

An Analysis Of The English Translation Of Izafat Constructions Expressing Qualities And Characteristics

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Abstract: This article analyzes the English translations of the izafat constructions Hizabrullāh and Makulul-laḥm in Baburnama, which express qualities and characteristics. The research is based on a comparative analysis of several English translations of Baburnama, including those by John Leyden and William Erskine, Annette Susannah Beveridge, and Wheeler Thackston. Special attention is paid to the strategies adopted in translating izafat constructions, such as literal translation, descriptive rendering, omission, and cultural adaptation. The analysis demonstrates that while some translations successfully preserve the core semantic meaning, they often fail to convey the expressive and evaluative nuances embedded in the original expressions. The findings reveal that inadequate rendering of izafat constructions may lead to partial semantic loss and a reduction of stylistic expressiveness. The article argues that deeper linguistic and cultural awareness is essential for achieving translation adequacy when working with izafat constructions expressing qualitative meaning in historical texts like Baburnama.

Keywords: Baburnama, izafat constructions, English translation, qualities and characteristics, translation strategies, cultural meaning.

Introduction: “Baburnama” regarded as one of the literary treasure of Uzbek classical prose, serves not only as a chronicle of historical events but also as a significant source that encapsulates the cultural, social, and linguistic characteristics of its era. In this work, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur effectively used the rich means of expression of the Uzbek literary language, in particular, izafet phrases, when describing a person, place, natural phenomena, and various events. These combinations, while ensuring the stylistic beauty of the text, serve to clearly, concisely, and figuratively express the characteristics and features of the objects of depiction.

This article analyzes izafet compounds related to characteristics found in the text of “Baburnama” examining their lexical-semantic features, methods of translation, and English equivalents.

In the work “Baburnama” in the process of studying

izafet compounds, we can see that izafet compounds are divided into several types. In particular, M.Amonov analyzed the izafet compounds used in “Baburnama” by dividing them into semantic groups based on the indicators of the formed toponyms. In addition, in the “Baburnama” izafet words denoting the meaning of time, the meaning of reason, the meaning of a sign, a feature, a person, the names of animals and plants were used, and in the modern Uzbek language they have fallen out of use. [Amonov, 2020]

The Arabic izafet phrases used by the author in several places in “Baburnama” served to convey the meaning of a sign-characteristic. Let’s study the English translations of izafet phrases denoting a characteristic. First of all, we will collect from the work izafet compounds expressing a feature, describe them in the table, and analyze them below.

Table 1 :

“Baburnama” Uzbek [2002]	in	J.Leyden-Erskine	Susannah Beveridge	W.Thackston
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“Ҳизабруллоҳ” лақаб бўлди,	to have the appellation of <i>Huzeber-ulla</i> (the Lion of God),	...are styled <i>Hizabru-lah (Lion of God)</i> ;	named Lion of God
Маъкулул–лаҳм	God knows the truth!	God knows the truth!	edible

Қутб бизнинг била ихтилот қиладур, санга “Ҳизабруллоҳ” лақаб бўлди, сен ўзбекни олғунгдир Бу сўзга инониб, бўйниға фўта солиб, шукрлар қилибтур. [Бобурнома 2002; 154]. The symbol “Hizabruallah” highlighted in the above example is an izafet denoting a characteristic. It is no coincidence that Babur emphasizes the fact that the text, which requires an explanation in terms of content, is actually a historical figure. In fact, it was about Zunnun Arghun, about whom, according to the “Babur Encyclopedia” this is what happened.

One of Sultan Husain’s emirs. First, he served Sultan Abusa’id, then went to Khorasan. Sultan Husain appointed him first as governor of Zamini Dovar, and then as governor of Qandahar in exchange for special services. When Ulugh Beg Mirza Kobuli died, Zunnun Arghun seized Kabul from Abdurrazzaq Mirza and gave it to his son Muqim. Badi’uzzamon gave his daughter to Mirza and rose to the rank of sahibikhiyar in his presence. Trying to take advantage of the political crisis that began with the execution of Mumin Mirza, he marched with Badi’uzzaman to Herat, but was defeated. After capturing Qandahar, Babur went to Herat. Badi’uzzamon Mirza appointed him governor of Oba and Chacharan provinces. When Shaibani Khan approached Herat, some mullahs and sheikhs bestowed upon Zunnun Arghun the title “Hizabruallah” (Lion of God), predicting his victory over Shaibani Khan. Believing this, Zunnun Arghun was killed in 1507 at Kararabat with an extremely small army. In the “Baburnama” Zunnun Arghun is described as a pure sectarian, a devout worshipper, and a skilled swordsman. [Encyclopedia of Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur. 2017; 235-236].

In the original text, the author emphasizes that the Arabic izafet phrase “Hizabruallah” was a nickname, where “Hizabruallah” means “Lion of Allah”.

We observe how the translation of this text was transmitted to the English readers in three types of English translations: John Leyden-William Erskine (1826), Anetta Susanna Beveridge (1921), and W. Thackston (1996).

The incident occurred when he was prime-minister, and in the highest trust at Heri, at which time a body of

Sheikhs and Mullas came and told him, that they had discovered by their communications with the Spheres, that he was to have the appellation of Huzeber-ulla (the Lion of God), and was to defeat the Uzbegs [J.Leyden-W.Erskine 1926; 222]

Here are the particulars: – While he was so dominant and trusted in Heri, certain Shaikhs and Mullas went to him and said, “The Spheres are holding commerce with us; you are styled Hizabru-lah (Lion of God); you will overcome the Auzbeg”. Believing these words, he put his bathing-cloth round his neck and gave thanks. [Susannah Beveridge 1921; 326].

While he was in power in Herat, a few Shaykhs and Mullas came to him and sent, “We are in touch with the Qutb. You have been named Lion of God and you will conquer the Uzbek.” [Wh.Thackston 1996; 247].

From this it can be seen that the three translators reflected the word “Hizabruallah” through the method of translation, calque and transliteration, in the original “Hizabruallah” in the translation “Hizabruallah” in John Leyden and William Erskine Huzeber-ulla (the Lion of God), Susannah Beveridge Hizabru-lah (Lion of God), and the third translator W. Thackston named Lion of God, and the word “Hizabruallah” was omitted in the translation and used the method of syntactic transformation. These differences reflect two main translation strategies. Leyden–Erskine and Beveridge adopt a transliteration approach, attempting to preserve the phonetic form of the original name, though with spelling variations caused by non-standardized transcription systems. Thackston, by contrast, applies semantic translation, prioritizing meaning over form in order to make the expression more accessible to English readers. Therefore, the combined strategy of transliteration followed by explanatory gloss, such as Hizabruallah (the Lion of God), is considered the most appropriate solution.

The izafet compound representing the next sign and characteristic is Ma’kulul-lahm. The author himself explains the Arabic izafet phrases in the work, which are difficult for some readers to understand. He writes about the chameleon:

Ул ажаб нима ривоят қилдилар: қиш бўлғоч, тоғ доманалариға тушар, агар учурсаларким, узум

боғидин ўтса, яна асло учолмас, тутарлар. Маъкулул-лаҳмдур, бисёр лазиз эти бордур [Бобурнома 2002; 201].

In this sentence, the Arabic izafet phrase Ma'kulul-lahm means edible meat. Its translation into modern Uzbek language is rendered as halal:

Ҳиндустонликлар қизиқ бир нарсани ривоят қилиб бердилар: қиш келиши билан улар тоғ этакларига тушар эканлар: уларни узумзор боғи устидан учирсалар, кейин асло учолмай қолишаркан, шу йўл билан тутишаркан. Гўшти жуда ширин, ҳалол ҳисобланади [Бобурнома 2008; 209].

It is said, that in winter they come down to the skirts of the hills, and that if in their flight one of them happens to pass over a vineyard, it can no longer fly, and taken. God knows the truth! Its flesh is very savoury. [J.Leyden –Erskine 320]

People tell this wonderful thing about it; -When the birds, at the onset of winter, descend to the hill-skirts, if they come over a vineyard, they can fly no further and are taken. God knows the truth! The flesh of this bird is very savoury. [S.Beveridge, 496]

The people there tell an amazing story about it: in winter it descends to the mountain foothills, and if it is made to fly over a vineyard, it cannot fly anymore and can be caught. It is edible and has quite delicious flesh. [W. Thackston 340].

In the translations of Susana Beveridge and J.Leyden-Erskine, we see that they tried to derive the meaning from a religious and cultural point of view by using the same phrase “God knows the truth”, but the original meaning remains unclear to English readers. It does not mean edible. Thackston is a modern-thinking translator, and we can learn from the translations in this sentence that he fully revealed the meaning of the original using the word “Edible”. If we want to compare the translations of several additions in the work, we think that tabulating it is also the best method, and this allows us to compare how the original example is given in the translation and the three different English versions.

The analysis of the English translations of Hizabrullāh demonstrates that translators adopt different strategies based on their priorities: phonetic fidelity versus semantic clarity. Leyden, Erskine, and Beveridge preserve the original sound through transliteration, while Thackston prioritizes meaning by rendering it as the Lion of God. Each approach has advantages and limitations. For historical and literary texts like Baburnama, the most effective method combines transliteration with explanatory gloss, ensuring both the original form and its semantic significance are

conveyed to the reader.

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