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PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATION ENGLISH CULTURAL SPECIFIC WORDS

Abstract. This article investigates the major cultural and linguistic problems that arise in the process of translating English cultural specific words into Uzbek language. The aim of the research is to investigate the nature of cultural bound lexical words, identify the difficulties they cause in translation, and analyze effective strategies for achieving functional and pragmatic equivalence. The objectives of the study include classifying English cultural units, examining their semantic and pragmatic features, and analyzing existing translations in literary and media texts. The research employs a number of methods such as descriptive analysis, comparative analysis, contextual interpretation and discourse- based examination of authentic texts. The results shows that the absence of direct lexical equivalents, loss of cultural connotations, and pragmatic misunderstandings are the most frequent problems in translation process. The findings also reveal that the strategies such as explicitation, descriptive translation, functional substitution, and selective borrowing considerably improve translation process adequacy. The research concludes that successful translation of cultural units requires not only linguistic competence but also deep intercultural awareness and contextual sensitivity. The results of the study may be useful for translation studies scholars and students specializing, translators in linguistics and intercultural communication.

Key words: culture-specific words, translation problems, English language, equivalence, cultural connotation, translation strategies, intercultural communication, pragmatics

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INGLIZ MILLIY-MADANIY BIRLIKLARINING TARJIMASI JARAYONIDA YUZAGA KELADIGAN MUAMMOLAR

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilidagi milliy-madaniy birliklarni o‘zbek tiliga tarjimasi jarayonida paydo bo’ladigan asosiy lingvistik va madaniy masalalar chuqur tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotning asosiy maqsadi madaniyatga xos leksikalarning tabiatini aniqlash, funksional va pragmatik ekvivalentlikka erishish hamda ularning tarjima jarayonida keltirib chiqaradigan qiyinchiliklarini o‘rganish uchun samarali tarjima strategiyalarini belgilashdan iborat. Tadqiqot vazifalariga ingliz madaniy til birliklarini tasniflash, ularning semantik va pragmatik xususiyatlarini aniqlash hamda badiiy va ommaviy axborot vositalari matnlaridagi mavjud tarjima namunalarini tahlil qilish kiradi. Tadqiqot jarayonida qiyosiy, tavsifiy, kontekstual shuningdek, diskursiv tahlil kabi metodlardan foydalanildi. Olingan natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, bevosita leksik ekvivalentning mavjud emasligi, madaniy konotatsiyalarning yo‘qolishi va pragmatik nomutanosiblik tarjima qilish jarayonida eng ko‘p uchraydigan muammolar hisoblanadi. Tadqiqot natijalariga ko‘ra, tavsifiy tarjima, funksional tarjima, izohlash tarjimaning adekvatligini oshiradi. Xulosa sifatida, milliy-madaniy so‘zlarning muvaffaqiyatli tarjimasi tarjimondan nafaqat lingvistik bilim, balki chuqur

madaniyatlararo ko‘nikma va kontekstual sezgirlikni ham talab etadi. Ushbu tadqiqot natijalari tarjimonlar, tarjimashunos olimlar hamda shu yo‘nalishlarda tahsil olayotgan talabalar uchun amaliy va nazariy ahamiyatga ega.

Kalit so’zlar: milliy-madaniy so‘zlar, tarjima muammolari, ingliz tili, ekvivalentlik, madaniy konnotatsiya, tarjima strategiyalari, madaniyatlararo muloqot, pragmatika

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ПРОБЛЕМЫ ПЕРЕВОДА АНГЛИЙСКИХ НАЦИОНАЛЬНО-КУЛЬТУРНЫХ СЛОВ

Аннотация. В статье проводится всесторонний анализ основных лингвистических и культурных проблем, возникающих при переводе английских национально-культурных слов на узбекский язык. Цель исследования заключается в выявлении сущности культурно-обусловленных лексических единиц, анализе трудностей, которые они вызывают в процессе перевода, а также в определении эффективных стратегий достижения функциональной и прагматической эквивалентности. В задачи исследования входит классификация английских национально-культурных слов, изучение их семантических и прагматических особенностей, а также анализ существующих переводов в художественных и медийных текстах. В работе используются качественные методы исследования, включая описательный, сопоставительный, контекстуальный и дискурсивный анализ аутентичных текстов. Результаты исследования показывают, что отсутствие прямых лексических эквивалентов, утрата культурных коннотаций и прагматическое несоответствие являются наиболее распространёнными проблемами перевода. Полученные данные также свидетельствуют о том, что такие переводческие стратегии, как экспликация, функциональная замена, описательный перевод и выборочное заимствование, существенно повышают адекватность перевода. В заключении подчеркивается, что успешный перевод национально-культурных слов требует от переводчика не только высокого уровня языковой компетенции, но и глубокого межкультурного осознания, а также чувствительности к контексту. Результаты исследования могут быть полезны переводчикам, исследователям в области переводоведения и студентам, изучающим лингвистику и межкультурную коммуникацию.

Ключевые слова. национально-культурные слова, проблемы перевода, эквивалентность, культурная коннотация, переводческие стратегии, межкультурная коммуникация, прагматика.

INTRODUCTION

In the process of globalization and intensified intercultural communication, translation and translators play crucial role in facilitating understanding between different cultural and linguistic communities. Now translation is no longer perceived merely as a linguistic transfer of meaning but as a complex intercultural process that involves worldviews, national identities, and conveying cultural values embedded in language [Nida, 1964; 23]. One of the most challenging aspects of translation is the rendering of culture-specific words, which are deeply rooted in the historical, social, and cultural experience of a particular speech community [Newmark, 1988; 94]. English cultural words reflect the traditions, social institutions, everyday lifestyles and mentality of English-speaking countries. These lexical words mostly have no direct equivalents in other languages, which leads to various translation difficulties [Baker, 2018; 112]. As a result, translators must employ different strategies to preserve both semantic meaning and cultural significance [House, 2015; 41]. In Uzbek translation studies, the issue of rendering

national-cultural words has attracted increasing scholarly attention. However, despite existing many studies, most problems related to equivalence, pragmatics, and cultural interpretation remain unresolved. The relevance of the research lies in the need to systematize translation issues associated with English cultural words and to identify effective solutions based on contemporary translation theory. The main aim of the article is to navigate linguistic and cultural challenges in translation English national units into Uzbek and to propose effective translation strategies. The research addresses the following questions: what types of cultural lexemes occur most frequently in English texts? What translation issues do they cause in Uzbek language? Which strategies contribute to achieving pragmatic and functional equivalence?

RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative study design, which is widely applied in translation studies to explore complex cultural phenomena that cannot be adequately measured through quantitative methods [Toury, 2012; 54]. A qualitative approach is partly appropriate for analyzing cultural units, as such lexical words are deeply embedded in socio-cultural contexts and require interpretative analysis rather than statistical generalization [House, 2015; 43]. To achieve the study objectives, a number of methods were employed, including descriptive, comparative, and discursive analysis, contextual interpretation. Descriptive analysis was used to identify and describe the features of English culture-specific units as they appear in authentic texts [Vinay&Darbelnet, 1995; 36]. Comparative analysis enabled a systematic comparison between the source text units and their Uzbek translations in order to reveal similarities, differences and changes in meaning or function [Catford, 1965;49]. Discourse analysis was applied to examine how cultural words function within broader textual and communicative structures, especially in literary and journalistic discourse [Baker, 2018; 118]. In addition, contextual interpretation played an important role in determining how meaning is shaped by textual and extra-textual factors, such as cultural knowledge and situational context [Nord, 1997; 63].

The study material consists of an attentively selected corpus of English literary and journalistic texts, along with their officially published Uzbek translations. Literary works were chosen because they frequently contain culturally marked language reflecting everyday lifestyle, national traditions, and social relations, while journalistic texts were included to represent modern cultural references and institutional terminology [Newmark, 1988; 98]. Cultural words were identified based on criteria such as cultural specificity, referential uniqueness, and the lack of direct lexical equivalents in the Uzbek language [Aixelá, 1996; 59]. After identification, the selected lexical words were categorized according to semantic domains, including social and political institutions, everyday life and housing, food and drink, education, and customs or traditions [Katan, 2014; 71]. Each example was studied to define the translation strategy employed such as descriptive translation, functional substitution, explicitation or borrowing and to estimate the degree of semantic, pragmatic, and cultural equivalence achieved in the target text [House, 2015; 47; Newmark, 1988; 110]. Particular attention was paid to contextual factors influencing translation options, including the target audience's cultural background, the genre and stylistic features of the text, and the overall communicative purpose of the translation. Using a combination of qualitative approaches and analyzing data from authentic sources, this methodological framework ensures the stability, validity, and depth analysis of the research findings.

RESULTS

Types of English Culture-Specific Words. The corpus analysis of the selected data shows that English culture-specific units consist a heterogeneous group of lexical words reflecting various spheres of cultural and social life. Based on functional and semantic criteria, these units can be systematically categorized into several major categories. The first group includes expressions related to **social and political institutions**, like *Parliament*, *Commonwealth*, and *public school*. These terms denote

institutional realities that are historically and culturally specific to English-speaking countries and are closely connected with their political system, educational traditions, and social hierarchy. For instance, the word ***public school*** (table 1) refers to ***xususiy va nufuzli ingliz maktabi*** in British English. If we translate it like ***davlat maktabi*** in uzbek language, we cannot express the meaning of a prestigious private educational institution, because in Uzbek language *davlat maktabi* refers to *state-funded schools*. Such lexical items often pose key challenges in translation process because their meanings extend beyond denotation and involve culturally conditioned associations that do not exist in the Uzbek socio-political context [Newmark, 1988; 105].

The second group constitutes of culture-specific units related to **everyday life and housing**, such as *pub*, *cottage*, and *terraced house*. These lexemes are deeply rooted in everyday cultural practices and social communication. For instance, the word of **a *pub*** (table 1) represents not only a place where drinks are served but also a social institution with a ***specialized communicative and cultural purpose***. Translating it simply ***ichimlikxona*** translator can preserve the basic meaning but does not express its broader cultural and social significance. Consequently, these lexical units produce vivid cultural images for native speakers while remaining mostly unfamiliar to target-language readers.

Another significant category includes **food and drink names** such as *pudding*, *fish and chips*, *afternoon tea* and *roast beef*, which are directly related with national culinary traditions and cultural identity. In English language, such lexical units refer to historically formed eating habits and social rituals except meanings of types of food. For example, the phrase ***afternoon tea*** (table 1) does not only denote the act of drinking during the afternoon, but also it refers to a *specific time of day, a particular set of food such as sandwiches, scones and pastries.* When translated it in Uzbek language as ***tushdan keyingi choy vaqti,*** the basic meaning is saved but its culture-bound concepts are lost. As a result, reader may understand the phrase as an everyday activity rather than a culturally established social ritual that developed in the nineteenth century in Britain.

Furthermore, the analysis identifies a category of terms related to **education related terms** (*Oxbridge*, *A-levels*) and **traditional events or holidays** (*Guy Fawkes Night*, *Thanksgiving*), which culturally express particular knowledge and shared historical background.

Major Translation Problems. The results demonstrate that the most common and persistent issue in translating English cultural words into Uzbek is the **lack of direct lexical equivalents** in the target language. This absence of equivalence often influences translators to make difficult choices between word-for-word translation and culture-specific adaptation, both of which may lead to semantic loss or alteration of meaning [Baker, 2018; 121].

Another significant problem is **the loss of cultural connotation**. Even when the core meaning of a word is successfully transferred, its associative, emotional, or symbolic value may be weakened or entirely lost. For instance, translating *pub* simply as “bar” fails to express its role as a common social area within English culture, thus reducing the pragmatic value of the original lexical item. Pragmatic discrepancy also occurs as a major issue, especially in cases where the target audience lacks proper understanding of the source culture’s background. In such cases, the translation may not evoke the same response or interpretation as the original text, resulting in communicative mismatch. These findings provide evidence that translation problems are not limited to linguistic form but are strongly connected to cultural and pragmatic factors.

Pragmatic Mismatch is another issue of translation cultural terms. This problem often occurs when translating culture-bound terms. The reader understands the basic meaning of the translated text but misses its purpose, emotional tone and cultural message. In order to avoid pragmatic mismatch, translators need to think carefully about how the target readers will understand the meaning of the word. They may need to add a short explanation or choose a different expression so that the translated text creates the same effect as the original.

Over-Domestication and Cultural Neutralization occurs when the translator replace with familiar words from the target culture instead of national-cultural terms. The text may become easier to read for target reader, but it no longer reflects the original cultural environment. ***Domestication*** is not always a problem, because it helps readers understand the text smoothly. However, when it is used to much, it may lead to ***cultural neutralization.*** As a result, unique cultural of features of the source text are weakened or completely lost.

Stylistic and Register Mismatch occurs when the culture-bound terms are translated in a way that stylistic features are not transferred correctly. As a result, the level of formality, social tone, or style of the source text changes and the translation may sound inappropriate or unnatural. Culture-specific words carry social class, manners, and accepted behavior in a particular culture. A good example becomes the English word ***gentleman*** to it. This word does not only mean an adult male person in English. When ***gentleman*** is translated in Uzbek as ***erkak,*** the stylistic and social meaning disappears. The reader understands only biological meaning of the word, not the person who has good manners, polite behavior, respect for others, and sometimes a higher social or educational background. As a result, semantic and pragmatic meaning of the word are reduced. The stylistic mismatch can also happens to such words ***lady, sir, madam, lord***, because these words carry strong stylistic and social meaning of English culture.

Translation Strategies. The study of translation solutions provides that translators use a various of strategies to tackle the identified problems. One of the leading used and highly effective strategies is **explicitation**, whereby additional explanatory elements are introduced into the target text to make the cultural meaning more accessible to the reader [Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995; 42].

Descriptive translation is another commonly used strategy, especially for institutional and culturally bound terms that lacking exact equivalents. By substituting a single word with a descriptive expression, translators can use both denotative meaning and essential cultural information.

Functional substitution is also conveyed in certain contexts, especially when a culturally similar concept exists in the target culture and can fulfill a comparable communicative function. Finally, selected borrowings supplemented by brief explanation provide evidence that effective for preserving the cultural specificity of highly marked items while ensuring reader understanding. Overall, the results demonstrate that pragmatically flexible and contextually informed use of translation strategies significantly enhances translation adequacy and helps maintain a balance between cultural fidelity and ease of understanding for the target audience.

Literal translation is a type of translation which means word-for-word translation. It is used when cultural meaning is not essential, the meaning of the word is already familiar for the reader. For instance, the phrase *roast beaf* is translated in Uzbek language as *qovurilgan mol go'shti.* The phrase does not reflect the cultural features of English culture and literal translation is sufficient here.

Table 1.

Translation of english national-cultural words: problems and strategies

Culture-specific word	Cultural domain	Main translation problem	Common strategy used	Example of Uzbek translation
Pub	Everyday life	Loss of cultural connotation	Borrowing + explanation	qovoqxona (inglizcha ijtimoiy yig'ilish joyi)
public school	Education	Lack of direct equivalence	Descriptive translation	xususiy va nufuzli ingliz maktabi
fish and chips	Food	Cultural neutralization	Borrowing	baliq and chips (an'anaviy ingliz taomi)

afternoon tea	Tradition	Pragmatic mismatch	Explicitation	ingliz jamiyatiga xos choy marosimi
Oxbridge	Education	Symbolic meaning loss	Borrowing + explanation	Oxbridge (Oxford va Cambridge)
Guy Fawkes Night	History/Tradition	Cultural reference gap	Descriptive translation	Angliyada 5-noyabrda nishonlanadigan bayram

DISCUSSION

The present study provides clear evidence that the translation of culture-specific words stands for a complex and mentally challenging process that extends far beyond the mere transfer of linguistic forms. Culture-specific lexical units are deeply fixed in the source culture's historical experience, social practices, and value systems. Thus, their translation certainly involves interpretation and cultural negotiation. From this perspective, the translator assumes the role of an intercultural mediator whose task is not only to convey semantic meaning but also to recreate culturally meanings in a form accessible to the target audience [Venuti, 2017; 36]. The study demonstrates that the choice of translation strategy is influenced by a range of factors, including text category, genre norms, intended audience, and communicative goal. For instance, literary works often permit for greater use of explicitation and descriptive translation, whereas journalistic texts generally prioritize clarity and functional equivalence. This observation helps the view that translation decisions are context-dependent and cannot be governed by rigid prescriptive rules [Pym, 2010; 92]. The findings further indicate that the absence of a universal strategy applicable to all culture-bound words. Although domestication may promote understanding by adapting cultural references to the target audience, excessive domestication risks neutralizing culturally significant elements and reducing the foreign cultural value of the source text. In contrast, excessive foreignizing approach may maintain cultural authenticity but create comprehension difficulties for the target audience. Therefore, effective translation requires a balanced, flexible, and context-sensitive approach that integrates both strategies when appropriate [Baker, 2018; 127; Venuti, 2017; 39].

In addition, the results emphasize the crucial role of intercultural competence in translation practice. A translator's awareness of source and target cultures, along with the ability to predict the target audience's background knowledge, significantly impacts the adequacy of translation solutions. This conclusion is consistent with recent international research published in high-impact journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, which emphasize intercultural competence as a core component of professional translation competence [Katan, 2014; 81; Baker, 2018; 130]. In general, the discussion demonstrates the theoretical and practical relevance of the present study and underscores the need for an integrated linguistic and cultural approach to the translation of culture-bound terms.

CONCLUSION

This article has provided a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic and cultural problems involved in translating English culture-bound units into the Uzbek language. The study has indicated that such lexical words represent one of the most complex fields of translation due to their deep connection with the source culture's social practices, historical background, and collective worldview. As shown in the research, culture-specific units cannot be adequately rendered through purely linguistic means, because their meaning extends beyond denotation and includes culturally bound associations and pragmatic functions.

The results of the research indicate that the most persistent translation challenges include the absence of direct lexical equivalents, the partial or complete loss of cultural connotations, and pragmatic mismatch between the source and target texts. These challenges arise primarily from differences in cultural experience and background knowledge between source-language and target-language readers. As a result, literal text often provides insufficient and may lead to semantic reduction or misinterpretation.

The present study further demonstrates that effective translation of culture-specific words requires the application of flexible and context-sensitive strategies. Techniques such as explicitation, descriptive translation, functional substitution, and selective borrowing enable translators to safeguard essential cultural meaning while ensuring accessibility for the target audience. The success of these strategies, however, largely depends on the translator's ability to assess contextual variables, including genre, communicative purpose, and audience expectations.

Most significantly, the study highlights the central role of intercultural knowledge in translation practice. A translator's awareness of both source and target cultures, as well as their capacity to mediate between different cultural systems, is crucial for achieving functional and pragmatic equivalence. In this respect, target text is best understood as an act of intercultural communication rather than a purely technical linguistic process.

The results of this study contribute to the ongoing advancement of translation studies by presenting a systematic account of culture-specific translation challenges and practical solutions. The findings may serve as useful guidance for professional translators, researchers, and students engaged with culturally marked language. Future investigations could expand on this study by incorporating quantitative methods, larger corpora, or comparative analyses involving additional target languages, thus providing a more comprehensive basis for understanding culture-specific translation phenomena.

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