

THE REPRESENTATION OF CULTURE-BOUND ELEMENTS IN TRANSLATION OF UZBEK AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

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Abstract: One of the most challenging issues in translation studies is the representation of culture-bound elements, which include traditions, customs, national concepts, historical realities, food, clothing, social relations, and other culturally specific phenomena. The translation of such elements from Uzbek into English and from English into Uzbek requires not only knowledge of both languages but also a deep understanding of cultural contexts. This article examines the ways culture-bound elements are represented in Uzbek and English translations. It analyzes the difficulties translators face when transferring culturally specific meanings and explores effective strategies such as explanation, adaptation, borrowing, substitution, and contextual translation. The study highlights the importance of preserving cultural identity while making translated texts understandable for foreign readers.

Keywords: translation, culture-bound elements, Uzbek language, English language, cultural identity, equivalence, translation strategies.

Language is considered one of the main expressions of culture because it reflects the history, worldview, traditions, and values of a nation. Every language contains unique cultural elements that may not have direct equivalents in another language. These elements create significant challenges for translators who aim to transfer both the linguistic meaning and cultural essence of a text. The relationship between language and culture has always been an important topic in translation studies. A translator does not simply replace words from one language with words from another; instead, the translator interprets cultural meanings and transfers them into a different cultural environment. Therefore, the representation of culture-bound elements is one of the most complex and significant aspects of translation.

Uzbek and English languages belong to different cultural backgrounds. Uzbek culture is deeply connected with Central Asian traditions, hospitality, family relationships, historical heritage, and Eastern values. English-speaking cultures, especially British and American cultures, have their own social norms, traditions, and historical experiences. Because of these differences, some cultural concepts cannot be translated through direct linguistic equivalents.

For example, Uzbek cultural terms such as “mahalla”, “hashar”, “sumalak”, and “dasturxon” carry meanings that are much broader than their dictionary definitions. Similarly, English cultural expressions such as “Thanksgiving”, “pub culture”, or “afternoon tea” represent specific social and historical practices that require cultural interpretation in Uzbek translation. The main purpose of this article is to study the representation of culture-bound elements in Uzbek-English and English-Uzbek translation processes, identify major translation problems, and analyze strategies used to overcome cultural barriers.

The concept of culture-bound elements has been widely discussed in translation studies. Scholars have emphasized that cultural translation requires understanding both the source culture

and the target culture. According to translation theorists, culture-bound elements are words or expressions that refer to objects, concepts, or practices specific to a particular society. They may include material culture, social traditions, religious concepts, historical references, and national symbols. The translator's task is to preserve the original meaning while making the text accessible to readers from another cultural background. This process often involves finding a balance between cultural preservation and adaptation.

Several translation strategies are commonly used for culture-bound elements:

1. Borrowing – keeping the original cultural term in the target text.
2. Explanation – adding additional information to explain the cultural meaning.
3. Adaptation – replacing a cultural element with a similar concept familiar to the target audience.
4. Descriptive translation – explaining the meaning through a longer description.
5. Contextual translation – transferring the meaning according to the situation rather than translating word by word.

These strategies are especially important in translating literary works, where cultural elements often create the atmosphere and identity of the text. This research applies a qualitative approach to analyze the representation of culture-bound elements in Uzbek and English translation. The study is based on comparative analysis of culturally specific words, expressions, and concepts found in Uzbek and English texts.

The research focuses on identifying cultural elements, examining their translation methods, and evaluating how successfully translators preserve cultural meanings. Examples are selected from literary texts, cultural materials, and everyday communication contexts.

The main methods used in this study include: Comparative analysis – comparing source texts and translated versions to identify differences and similarities.

Descriptive method – explaining the cultural meaning of specific elements.

Translation analysis – studying translation techniques used for transferring cultural concepts.

Contextual analysis – examining cultural elements within their social and historical contexts.

The purpose of this methodology is to show that successful translation requires cultural competence as well as linguistic knowledge.

Culture-bound elements represent the identity of a nation. They reflect people's lifestyle, beliefs, traditions, and historical development. During translation between Uzbek and English, translators often face difficulties because some cultural concepts have no direct equivalents. Uzbek culture contains many unique concepts that require special translation strategies. For example, the word “mahalla” is not simply a neighborhood. It represents a traditional social community where people support each other, participate in collective activities, and maintain close relationships. Translating “mahalla” as only “neighborhood” may lose part of its cultural meaning. Therefore, translators often use borrowing with explanation, such as “mahalla, a traditional Uzbek community”.

Another example is “hashar”. This concept refers to voluntary collective work when members of a community gather to help each other. The English language does not have an exact equivalent. Therefore, translators may describe it as “a traditional Uzbek practice of collective voluntary work”.

The traditional dish “sumalak” is also culturally specific. It is connected with spring celebrations and national traditions. Translating it as only “sweet dish” cannot represent its cultural importance. A better approach is to keep the original name and provide explanation.

The word “dasturxon” is another important cultural element. It refers not only to a tablecloth but also to the tradition of hospitality and serving food to guests. In English translation, additional explanation is often necessary.

These examples demonstrate that Uzbek cultural elements require more than literal translation because they contain historical and emotional meanings. English culture also includes many concepts that need cultural adaptation when translated into Uzbek. For example, “Thanksgiving” is a traditional American holiday. If translated literally, Uzbek readers may not fully understand its cultural background. Therefore, translators usually add explanations about its history and celebration. The expression “afternoon tea” represents a British social tradition. It is not simply “afternoon tea” as a drink, but a cultural activity involving specific manners and social practices. Another example is “pub”. In English-speaking cultures, a pub is more than a place to drink. It is a social institution where people meet, communicate, and spend leisure time. Translating it as “bar” may not fully express its cultural role. Therefore, English cultural elements often require contextual translation to preserve their original meaning.

There are several difficulties in translating culturally specific concepts between Uzbek and English. Some cultural concepts exist only in one culture. Because of this, translators must use explanations or borrowings. Different societies have different traditions and values. A concept familiar to one culture may be unknown to another. Literal translation can sometimes remove the emotional and cultural significance of an expression.

The translator must avoid replacing unique cultural elements with completely foreign concepts because this may lead to cultural loss.

To overcome these problems, translators use several effective strategies: Borrowing: Keeping the original term helps preserve cultural identity. Example: “mahalla”, “sumalak”. Explanation: Providing additional information helps foreign readers understand unfamiliar concepts. Adaptation: Replacing a cultural element with a similar target-culture concept when necessary. Combination strategy: Using the original word together with explanation is often the most effective method. For Uzbek-English translation, preserving national terms is especially important because they represent the unique cultural heritage of Uzbekistan.

In conclusion, the representation of culture-bound elements in translation between Uzbek and English is one of the most challenging areas of translation studies. Cultural elements are closely connected with the history, traditions, worldview, and identity of a nation. Therefore, their translation requires not only linguistic competence but also intercultural knowledge and sensitivity. The analysis shows that many Uzbek cultural concepts such as mahalla, hashar, dasturxon, and sumalak cannot be fully translated through direct equivalents because they contain deep social and historical meanings. Similarly, English cultural concepts such as Thanksgiving, afternoon tea, and pub require additional explanation and contextual interpretation in Uzbek translation. A successful translator should maintain a balance between two important goals: preserving the cultural identity of the source text and making the meaning understandable for the target audience. Literal translation is sometimes insufficient because it may cause cultural loss or misunderstanding. Therefore, strategies such as borrowing, explanation, adaptation, and contextual translation play an essential role in transferring cultural meanings.

Translation serves as a bridge between different nations. Through accurate representation of culture-bound elements, translators help readers understand not only foreign languages but also foreign ways of thinking and living. In the context of globalization, effective cultural translation

contributes to international communication, mutual respect, and cultural exchange between Uzbek and English-speaking communities.

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