

PRAGMATIC ISSUES OF TRANSLATING ETHNOGRAPHSMS IN NOVELS FROM UZBEK INTO ENGLISH

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Abstract. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the pragmatic issues encountered when translating ethnographisms from Uzbek into English, focusing on literary texts as the primary area of exploration. Ethnographisms—words and expressions that reflect a nation’s unique customs, social practices, and cultural traditions—are deeply embedded in the linguistic and cultural fabric of a society. They play a pivotal role in conveying the identity and worldview of a particular ethnic group. However, translating such culturally loaded terms poses significant difficulties due to disparities in cultural background, context, and the pragmatic functions of language in different societies.

Literary texts, in particular, require a nuanced approach to translation because they do not merely communicate information but also convey the cultural atmosphere, emotional undertones, and aesthetic values of the original work. The challenge lies in transferring these cultural meanings into the target language without losing the authenticity or emotional resonance of the source. The article investigates various strategies that can be employed to maintain pragmatic equivalence—ensuring that the translated term or expression evokes a similar response or understanding in the target audience. Such strategies include descriptive translation, cultural substitution, footnoting, and the use of transliteration when necessary. Ultimately, the study underlines the importance of the translator's cultural competence and sensitivity to context in preserving the integrity of the source text while making it accessible and meaningful to the target audience.

Keywords: Ethnolinguistics, ethnographisms, literary translation, cultural identity, pragmatic equivalence, translation strategies, Uzbek-English translation, cultural adaptation.

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqola o‘zbek tilidan ingliz tiliga etnografizmlarni tarjima qilish jarayonida yuzaga keladigan pragmatik muammolarni tahlil qiladi. Asosiy e’tibor adabiy matnlar tarjimasiga qaratilgan, chunki bunday asarlar nafaqat axborot uzatadi, balki muallifning madaniy qarashlarini, milliy urf-odatlarini va estetik didini

ham aks ettiradi. Etnografizmlar — milliy an'analar, urf-odatlar va ijtimoiy hayotga xos so'z va iboralar bo'lib, ular tilning madaniy qatlamini tashkil qiladi va xalqning o'ziga xosligini ifodalaydi.

Bunday so'zlarni tarjima qilish jarayonida tarjimon madaniy kontekstlar, tilning ma'no qatlamlari va pragmatik vazifalaridagi farqlarni hisobga olishi lozim. Ayniqsa, adabiy tarjimada muallif uslubini, ifoda vositalarini va madaniy konnotatsiyalarni saqlab qolish muhim hisoblanadi. Maqolada pragmatik ekvivalentlikka erishish usullari, jumladan tavsifiy tarjima, madaniy moslashtirish, izohli tarjima, va kerak bo'lsa transliteratsiya kabi strategiyalar tahlil qilinadi.

Xulosa o'rnida, tarjimonning madaniy kompetensiyasi, kontekstga nisbatan sezgirligi va original matnning mazmuniy hamda emotsional jihatlarini saqlab qolishga bo'lgan intilishi samarali tarjimaning asosi sifatida e'tirof etiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: Etnolingvistika, etnografizmlar, adabiy tarjima, madaniy identitet, pragmatik ekvivalentlik, tarjima strategiyalari, o'zbekcha-inglizcha tarjima, madaniy moslashtirish.

It is widely recognized that communities sharing common traditions and values contribute significantly to the development and preservation of a people's culture. The study of customs and traditions is not only relevant to linguistics but also intersects with multiple scientific disciplines. One of the emerging branches of modern linguistics that has garnered scholarly interest in recent years is ethnolinguistics—a field that remains relatively underexplored.

Although ethnolinguistics is recognized as a distinct academic domain, M.S. Yangelova emphasizes its close relationship with ethnography and ethnology. In a more focused sense, ethnolinguistics is defined as a subfield of linguistics that investigates the relationship between language and national consciousness, folklore, and cultural expression. For instance, some ethnographic studies have examined naming customs for children, though such studies reflect only a small segment of the broader exploration of the ethnographic characteristics of various nations.

In both ethnolinguistics and ethnography, the term ethnographisms refers to lexical elements tied to cultural practices, traditions, and rituals. According to R. Kasimova, these lexical items—or ethnographisms—occupy an important place in a language, forming a significant layer within its vocabulary structure [2:28]. Thus, ethnolinguistics serves as the discipline dedicated to examining these culturally embedded lexical units.

Words that reflect national customs and traditions hold a central place within a language's vocabulary. The lexical-semantic characteristics of what is referred to as ethnographic vocabulary—those lexical items that convey a people's cultural values and traditional practices—have been the subject of scholarly attention. Notably, M.S. Yangelova categorized ethnographisms into two primary lexical-semantic groups:

- a) Material-cultural ethnographisms, such as supra, table, kapgir, khontakhta, and others;
- b) Spiritual-cultural ethnographisms, including terms like wedding, khatna, mawlud, hinabandon, etc. [6:35].

Comparative linguistics is closely intertwined with translation studies. While translation is commonly understood as a secondary yet creative process that bridges different linguistic and cultural systems, it is an oversimplification to think that the translator's task is merely to convert meaning from one language to another. Modern translation theory emphasizes the importance of pragmatic considerations alongside morphological, syntactic, and semantic elements. This article focuses specifically on the pragmatic dimensions of literary translation, with particular attention to how ethnographisms are translated into English using the concept of pragmatic equivalence. A range of problems arises when the unique pragmatic nuances of words that represent Uzbek national culture in literary texts are inadequately conveyed in English translations. These issues include:

- The absence of culturally appropriate equivalents in the target text (TT) compared to the original source text (AT);
- Failure to take into account the pragmatic context of ethnographic terms when translated literally;
- Misinterpretation of contextual and implied meanings;
- Lack of equivalents for certain religious or culture-bound ethnographic expressions in the TT;
- Overlooking the multiple meanings or connotations of ethnographic terms;
- Neglect of unique features in ethnographic units that are loanwords from other languages used in the AT;
- Literal translations of culturally significant occasionalisms and archaic ethnographic terms in literary texts.

One of the major challenges in literary translation lies in the absence of direct equivalents in the TT for ethnographisms found in the AT. To address this, translators often employ various techniques, such as:

- Assimilation, e.g., dastarkhan – a traditional cloth used for serving food;

- Transcription or transliteration, e.g., plov or pilaf;
- Hypo-hyperonymic translation, e.g., doira – a musical instrument;
- Descriptive translation, e.g – offering a thorough explanation of national-cultural terms.

However, even these methods may fall short of achieving a pragmatically faithful translation, especially when deeper cultural implications are not fully captured.

In Uzbek: *Qarshi quda bo'lmoq uchun qizliq va o'g'ullik havlini uchratish va buning ustiga "naslu nasabda tekislik", olinadig'an kelinning silliqina bo'lishi – ana shunday mushkilotlar orqasida ikki yil chamasi Naimaning umri sarg'ayib o'tdi. [3;32]*

In English: *She wanted to engage Naima with someone and then to find somebody for Mahdum from that family. In order to find an appropriate family **with good manner** which had both a son and a daughter. [4;28]*

The Uzbek language explanatory dictionary lists the following meanings for the word “silliq” (smooth):

- 1) Flat, hilly, undulating;
- 2) Slippery, glassy;
- 3) Smooth, polished;
- 4) Movable – s. t. Handsome, elegant, beautiful;
- 5) Mobile – flawless, fluent (about language, style, speech, etc.);
- 6) Pleasant, not harsh, gentle;
- 7) Without issue; as you wish, without obstacles; fluffy; careless;
- 8) Silent; without realising it;
- 9) Evenly, evenly, smoothly, noiselessly [7].

The phrase “kelinning silliqina bo'lishi” in the aforementioned work extract has multiple connotations intended by the author. Although in SLT the author tried to convey (4), (6), and (7) meanings, in the English translation only meaning (6) is indicated. There are multiple reasons why we consider the term “*kelin*” to be an ethnographism. Firstly, its role and pragmatic implications in Uzbek culture differ significantly from the EngConceconcepts of “bride” or “daughter-in-law”. In Uzbek culture, a “*kelin*” is someone who serves her husband and his family, shows respect to all family members, takes part in household chores and child-rearing. In contrast, in English culture, she is considered a full member of the family with equal rights. Therefore, translators often interpret the term “daughter-in-law” more generally as “appropriate family” to capture its broader cultural context.

Considering that the term “kelin” in Uzbek language has varying meanings depending on context, it’s inaccurate to simply label it as a straightforward ethnographic lexeme. Its meaning can change based on context, carrying pragmatic effects and implied meanings. Thus, we suggest calling such terms “contextual ethnographisms”. We define contextual ethnographism as a word or phrase characteristic of a specific culture or tradition, which acts as an ethnographic term only in certain contexts, reflecting the cultural characteristics.

Given the contextual nature of the term “kelin” as a contextual ethnographism, to enhance its pragmatic impact on the reader, we recommend translating it as follows:

*She wanted Naima to marry with a man at the same time who also has a sister for Mahdum. It took her almost 2 years to find an appropriate family **with an ideal daughter who meets all of her criteria (including social status, appearance and behavior).***

Consequently, in order to achieve pragmatic equivalence, the translator must possess an impeccable understanding of the cultural components associated with the setting and be able to accurately represent each of these contextual characteristics in the translation.

A translator must carefully consider cultural nuances, how these are reflected in a literary work, and the extent to which the author has deliberately chosen specific linguistic elements. This attention helps avoid potential misinterpretations. It’s important to note that the cultural and social content of literary texts, particularly novels, may shift over time. For example, ethnographic terms that appeared in literary works centuries ago might now be outdated or no longer in use.

In A. Qadiri’s novel Mehrobdan Chayon (Scorpion from the Altar), terms like “*panjshanbalik*” and “*ozodliq*” are unique to this work, with no clear definitions or occurrences in other sources. Specifically, “*panjshanbalik oshlari*” appears six times, while *ozodliq (oshlari)* is mentioned nine times. Their meanings must be inferred from their contextual usage. However, when translated into English, “*panjshanbalik*” is often rendered simply as “Thursday” or “Thursdayship,” and *ozodliq* as “freedom” or is sometimes omitted altogether. This approach results in the loss of the contextual and pragmatic connotations, as well as the cultural flavor inherent in these occasionalisms. We argue that applying the method of expansion to explain such terms can more effectively convey the author’s intended meaning and preserve the original cultural essence for the target reader.

Based on the context, it is evident that the terms “panjshanbalik oshlari” and “ozodliq oshlari” refer not only to the traditional Uzbek dish osh or meals in general, but also convey additional meanings depending on usage:

A) As a form of money:

For instance, in the following excerpt, these terms symbolize financial contributions: “Let’s set that aside for now; even though Nigor Oyim educated twenty to thirty girls, she could not benefit from the money collected as ‘ozodliq’ and ‘panjshanbalik’ fees. She had to report all expenses daily to the esteemed Maxdum Pochcha.” (Page 8)

B) As a form of gift, particularly clothing:

The term can also imply a traditional gift, especially clothing, given in honor of certain occasions:

“However, when it came to ‘ozodliq,’ no child was exempt. If a wealthy student owed ‘ozodliq,’ it was demanded; even from poorer children, efforts were made to collect it. If students began studying Haftiyak, the Quran, or books like So’fi Olloyor, ‘ozodliq’ was mandatory. Even though it was customary for students graduating from school to host a feast and present attire to the teacher, many children would try to deceive the teacher and avoid this responsibility.”

C) As a type of meal:

In this case, the words refer specifically to special meals:

“They would go two weeks without seeing plov (with the exception of the special ‘ozodliq’ meals); most of their food consisted of ubra, tuppi, mastaba, or qo‘g‘urma soup.”

From these three examples, we can infer that “panjshanbalik” and “ozodliq” can refer to monetary contributions (example A), ceremonial gifts (example B), or special meals (example C), all shaped by the students’ educational environment. Hence, it is crucial to consider the context when translating these terms, as it significantly influences how the author’s message is conveyed to the target audience.

The Uzbek literary texts analyzed here reflect deeply rooted national customs and values. Translating such texts from Uzbek into English differs significantly from standard translation tasks and presents a complex challenge. Ensuring pragmatic equivalence requires attention to cultural context and the accurate interpretation of implied meanings (implicatures). Such fidelity to cultural nuance is essential for an adequate and faithful translation.

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