

# *Lost in Translation: The Challenges of Rendering Kyrgyz Epic Poetry into English*

## *A Case Study of the Manas Epic*

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# Epos Manas

## The Manas Epic:

One of the longest epic poems in the world (over 500,000 lines)

Central to Kyrgyz culture and national identity

Tells the story of the hero Manas and his descendants, their battles, and their struggles to protect their people

Incorporates elements of Kyrgyz history, mythology, and folklore

Passed down orally for centuries by Manaschis (traditional bards)

**Translation Challenges:** Maintaining the original's rhythm and rhyme while conveying accurate meaning

Translating culturally specific terms, metaphors, and imagery that have no direct English equivalents

Providing adequate context for culturally specific references and historical events unfamiliar to English-speaking audiences

Balancing literal accuracy with cultural adaptation to ensure accessibility for an English-speaking audience

Limited resources for Kyrgyz-English translation, including dictionaries and linguistic expertise





# *Specific Challenges in Translating Manas*

**Maintaining Rhythm and Rhyme:** Discuss the difficulty of preserving the original's rhythm and rhyme scheme while conveying accurate meaning in English.

**Cultural Nuances:** Explain the challenge of translating culturally specific terms, metaphors, and imagery that have no direct English equivalents.

**Historical Context:** Discuss the need to provide sufficient context for culturally specific references and historical events that English-speaking audiences may be unfamiliar with.



# *The Role of the Translator*

## **Balancing Accuracy and Adaptation:**

Emphasize the translator's role in finding a balance between literal accuracy and cultural adaptation to ensure accessibility for an English-speaking audience.

**Creative Transformation:** Discuss the translator's need to employ creative solutions to bridge cultural and linguistic gaps while preserving the epic's essence.



# Case Studies: Analyzing Translations

## Example 1: «Кыз да болсо Акылай

Конду дөөлөт башына.» -

The term '«Кыз да болсо Акылай

Конду дөөлөт башына.» - ' implies a maiden who, with her determinance, and audacity, chose Manas and became an equal ruler of the kingdom. Therefore, it is important to use precise language and avoid subjective evaluations. The phrase 'Although Akilai was still a maid, happiness invaded her soul' could be misinterpreted in a poor translation, shifting the focus to a completely different interpretation and losing its original meaning.

**Example 2:** During the translation of the Kyrgyz episode of the epic 'Manas' into English, several difficulties may arise that could lead to potential translation issues. It is important to note that if

the Russian translation is accurate and correct, many errors in the English translation will be apparent to Kyrgyz-speaking readers. For instance, the name of Manas' father in Kyrgyz is 'Bay Jakyp,' which could be translated as 'Bey' in Turkish, but it would be incorrect to translate it as 'Bey' in English.





# Case Studies: Analyzing Translations

- **Somatic Units in Phraseological Expressions:** The epic 'Manas' utilizes somatic units (references to body parts) within phraseological expressions to create metaphors, epithets, similes, and other figures of speech.
- **Artistic Techniques for Vivid Imagery:** The epic employs various artistic techniques, including epithets, similes, metaphors, and hyperbole, to create vivid imagery and emphasize the significance of characters and events.
- **Significance and Translation Challenges:** 'Manas' holds a crucial place in Kyrgyz culture, but translating it into English presents unique challenges due to the linguistic, cultural, and literary differences between the two languages.
- **Comparative Analysis and Translation Errors:** This study conducts a comparative analysis to highlight instances where translations of the Kyrgyz episode of 'Manas' into English are inadequate, emphasizing the potential consequences of these errors for understanding and appreciating the epic.



# Strategies for Effective Translation

**Thorough Research:** Translators must delve deeply into the cultural, historical, and linguistic context of the Manas epic.

Understanding the nomadic lifestyle, social structures, beliefs, and values of the Kyrgyz people is crucial for accurate translation.

Researching the historical events and figures referenced in the epic provides essential background knowledge.

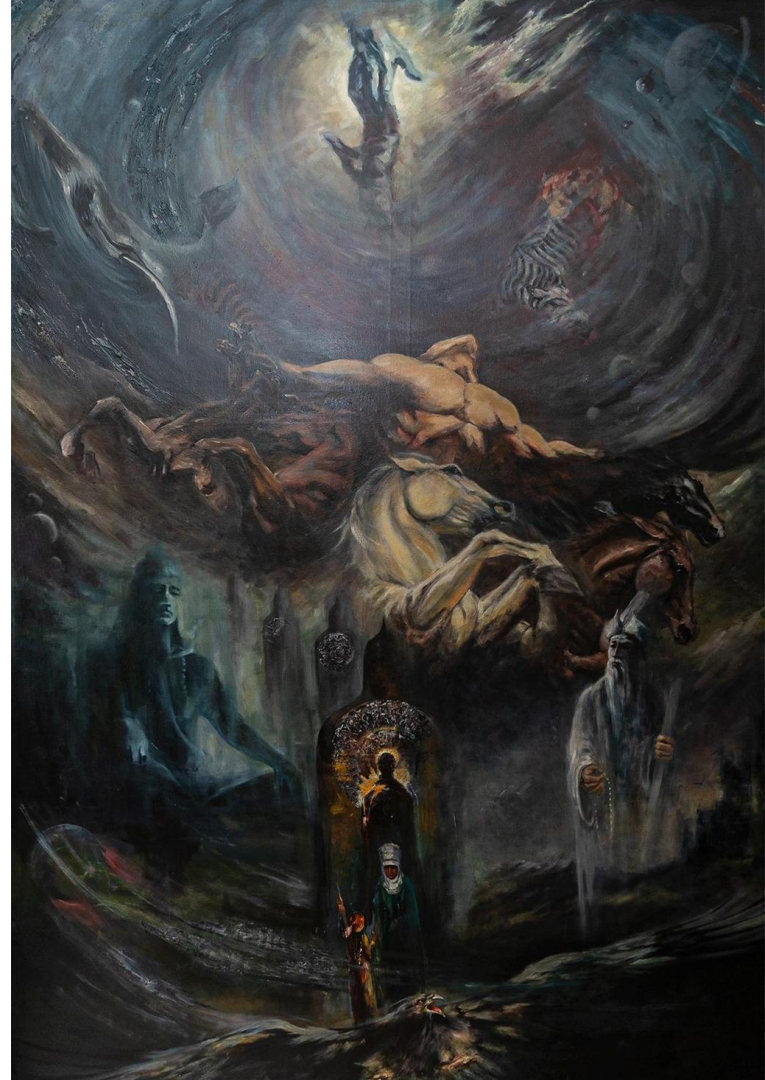
Familiarity with Kyrgyz oral traditions and poetic conventions enhances the translator's ability to capture the epic's essence.

**Collaboration:** Collaboration between Kyrgyz-speaking experts (Manaschis, scholars, cultural consultants) and English-speaking translators is essential.

Kyrgyz-speaking experts can provide insights into the nuances of the language, cultural references, and oral traditions.

English-speaking translators bring their expertise in crafting natural and engaging English prose while remaining faithful to the original.

Collaborative teams can ensure both linguistic accuracy and cultural sensitivity in the translation.



# Conclusion

**Promoting Cross-Cultural Understanding:** Translation makes epic poetry accessible to a wider audience, fostering appreciation for different cultures.

Sharing epic narratives promotes understanding of another culture's history, values, and worldview.

Translation can help preserve and revitalize endangered languages and cultural traditions.

Epic poems like Manas offer valuable insights into the human condition, promoting empathy and connection across cultures.

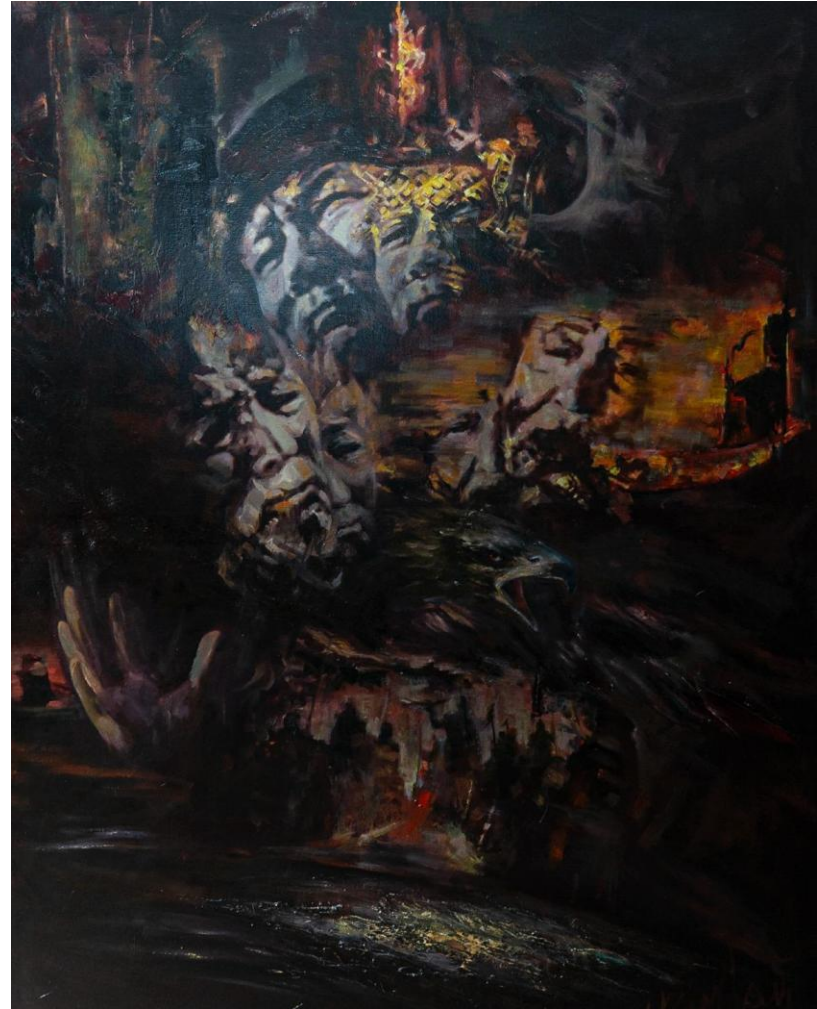
**Call for Future Research:** More research is needed on effective translation strategies for epic poetry, especially for languages with limited resources.

Developing translation tools and resources for under-resourced languages can facilitate wider dissemination of epic literature.

Collaboration between linguists, literary scholars, and cultural experts is crucial for accurate and meaningful translations.

Exploring innovative approaches, such as multimedia translations or collaborative projects involving community members, can enhance accessibility and engagement with epic poetry.

Investigating the impact of translation on the reception and interpretation of epic poems can further refine translation practices.





# Questions & Answers

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Images by artist: Taalai Seidakmatov

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