



LESS COMMONLY USED PUNCTUATION MARKS IN THE ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE AND THEIR EFFECTS ON TRANSLATION INTO UZBEK

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**Abstract:** *This research investigates the challenges associated with translating less commonly used punctuation marks from English into Uzbek. Due to the structural and syntactic differences between the two languages, accurately conveying both the meaning and function of these symbols presents a significant difficulty for translators. Specifically, this study examines punctuation marks such as the interrobang (?), the percontation point (?), and the irony mark (?), exploring their intended roles and the complexities they introduce in translation. By analyzing real-world examples, we identify different approaches to handling these symbols, including the use of approximate equivalents, explanatory additions, or paraphrasing. The findings suggest that while some punctuation marks can be adapted relatively straightforwardly, others demand a more nuanced and creative approach to preserve both clarity and the original intent in Uzbek.*

**Annotatsiya:** *Ushbu tadqiqot ingliz tilidagi kam qo'llaniladigan tinish belgilarining o'zbek tiliga tarjimaga ta'sirini o'rganadi. Tadqiqot davomida tarjimonlar duch keladigan qiyinchiliklar, sintaktik va tuzilma farqlari tahlil qilinadi. Xususan, interrobang (?), perkontatsiya belgisi (?) va kinoya belgisi (?) kabi belgilar tahlil qilinib, ularning funksional roli va tarjima strategiyalari ko'rib chiqiladi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, ba'zi tinish belgilarini mos ekvivalentlar bilan almashtirish mumkin bo'lsa, boshqalari izoh qo'shish yoki parafraz qilishni talab qiladi.*

**Keywords:** *punctuation, interrobang, translation studies, linguistic analysis, Uzbek language*

### Introduction

Punctuation has always played a crucial role in language and communication, making it a key area of study in linguistics—especially in translation. Well-known works like Truss's *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* (2003) and Crystal's *Making a Point: The Persnickety Story of English Punctuation* (2015) have examined how punctuation shapes meaning in English. However, while these studies provide valuable insights, they primarily focus on widely used marks such as commas, periods, and semicolons. Far less attention has been given to rare punctuation symbols and their challenges in translation—particularly when adapting them for non-Latin-based languages like Uzbek.

To build on this discussion, Parkes's *Pause and Effect* (1993) traces the historical development of punctuation, offering a broader perspective on its role in written language. Meanwhile, Baker's *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation* (2018) explores the complexities of translating linguistic features that lack direct equivalents in other languages.



These studies highlight the need to move beyond traditional punctuation marks and consider less familiar ones—such as the interrobang, irony mark, and asterism—which introduce unique translation difficulties.

This study aims to address that gap by examining how these lesser-known punctuation marks can be adapted into Uzbek. By doing so, it sheds light on a frequently overlooked aspect of translation, offering fresh insights into how language functions across different writing systems.

### **Methodology**

This study takes a comparative linguistic approach to explore how rarely used punctuation marks function in English and how they are translated—or adapted—into Uzbek. To do this, the research follows a step-by-step process:

First, it identifies and categorizes punctuation marks that are not commonly used in English. Then, it examines their grammatical and semantic roles using real-world examples from language databases. After that, it looks at how these punctuation marks are translated into Uzbek, considering whether direct equivalents exist or if adjustments are needed. Finally, it conducts a case study, analyzing how these marks appear in translated literary and journalistic texts.

To ensure a well-rounded analysis, the study draws from various sources, including books, online articles, and academic research where these punctuation marks appear. Additionally, interviews with professional translators provide firsthand insights into how they approach non-standard punctuation, revealing both the challenges they encounter and the creative strategies they use to maintain meaning and clarity in translation.

### **Results and Discussion**

Punctuation is essential for structuring written language, guiding readers through sentences, and conveying subtle nuances of tone and meaning. While common symbols like commas, periods, and question marks are universally recognized, some lesser-known punctuation marks add layers of expression that words alone may not fully capture. Three particularly interesting examples include the interrobang, the irony mark, and the asterism.

The interrobang (‽) combines a question mark and an exclamation point, signaling both surprise and inquiry in a single punctuation mark. It is especially useful for rhetorical questions or moments of shock. Consider the following exchange:

*"You spent \$500 on a single pair of shoes?!"*

Here, the speaker is not just asking a question but also expressing disbelief. Without the interrobang, one might write, "You spent \$500 on a single pair of shoes?!"—which works, but is visually clunkier.

The irony mark (₪) was designed to indicate sarcasm or irony, helping readers distinguish between literal and ironic statements. Although rarely used today, it can be helpful in written text where tone is unclear. Imagine reading the following sentence in an online comment:

*"Oh, great, another Monday₪"*



Without the irony mark, a reader might assume genuine enthusiasm. However, its presence clarifies that the statement is meant sarcastically. While irony is often conveyed through context or tone of voice in speech, the irony mark attempts to fill this gap in writing.

The asterism (\*\*\*) consists of three asterisks in a triangular formation and was once commonly used in literature to indicate a minor break within a text—somewhere between a paragraph break and a chapter division. While it has largely fallen out of use, it can still be effective in structuring a narrative. For instance:

*Sarah opened the old journal and flipped through its pages. Most of it was filled with mundane diary entries—shopping lists, daily reflections, notes on the weather. But then, near the middle of the book, something caught her eye.*

\*\*

*August 12, 1923*

*Today, I saw something in the woods that I cannot explain...*

Here, the asterism serves as a subtle pause, marking a shift in the narrative and building suspense.

Though these punctuation marks are not widely used, they highlight the evolving ways in which written language conveys tone, emphasis, and structure. While the interrobang and irony mark add emotional and contextual clarity, the asterism helps with textual organization. Even if they remain niche, their presence in writing can enrich the reader's experience, making communication more expressive and nuanced.

In Uzbek, punctuation primarily consists of standard marks such as the comma, period, question mark, and exclamation point. However, when it comes to lesser-known symbols like the interrobang, irony mark, and asterism, translators face considerable challenges since these marks do not have direct equivalents in Uzbek. As a result, various strategies are employed to adapt their meaning effectively.

Interrobang (?): Since Uzbek lacks a single symbol that conveys both questioning and exclamation, translators often replace it with the combination "?!", or in some cases, they rephrase the sentence to maintain clarity.

Irony Mark ('): As this punctuation mark is not used in Uzbek, sarcasm and irony must be conveyed through context alone, often requiring a more explicit wording of the sentence.

Asterism (\*\*): Since this symbol is rarely used in modern Uzbek writing, translators typically replace it with line breaks or paragraph divisions to indicate shifts in the text.

To overcome these challenges, translators rely on several techniques. A common approach is to replace the interrobang with "?!", preserving its intended tone without introducing a new, unfamiliar symbol. When translating irony or sarcasm, translators often restructure sentences to make the meaning explicit, rather than relying on punctuation alone. In literary translations, footnotes or brief in-text explanations can be used to clarify the function of these punctuation marks, ensuring that the intended meaning is not lost.



Ultimately, while some punctuation marks can be substituted with familiar alternatives, others require creative adaptation to ensure readability and maintain the intended tone. This highlights the nuanced role of punctuation in written language and the complexities involved in translating it effectively across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

### **Conclusion**

The study reveals that less common punctuation marks in English create unique challenges for Uzbek translation due to structural and syntactic differences. While some marks can be substituted, others require creative linguistic adaptation. Future research should explore how digital communication influences the adoption of unconventional punctuation in translation practices.

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