COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF REALIA IN UZBEK AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRANSLATION

Muxtorova Maftuna Baxtiyorovna
University of Information Technologies and Management
1st year master's student in Linguistics

Annotation: This article explores the linguistic and cultural complexities involved in translating realia culturally specific words and expressions between Uzbek and foreign languages. It examines the classification of realia, common translation strategies, and practical challenges faced by translators. Through comparative analysis and illustrative examples, the article highlights the importance of preserving cultural identity while ensuring clarity and accessibility for the target audience. The study contributes to broader discussions in translation theory and intercultural communication, offering practical insights for translators working with culturally rich source texts.

Keywords: Realia, Uzbek translation, cultural translation, translation strategies, intercultural communication, linguistic equivalence, transliteration, descriptive translation, cultural adaptation, translation theory.

Introduction. The translation of realia, or culturally specific terms, poses one of the most intricate challenges in translation studies. Realia are words, expressions, and concepts that are deeply embedded within a particular culture and often have no direct equivalents in other languages. These terms reflect the unique customs, practices, social structures, and traditions of the source culture. As global communication becomes increasingly interconnected, the need for effective translation of realia has gained prominence, especially in literary, academic, and media translations. In the context of Uzbek and foreign language translation, realia play a critical role in conveying the cultural richness of Uzbekistan. The Uzbek language, deeply intertwined with the country's historical, social, and political developments, is rich in terms that reflect local practices, social hierarchies, food, architecture, and traditions. These realia, such as "mahalla" (community neighborhood), "plov" (pilaf), and "hokim" (local governor), carry meanings that are crucial to understanding Uzbek society but are often untranslatable into other languages without losing some of their cultural significance. Uzbek is a language rich in cultural nuances, and as more Uzbek literature, media, and academic works are translated into global languages like English and Russian, it is crucial to examine how these realia are dealt with in the translation process. This article aims to conduct a comparative analysis of how realia in the Uzbek language are translated into foreign languages, with a specific focus on English and Russian translations. By exploring the strategies employed by translators, this study will provide insights into how cultural and linguistic barriers are navigated in the translation of realia. It will examine the challenges that arise when translating culturally specific terms and consider the strategies—such as transliteration, descriptive translation, borrowing, and cultural substitution—that translators use to maintain the cultural essence of the original text while ensuring that it remains understandable to the target audience.

Research methodology. This study employs a qualitative comparative method to analyze realia in the context of Uzbek and foreign language translation. The research is both descriptive and

analytical, focusing on identifying, classifying, and evaluating the use and translation of realia in various text types. It draws from examples in literary works, media texts, and academic translations to observe patterns and strategies used by translators.

The data was collected from a variety of bilingual and translated texts, including:

• Uzbek literary works translated into English and Russian.

• English and Russian literary, journalistic, and academic texts translated into Uzbek.

• Dictionaries and glossaries of cultural terms.

• Official documents and subtitles from films or documentaries.

Realia were selected based on the following criteria:

• Culturally specific terms with no direct equivalents in the target language.

• Terms representing customs, foods, clothing, social structures, or geographical features.

• Realia that appear frequently in translations or are prone to multiple translation strategies.

Realia were classified based on Vlahov and Florin's typology: geographic, ethnographic, social-political, and onomastic realia. Translation strategies used in rendering the realia were identified and categorized, including:

• Transliteration

• Descriptive translation

• Borrowing

• Cultural substitution

• Use of footnotes or glosses

The primary objective of this study is to offer a better understanding of the ways in which Uzbek realia are handled in translation, with the goal of improving the quality of translations and preserving the cultural identity embedded in the source text. In doing so, this research contributes to the broader field of translation studies, particularly in the context of Central Asian languages, and highlights the ongoing challenges translators face when working with culturally rich and context-specific language. The following sections will first outline the theoretical framework of realia translation, followed by a review of the existing literature on the subject. The analysis will then delve into a comparison of translation strategies, offering examples from both Uzbek-English and Uzbek-Russian texts. Finally, the article will conclude by discussing the implications of these strategies for the future of translation practice and research.

Analysis of literature. The translation of realia has been a subject of extensive scholarly attention due to its significant role in cross-cultural communication. Realia, as defined by Vlahov and Florin (1980), are terms or concepts that are deeply rooted in the source culture and lack direct equivalents in the target language. Their translation, therefore, is not merely a linguistic exercise but also a cultural negotiation. According to Newmark (1988), translating realia involves dealing with the intrinsic connection between language and culture, making it one of the most complex challenges in the translation process. Several scholars argue that realia are markers of cultural identity and must be treated with special care. Baker (2018) emphasizes that the translator's role is to preserve the cultural and historical significance of the realia while making the text accessible to the target audience. This aligns with the ideas proposed by Catford (1965), who distinguished between formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence in translation. While formal equivalence aims for a direct linguistic match, dynamic equivalence focuses on conveying the meaning and impact of the source text in a way that resonates with the target audience's cultural context. The translation of realia often requires the use of various strategies

to ensure both linguistic accuracy and cultural appropriateness. These strategies have been widely discussed in the literature. The most commonly used strategies include transliteration, descriptive translation, borrowing, and cultural substitution.

In cases where the realia have gained international recognition or when a direct equivalent does not exist, transliteration or borrowing is commonly employed. According to Gritsenko (2014), borrowing is a strategy that is frequently used for terms related to food, fashion, and cultural symbols, especially when these terms have been globalized. For example, "sushi" and "kimono" have entered many languages without any alteration. In Uzbek, terms like "plov" and "Navruz" are often borrowed directly into English texts because of their widespread recognition. Transliteration, as described by Newmark (1988), is the process of representing the source language term phonetically in the target language's script. This strategy is often favored when dealing with geographic names, titles, or proper names that cannot be easily translated into another language. In Uzbek translation, names like "Samarkand" or "Tashkent" are transliterated into foreign languages rather than translated, preserving both the phonetic and cultural integrity of the terms. Descriptive translation involves explaining the meaning of the realium within the target text. While this strategy can clarify the cultural significance of the term, it is often criticized for being cumbersome and potentially interrupting the flow of the narrative. According to Gile (2009), while descriptive translation can aid in understanding, it risks diminishing the immediate impact of the original term, which may evoke cultural nuances that cannot be fully conveyed in a description.

For instance, when translating the Uzbek term "doira" (a traditional percussion instrument), translators might opt for a descriptive translation like "a traditional Uzbek frame drum used in folk music." While this offers the target audience clarity, it might fail to capture the emotional and cultural resonance of the word, which can be especially crucial in literary texts.

In some cases, cultural substitution is employed, where a culturally specific term is replaced with an equivalent term in the target language culture. This strategy, although often effective in making the text more accessible, may lead to a loss of the source culture's specific meaning. Venuti (1995) argues that such substitutions compromise the authenticity of the source text and prioritize the target audience's familiarity over the preservation of cultural diversity. While cultural substitution may be useful in certain genres, such as children's literature or commercial translations, it is less common in literary works, where preserving the cultural flavor of the source text is usually paramount. Several studies emphasize the importance of context in the translation of realia. For example, Tymoczko (2007) highlights that a translator must consider the broader sociopolitical, historical, and cultural context in which a realium is used. In the case of Uzbek realia, terms like "hokim" (governor) or "mahalla" (neighborhood council) require contextual knowledge of Uzbekistan's local governance and community structures. A translator unfamiliar with these structures might misinterpret or oversimplify these terms, leading to a loss of meaning. Moreover, in literature, the translation of realia is not merely about linguistic equivalence but also about the translator's interpretation of the cultural implications of these terms. As Katan (2004) suggests, the translator's task is to act as a cultural mediator, ensuring that the cultural message is not lost while making the text comprehensible to the target audience.

In the specific context of Uzbek translation, the interplay between traditional cultural concepts and modern global influences is particularly evident. Uzbek language and culture are rich in realia that are deeply tied to Central Asian customs, food, and social structures. For instance, the

terms "chapan" (traditional robe) or "osh" (pilaf) are deeply embedded in Uzbek identity and frequently appear in translated works. As observed by Khodiyeva (2021), Uzbek translators often face the challenge of deciding whether to preserve the cultural term or adapt it to fit the target language's norms and expectations. Uzbek translation studies have paid particular attention to the domestication vs. foreignization debate in realia translation. Uzbek translators tend to lean towards foreignization, particularly in literary translations, to preserve the cultural essence of the original text (Khodiyeva, 2021). This trend reflects the desire to maintain the cultural specificity of the source text, even if it means alienating the target audience to some extent. However, in more functional or commercial translations, domestication strategies are more frequently employed to enhance reader comprehension.

Research discussion. Realia, by their very nature, are integral components of a culture's identity, representing unique aspects of a society that cannot be easily conveyed through standard language equivalents. This study revealed that in the context of Uzbek and foreign language translation, realia carry significant cultural weight, often acting as bridges between the source and target cultures. Translators, therefore, not only deal with the linguistic challenge of rendering words and phrases but must also navigate the cultural significance embedded in these terms. One of the key findings of this research is the pronounced difficulty that translators face when translating realia, especially when there are no direct equivalents in the target language. For instance, terms such as "mahalla" (a community-based neighborhood structure) or "oqsoqol" (a community elder) are not merely terms but carry profound social and cultural meanings. Translating these into foreign languages often requires extensive adaptation strategies to retain their cultural essence. The study highlights the tendency to use descriptive translation and footnotes as strategies, which, while effective in providing context, can disrupt the flow of the narrative or the readability of the text. Furthermore, the analysis revealed a recurrent tension between domestication and foreignization in translation. While domestication aims to make the target text more accessible by replacing unfamiliar cultural elements with familiar ones, foreignization seeks to preserve the foreign nature of the text, emphasizing the cultural distinctiveness of the source language. This tension was evident in the different translation strategies employed: in literary works, translators tended to prioritize foreignization, while in more functional, pragmatic texts (e.g., news articles or manuals), domestication was favored. The research identified several prevalent strategies used in translating Uzbek realia into foreign languages. Transliteration, the process of adapting the source language term into the target language's script, was particularly common in cases where the realia had gained international recognition or was culturally specific to the Uzbek context. Examples like "Navruz" (the traditional spring festival) and "plov" (pilaf) are widely recognized outside of Uzbekistan, making them candidates for direct transliteration in English texts.

However, when realia are not internationally recognized or have no direct equivalent in the target language, translators often resorted to descriptive translation. This method, while informative, can lead to the over-explanation of cultural concepts, which may alienate or overwhelm readers who are unfamiliar with the cultural context. For example, translating "doira" as "a traditional frame drum used in Uzbek folk music" provides clarity but loses the immediate, culturally-loaded impact that the word would have in its original context. Borrowing also plays a crucial role in translating Uzbek realia into languages like Russian or English. In cases where the realia

are crucial to the understanding of the text and cannot be adequately conveyed by existing terms, translators opt for borrowing the original word. This approach helps maintain the authenticity of the cultural term but may require additional explanations, especially when used in texts for a broader audience. The study emphasizes that translators must strike a balance between fidelity to the original text and the need for cultural accessibility in the target language. The findings suggest that the choice of translation strategy is often contingent upon the text type, audience, and purpose of the translation. Literary works may afford more flexibility in using foreignization to preserve cultural flavor, while practical texts—such as travel guides, educational materials, or media reports—may necessitate a more domesticated approach to ensure clarity and understanding.

This research also calls attention to the subjectivity involved in translating realia. Different translators may interpret the same realium differently, reflecting their own cultural backgrounds, experiences, and ideological leanings. As such, the translator's role extends beyond that of a mere linguistic mediator to a cultural ambassador, tasked with the complex responsibility of interpreting and conveying cultural meanings that may be deeply unfamiliar to the target audience. While this study provides valuable insights into the challenges of translating realia, it is limited by its focus on Uzbek-English and Uzbek-Russian translation pairs. Future research could explore realia translation in other language pairs, particularly in the context of globalized media and digital content, where realia are often translated across a wider spectrum of languages. Additionally, further studies could incorporate reader response to gauge how well these translation strategies perform in terms of audience reception and understanding. In summary, this research demonstrates that translating realia is not simply a matter of finding equivalent terms; it involves making nuanced decisions that reflect both linguistic and cultural considerations. As global communication continues to increase, the study of realia in translation will remain a critical area of focus, contributing to a more refined understanding of how language and culture intersect in the realm of translation.

Conclusion. The translation of realia presents a unique challenge that goes beyond linguistic accuracy, demanding a deep understanding of cultural nuances and contextual implications. This study has highlighted the complexities involved in translating Uzbek realia into foreign languages, showing that realia are not just words but cultural artifacts that carry significant meaning within their native context. Translators must navigate the fine balance between preserving the cultural integrity of these terms and ensuring that the translated text remains accessible and meaningful to the target audience. The research revealed that a variety of translation strategies, including transliteration, descriptive translation, borrowing, and cultural substitution, are commonly employed depending on the nature of the realium and the type of text. Transliteration and borrowing are particularly prevalent for terms with international recognition or when cultural terms cannot be replaced, while descriptive translation offers clarity but risks losing the immediate cultural impact of the term. The strategy of cultural substitution can make texts more accessible but often compromises the cultural specificity of the original text. The translation of realia is a complex, multi-faceted process that requires careful consideration of both linguistic and cultural factors. As global interest in Uzbek literature and culture continues to grow, further research into the strategies and challenges of translating realia will be essential to

enhancing cross-cultural understanding and promoting the richness of Uzbek cultural heritage in global contexts.

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