TRANSLATION PROBLEMS IN CULTURAL REFERENCES FROM ENGLISH TO UZBEK

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines the challenges in translating cultural references from English to Uzbek, focusing on preserving cultural nuances and ensuring target readers' comprehension. Cultural references, including idioms, proverbs, metaphors, and culturally specific terms, present unique obstacles in translation due to the socio-cultural gaps between English-speaking and Uzbek-speaking communities. By analyzing specific texts, this research identifies common issues such as loss of meaning, domestication versus foreignization, and the difficulty of maintaining cultural connotations. Solutions to these translation challenges are also discussed to aid translators in effectively bridging cultural differences.
Keywords: translation problems, cultural references, English-Uzbek translation, domestication, foreignization, cultural connotation, equivalence

INTRODUCTION:

Translating cultural references from English to Uzbek poses distinct challenges due to the differences in cultural backgrounds, social norms, and idiomatic expressions. Cultural elements such as proverbs, idioms, and specific terms related to customs or social practices are deeply rooted in a society's worldview and values. When translating these elements, Uzbek translators often face dilemmas about whether to prioritize cultural accuracy or reader comprehension. This thesis explores these issues, aiming to contribute to a broader understanding of cultural translation problems and offer practical strategies for achieving a balance between fidelity and readability.

Previous Research. Lawrence Venuti introduced the influential concepts of "domestication" and "foreignization" in translation. Domestication involves adapting a text to align with the target culture, making it familiar and accessible to readers. Foreignization, in contrast, retains elements of the source culture, challenging the reader and preserving cultural specificity. Venuti argued for foreignization as a way to promote cultural diversity and resist the erasure of minority voices, which can

happen when texts are overly domesticated to fit dominant cultural norms. Peter Newmark emphasized the importance of "cultural equivalence" and "communicative translation," advocating for translation that respects both the cultural context of the source text and the comprehension level of the target audience. He believed that translators should aim to produce a similar effect in the target language, often by finding culturally appropriate equivalents for idioms, symbols, or culturally specific references, rather than sticking to literal translations. His work provides a framework for balancing fidelity to the original text with reader accessibility. Eugene Nida is best known for developing "dynamic equivalence," a theory that prioritizes the emotional and cognitive response of the target audience. Rather than aiming for a word-for-word translation, Nida's approach seeks to convey the meaning and impact of the source text in a way that elicits a similar reaction in the target audience. This method has been particularly influential in translating religious texts, where preserving the intended effect is often more important than literal accuracy, though it has broad applications in translating culturally loaded texts as well. [1, 25-26]

Using Cultural Substitutes: Translators often turn to cultural substitutes—phrases or idioms in Uzbek that share similar meanings or emotional resonances with the English original. This approach allows the translation to remain culturally significant while making the text more accessible to an Uzbek-speaking audience. For instance, the English phrase "break the ice" might be replaced with a phrase like "yorug'lik solmoq" (literal meaning: "to bring light"), which similarly implies easing tension or making a situation more comfortable.

Footnotes and Explanations: When a cultural reference is deeply embedded in the source language's culture and lacks an equivalent expression in Uzbek, translators may insert footnotes or brief in-text explanations. This approach maintains the authenticity of the source material while supporting readers' understanding of culturally specific ideas. For example, references to Thanksgiving in English texts could include a note explaining its historical and cultural significance, as this tradition doesn't have a direct counterpart in Uzbek culture. While footnotes can disrupt the reading flow, they provide valuable context that allows readers to fully grasp the underlying cultural implications. [2, 266-268]

Mixed Strategy Approach: The mixed strategy approach is a hybrid of domestication and foreignization, which balances preserving cultural authenticity with making the content accessible and familiar to the target audience. This method allows translators to strategically choose which elements to domesticize or foreignize, depending on the context and intended impact. [3, 36-37]

Selective Domestication: Translators may choose to domesticate certain terms that do not hold significant cultural weight, making the text feel more familiar to the reader. For instance, foods or everyday items might be translated to Uzbek equivalents when they are incidental to the story.

Strategic Foreignization: Elements with strong cultural or symbolic significance are left foreignized, often paired with a footnote or brief explanation. For example, translating culturally iconic terms, like "Big Apple" for New York, might require preserving the English term along with an explanatory note, maintaining both the uniqueness and recognizability of the cultural reference.

Example of Mixed Strategy: In a text discussing the American "high school prom," translators may choose to domesticate the concept to align with the Uzbek educational system while maintaining the foreign term "prom" or explaining it as a "maktab balochasi" (school ball). This strategy allows the reader to relate to the event without losing the cultural context.

Translating cultural references from English to Uzbek requires careful consideration of cultural differences and target audience expectations. While literal translations often fall short in conveying cultural meaning, strategies such as using cultural substitutes and adding explanatory notes can aid in bridging the cultural divide. Future research should continue to explore effective approaches for translating culturally rich texts to enhance cultural understanding and preserve the original text's nuances.

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