



CHALLENGES OF TRANSLATING CULTURE-SPECIFIC WORDS

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**Annotatsiya:** *Tarjima nafaqat lingvistik jarayon, balki turli ijtimoiy va madaniy kontekstlar o'rtasida ma'noni uzatishni o'z ichiga olgan madaniy faoliyat hamdir. Translation Studies sohasidagi eng murakkab masalalardan biri madaniyatga xos so'zlarni tarjima qilishdir. Bunday birliklar ko'pincha madaniyatga bog'liq terminlar yoki madaniyatga xos birliklar deb ataladi. Ushbu leksik birliklar ma'lum bir madaniyatga xos bo'lgan predmetlar, an'analar, ijtimoiy institutlar yoki tushunchalarni ifodalaydi va shuning uchun boshqa tilda ularga to'g'ridan-to'g'ri ekvivalent topish qiyin bo'lishi mumkin. Mazkur maqolada madaniyatga xos so'zlarni tarjima qilishda tarjimonlar duch keladigan qiyinchiliklar ko'rib chiqiladi hamda bu muammolarni hal qilishda qo'llaniladigan turli strategiyalar tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot madaniy tarjimaning nazariy asoslarini yoritadi va ingliz hamda o'zbek tillari misolida amaliy tahlilni taqdim etadi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, aniq va mazmunli tarjimani amalga oshirish uchun tarjimon lingvistik kompetensiya bilan bir qatorda chuqur madaniy bilimga ham ega bo'lishi zarur.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *madaniyatga xos so'zlar, tarjima strategiyalari, madaniy ekvivalentlik, lingvistik muammolar, madaniyatlararo kommunikatsiya.*

**Annotation:** *Translation is not merely a linguistic process but also a cultural activity that involves transferring meaning between different social and cultural contexts. One of the most difficult issues in Translation Studies is the translation of culture-specific words, often referred to as culture-bound terms or culture-specific items (CSIs). These lexical units represent objects, traditions, social institutions, or concepts that are unique to a particular culture and therefore may not have direct equivalents in another language. This article examines the challenges translators face when dealing with culture-specific words and discusses various strategies used to overcome these difficulties. The study analyzes the theoretical foundations of cultural translation and explores practical examples from English and Uzbek contexts. The findings show that translators must combine linguistic competence with cultural knowledge to produce accurate and meaningful translations.*

**Keywords:** *culture-specific words, translation strategies, cultural equivalence, linguistic challenges, intercultural communication.*

The issue of translating culture-specific elements has attracted considerable attention in translation theory. Scholars have approached this problem from different theoretical perspectives. For instance, Peter Newmark considers cultural words to be among the most problematic elements in translation because they refer to objects or phenomena that exist only within a specific cultural environment. According to Newmark, culture-specific words can be





classified into several categories such as ecological terms, material culture, social culture, organizations, customs, and gestures. Each category requires specific translation techniques. Similarly, Mona Baker emphasizes that difficulties in translation often arise due to the lack of lexical equivalence between languages. In her work on equivalence, Baker explains that culture-specific concepts may require translators to use strategies such as paraphrasing, borrowing, or cultural substitution.

Another important theoretical contribution is provided by Lawrence Venuti, who introduced the concepts of domestication and foreignization in translation. Domestication refers to adapting the source text to the cultural norms of the target audience, while foreignization involves preserving the cultural characteristics of the source language in order to maintain its cultural authenticity. Furthermore, Gideon Toury highlights the importance of translation norms, suggesting that translators' decisions are influenced by cultural expectations and conventions within the target culture.

According to Toury, translation is not only a linguistic operation but also a socially regulated activity. These theoretical perspectives demonstrate that the translation of culture-specific words is a complex process that requires both linguistic competence and cultural awareness. Culture-specific words are lexical items whose meanings are deeply rooted in the cultural experience of a particular society. Such words often reflect historical traditions, social institutions, and cultural practices. Linguistically, culture-specific words are characterized by the following features:

1. Cultural embeddedness – they reflect specific cultural phenomena.
2. Lack of direct equivalence – they may not have exact equivalents in other languages.
3. Semantic complexity – their meanings often include connotations and cultural associations.
4. Context dependence – their interpretation depends heavily on cultural knowledge.

Examples of culture-specific words can be found in many languages. For instance:

- Thanksgiving (American culture)
- kimono (Japanese culture)
- mahalla (Uzbek social institution)

Such words cannot be translated adequately without taking into account their cultural context.

The translation of culture-specific words presents several significant difficulties. One of the most common problems is the absence of a direct equivalent in the target language. Many cultural concepts exist only within a particular society, making it difficult to find an exact translation. For example, the Uzbek word mahalla refers to a traditional neighborhood community that functions as both a social and administrative institution. The English language does not have an exact equivalent for this concept. Another important challenge arises from cultural differences between societies. When the cultural background of the target audience differs significantly from that of the source culture, understanding certain concepts becomes difficult. For instance, traditional Uzbek foods such as sumalak or halva may require explanation when translated into English.





## TANQIDIY NAZAR, TAHLILIIY TAFAKKUR VA INNOVATSION G'OYALAR



Culture-specific words often carry pragmatic meanings that reflect cultural attitudes, values, or social relationships. Translating these meanings requires deep cultural understanding. In literary texts, culture-specific words frequently carry stylistic or emotional connotations. If these connotations are lost in translation, the translated text may fail to convey the same aesthetic effect. There are some strategies for translating culture-specific words. In order to overcome these challenges, translators employ various translation strategies: Borrowing: borrowing involves preserving the original word in the target text.

Example:

- kimono → kimono
- mahalla → mahalla

Cultural substitution: this strategy replaces the source culture element with a similar element from the target culture. Descriptive translation: the translator explains the meaning of the cultural term. Example:

mahalla → traditional neighborhood community in Uzbekistan

Functional equivalence: the translator uses a term that performs a similar function in the target culture. Footnotes or explanations: academic translations often provide additional explanations in footnotes. The translation of culture-specific words illustrates the intricate relationship between language and culture. Translators must constantly negotiate between fidelity to the source text and comprehensibility for the target audience. Some scholars argue that translators should preserve cultural differences to promote intercultural understanding. Others believe that adaptation is necessary to ensure readability. The optimal strategy often depends on factors such as:

- the purpose of the translation
- the type of text

The expectations of the target audience. The translation of culture-specific words remains one of the most challenging tasks in translation practice. Such words embody cultural knowledge, social values, and historical traditions that may not exist in the target culture. Theoretical approaches proposed by scholars such as Eugene Nida, Peter Newmark, Mona Baker, and Lawrence Venuti demonstrate that effective translation requires a combination of linguistic competence and cultural awareness. Therefore, translators must act as cultural mediators who facilitate communication between different societies while preserving the cultural richness of the original text.

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