless it's a fixed expression. Schnauze zeigen (to show fangs/snarl) in German might be idiomatic, but in Russian, one would rarely say "стойка показала зубы" (the counter showed teeth) outside of poetic contexts. So part of the shift can be attributed to genre conventions and idiomatic ranges of the target languages. The relay nature means Uzbek conventions were doubly removed: first filtered by

Russian conventions, then by Uzbek. However, Uzbek sometimes added its own flavor (the phoenix's seed idiom) showing that cultural substitution can occur to maintain expressiveness.

It is noteworthy that the Uzbek translator felt comfortable adding an idiom for rarity, implying that in Uzbek storytelling, using a proverb is a way to connect with readers. This is a form of indigenization of the text. Yet, adding a local idiom also localizes the feel of the narrative slightly; the reader momentarily steps out of Remarque's Germany and into an Uzbek proverbial context. This is a known trade-off in literary translation: too foreign = possibly unrelatable, too domestic = lose foreign ambiance. Here it was just a small insertion, so probably harmless or even helpful for reader engagement.

e. Indirect Translation – Mitigating the Risks: Our analysis underscores typical pitfalls of relay translation: meaning degradation and style normalization. But how might these be mitigated? One approach is consultative translation – if the second translator (Uzbek) had access to the German original or annotations from it, they might catch nuances that the Russian missed or changed. For example, an Uzbek translator with knowledge of German might have decided to reintroduce "teeth" in some creative way (perhaps "bar counter's fangs" in Uzbek) or at least note it. In practice, many indirect translations historically did not involve such consultation due to time or resource constraints. Another approach is revision by comparatists: nowadays, an editor could compare the Uzbek against the German (via a Russian intermediate) and adjust some phrases. In the context of global literature, such efforts are seldom made for every figurative detail, but perhaps for key metaphors it could be worthwhile.

Our findings also reflect that indirect translation can succeed when the first translation is strong. The Russian translation of Der Weg zurück was, overall, quite faithful and evocative (it preserved most metaphors and all symbolism, as

we saw). Thus, the Uzbek translator working from a quality Russian text could produce a quality Uzbek text. The weakest link determined the outcome: in our case, the initial removal of the "teeth" metaphor in Russian. Had the Russian translator kept a metaphor (e.g., "на стойке оскалились краны" – "the taps bared like fangs" – a possible creative rendering), the Uzbek might have followed with something similar (since Uzbek can borrow Russian structure or at least get the idea of fangs). So, in indirect translation chains, the first translator's choices heavily influence subsequent ones.

f. Preservation of Style vs. Readability – Translators' Agency: There is a perennial discussion in translation studies about the translator's agency in preserving style. Some argue a translator should take risks to carry over metaphors and stylistic quirks, even if they seem unusual, to give the target reader a sense of the original's flavor. Others prioritize smoothing the text for readability. In our study, the evidence suggests the translators mostly leaned towards caution (smoothing out the riskiest figurative language). Given the era and context (likely mid-20th century Soviet translation norms), this was unsurprising. The outcome invites reflection: was something lost in terms of the novel's stylistic identity? Remarque's style has been characterized by critics as unsentimental but rich in symbolic detail and a mix of brutality and tenderness. The translations preserved the brutality and tenderness in content, but some symbolic detail (like the specific metaphor of "teeth") was toned down. This means a target reader might perceive Remarque's style as slightly more conventional than it truly is. For literary scholars or for cross-cultural appreciation of literature, this is a loss, because part of what distinguishes one author from another is precisely those unconventional phrasings.

However, one might argue that the spirit of Remarque's work – the narrative arc, the emotional beats – was transmitted. The scenes still function: the bar scene is

still rowdy (if less ominous), the porter still looks absurd, the church copper still speaks to war's sacrilege, the fights and drunks still illustrate despair, and the final nature scene still brings a poignant calm. If the ultimate aim was to convey Remarque's message about the difficulties of returning to civilian life and the longing for lost innocence, the translations did achieve that. This touches on the debate between content meaning and form meaning. While many formal elements (specific metaphors, wordplay, sound patterns) are often lost, translators may feel that as long as the core content and emotional message get across, they have succeeded.

g. Cross-Cultural Equivalence and Reader Reception: How do Russian and Uzbek readers receive these translated images? A Russian reader of the bar scene would visualize a lively pub; a German reader might have visualized something slightly more sinister. An Uzbek reader of the same scene would visualize roughly what the Russian described, maybe adding their own experiences of teahouses or chaikhanas if drawing parallels. None would be aware they missed a metaphor, unless they read a scholarly analysis or the original. Does this affect their interpretation? Possibly not in terms of plot, but it subtly affects the thematic coloring. The bar's menace was an early clue to readers that war's shadow lingers everywhere. Without it, the scene reads as more straightforward camaraderie and chaos, and the thematic clue is weaker. Reader reception studies might find that target readers focus on different elements – for instance, Uzbek readers might notice the proverb "anqoning urug'i" and find that humorous or relatable, which is an effect not present in the original or Russian. So the reading experience diverges slightly across cultures, in part due to these translational tweaks.

h. The Role of Theoretical Insights: The case at hand benefited from applying theories: Catford's shifts gave us a vocabulary to identify and classify what changed. Nida's equivalence theory helped frame whether those changes might

have been meant to maintain reader response. Nord's loyalty principle provides a yardstick to question if the translators served the author's art or bent it to the audience – in our findings, we see an interplay of both. Pan's stylistics reminds us why those figures of speech mattered in the first place, by explaining their function (e.g., metaphor for vivification, hyperbole for intensity, etc.) (Pan, 2010). The theoretical framework thus enriches our understanding of the practical outcomes, and in discussion we can say our observations concur with general trends noted in translation studies: e.g., that indirect translations often lean towards standardization or that translators often resolve ambiguity by interpretation (as the Russian did by interpreting Glas as a banka, a jar).

Implications for Translation Practice: For translators and publishers dealing with indirect translation: - Awareness: Being conscious that each figurative element carries potential significance is step one. Our study shows even a single metaphor can reflect a theme (the "teeth" reflecting latent aggression). Translators, including those working from an intermediate text, should be alert to these possibilities and consider checking the original or commentary if available. - Training: Translators should be trained to handle figurative language by seeking target-language equivalents that preserve both sense and tone. If a direct equivalent is lacking, creative solutions (possibly footnotes or adaptation) could be considered rather than outright omission. For example, a footnote in the Uzbek edition might have explained the original metaphor, though in fiction that's rarely done due to stylistic preferences. Alternatively, the translator could have tried "tishdek chaqnaydi" ("gleams like teeth") in Uzbek to keep the image – even if unusual, it might intrigue readers. - Indirect strategies: When working indirectly, translators might collaborate. If the Uzbek translator had consulted with the Russian translator or had the Russian translator's notes, they might glean why certain choices were made and decide if they want to continue that path or

diverge. In modern practice, using a pivot language like Russian can be supplemented by also referencing an English translation if one exists, to catch differences. Though that introduces another layer, triangulating multiple translations of the same source can illuminate missing nuances. - Preserving style: For literary classics, style is part of content. Thus, more emphasis could be placed on preserving stylistic features. If a translation is for a serious literary publication, perhaps translators would be less inclined to drop metaphors. Encouraging that mindset – that the unusual in the source is often intentional and meaningful – could help future translations maintain more of the original texture.

Implications for Cross-Cultural Equivalence: Achieving equivalence in the realm of style and figurative connotation is far more challenging than in basic referential meaning. Our findings reinforce that cross-cultural equivalence should be considered not just as transferring information, but transferring modes of expression and aesthetic effect. True equivalence would mean a Russian or Uzbek reader feels the same eeriness in the bar scene as a German reader did. This did not fully happen here. It calls to mind Nida's warning that one "cannot have his formal cake and eat it dynamically too" – something must give in translation, often form is sacrificed for meaning (Venuti, (Ed.) 2004). In our case, form (metaphor) was sacrificed but the full dynamic effect was not wholly retained either. Perhaps a more daring translation could have attempted to have it both ways to some degree, by inventing a metaphor that works in the target context. This is easier said than done, of course, and hindsight is 20/20. But the principle is: for cross-cultural literary exchange, sometimes a departure from literal translation is needed not to simplify, but on the contrary, to complicate – to introduce a figurative term where none exists in a direct dictionary sense, in order to elicit the same reaction from readers.

For example, translating "Die Zähne der Theke blitzen" into English, a translator might say "The baring grin of the bar counter flashed" – adding "grin" to get the idea across. Similarly, into Uzbek one could coin "peshtahxta tirjayib tishlarini yaltiratdi" ("the bar counter bared and shone its teeth") to preserve the metaphor. It might sound a bit strange, but that strangeness is the point. It would certainly give the reader pause, possibly making them sense something ominous or at least noteworthy. This kind of creative equivalence requires confidence and perhaps editorial support. It's understandable that not all translators take such risks, especially under historical conditions where fidelity to content was measured more than fidelity to style.

Limitations of the Study: Our analysis focused on select passages and devices; it is not an exhaustive evaluation of the entire novel's translation. Thus, generalizations should be cautious. There might be parts of the novel where the Uzbek translator actually improved on the Russian or introduced a new metaphor aligning with Remarque's tone that we did not examine. Also, lacking the full Russian and Uzbek text for every example, we sometimes inferred likely translations (particularly for the "snout" line). However, we backed our inferences with secondary analysis that confirms the handling of those elements in concept. Another limitation is that we did not examine reader responses directly – our judgments about effect are based on analysis, not empirical reception studies. It would be interesting to see how Russian or Uzbek readers from the time perceived the style of the translation, and whether they felt anything "missing" or not. For the scope of this study, we relied on textual evidence and theoretical reasoning.

Conclusions

This comparative study of German, Russian, and Uzbek texts of Remarque's Der Weg zurück has provided insight into the challenges and outcomes of translating figurative language through an indirect pathway. Several conclusions can be drawn:

- Indirect Translation can maintain core narrative meaning but may attenuate literary nuance. In our case, the plot and general themes of the novel were successfully transmitted to both Russian and Uzbek audiences. However, finer points of Remarque's style – especially innovative metaphors and tonal subtleties – were more vulnerable. The "double translation" process tended to reinforce any simplifications made at the first stage. Thus, while indirect translation is a viable method to reach new linguistic audiences (and often the only practical one historically), it carries a higher risk of cumulative stylistic loss.
- Figurative representations of everyday objects are crucial carriers of an author's thematic intent and should be handled with care. Remarque's use of everyday imagery (bread, chairs, candles, etc.) as symbols for existential states (life, peace, memory) means that seemingly minor descriptive phrases can have large interpretative weight. Translators need to recognize these as more than decorative language. In our analysis, when such an object-image was plainly factual (church copper to grenades), it was preserved; but when it was metaphorical or poetic (bar counter's teeth), it was under-translated. This suggests a need for heightened awareness and perhaps additional research or footnoting by translators dealing with literary texts – an argument for a more scholarly approach to literary translation, even in commercial contexts.
- Translation shifts identified (metaphor to literal, explicitations, omissions) align with known patterns in translation studies, confirming that our specific observations reflect general translation phenomena. The loss of metaphor is an

instance of a category shift from figurative to non-figurative language (Venuti, (Ed.) 2004). The retention of simile indicates that when a trope has a straightforward equivalent, translators will gladly use it, maintaining surface equivalence and effect. The handling of irony and hyperbole shows that pragmatic context often guides translators to preserve illocutionary force (they kept the irony's sarcasm) but possibly simplify idiomatic vehicles (Uzbek dropping the hail metaphor). These correspond to what Shoshana Blum-Kulka called the "explicitation" hypothesis (tendency to spell things out or normalize in translation), which seems amplified in the second remove.

- Theoretical principles like dynamic equivalence and skopos help explain the translators' choices, but also highlight where those choices fall short of an ideal equivalence. Nida's aim of eliciting the same receptor response was partially fulfilled: target readers likely felt much of the sorrow, humor, and relief intended, but perhaps not all the eeriness or absurdity to the same degree as source readers. Skopos-wise, the translations were functional: Russian and Uzbek readers could appreciate the novel without stumbling on obscure expressions. Yet, a functionalist would also note that if the function includes appreciating Remarque's literary style, then some function was unavoidably altered. Nord's loyalty concept is a reminder that translators are mediators who owe fidelity to both sides (Nord, 1991). In indirect translation, loyalty is further diluted by having two mediators in series. If each drops a bit of the author's voice, by the end the voice is a little more faint. Ensuring loyalty in such cases might require extra efforts (like second translators consulting the original author's style via glossaries or existing critiques).
- Implications for practice: For future translations (especially of classic works that might be retranslated), we recommend translating from the original whenever possible to avoid second-hand distortions. If indirect translation must

be used, one should use a high-quality first translation and remain vigilant to its blind spots. As seen, a good first translation (the Russian one was overall very competent) can carry much of the freight. Additionally, translation evaluators and editors should be mindful of figurative language as a category in need of review. Perhaps a checklist approach – "have all metaphors, similes, symbols in the original been accounted for in some fashion in the translation?" – could be applied during editing.

- Implications for cross-cultural understanding: Literature often survives translation, but the flavor can change. Recognizing what might have been lost or changed in translation is important for comparative literature studies. A Russian or Uzbek reader's interpretation of Der Weg zurück might slightly differ from a German reader's because of these translational nuances. Scholars and students reading the work in translation should be cognizant that certain interpretative elements (like the foreshadowing menace of a scene) may not be as apparent due to translational choices. This does not negate their interpretation, but it means cross-cultural literary analysis should consider the translation as a text in its own right – a version of Remarque shaped by translators' voices.

In conclusion, the comparative study underscores that indirect translation of figurative language is a high-stakes endeavor: it requires sensitivity to language-specific expression and an ability to carry over nuance through an intermediary. Our case study of Remarque's novel demonstrates both the difficulties and the possibilities. Despite some losses, the Russian and Uzbek translations of Der Weg zurück succeed in conveying the novel's poignant portrayal of a generation seeking normalcy and meaning after unspeakable turmoil. However, to fully preserve the stylistic richness – the teeth behind the smiles, the halos turned to shells, the drunken humor masking despair – translators must sometimes venture beyond literal renderings and embrace creative equivalence. As translation

practitioners and theorists continue to engage with indirect translation (which remains common in our globalized world for less-dominant language pairs), the lessons drawn from cases like this can inform guidelines to improve fidelity in the broader sense: fidelity not just to words, but to imagery, tone, and the soul of the text. By marrying rigorous analysis with translatorial creativity, one can hope to reduce the "doubly lost" effect and ensure that even in relay, the echo of the original voice rings clear for future readers (Güércio, 2022).

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