HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

THE REPRESENTATION OF LINGUOCULTURAL FEATURES IN TRANSLATION BETWEEN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

Ibragimova Dilnura
Field of Research: Translation Studies and Linguistics,
Bukhara state university, Uzbekistan
doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24043525

Abstract. Language and culture are closely interconnected, as linguistic expressions reflect the traditions, values, beliefs, social relationships, and historical experiences of a particular community. Therefore, translation between English and Uzbek involves not only the transfer of linguistic information but also the interpretation and representation of culturally embedded meanings. This study examines how linguocultural features are conveyed in English–Uzbek and Uzbek–English translation, focusing on culture-specific vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, proverbs, forms of address, and traditional concepts. The research applies descriptive, comparative, and contextual methods to identify the challenges associated with transferring cultural meanings between the two languages. Particular attention is given to the translation of such Uzbek concepts as mahalla, hashar, sumalak, and mehmondo‘stlik, as well as English cultural expressions that do not have direct equivalents in Uzbek. The analysis demonstrates that literal translation is not always sufficient to preserve cultural and pragmatic meanings. Depending on the context, borrowing, descriptive translation, functional equivalence, adaptation, and compensation may provide more effective solutions. The study proposes a context-oriented approach in which the translator considers semantic meaning, cultural identity, communicative purpose, and target-reader comprehension simultaneously. It concludes that successful translation requires not only linguistic competence but also a comprehensive understanding of the cultural backgrounds of both language communities.

Keywords: linguocultural features, English–Uzbek translation, cultural identity, culture-specific items, translation strategies, cultural equivalence, realia, intercultural communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is more than a system of grammatical rules and vocabulary; it is also a reflection of the culture, history, traditions, and worldview of its speakers. Every language contains expressions that represent the collective experience and cultural identity of the community using it. These expressions may include traditional customs, national dishes, social relationships, religious beliefs, proverbs, idioms, and forms of politeness. As a result, language and culture cannot be completely separated in the process of translation.

Translation between English and Uzbek presents particular challenges because the two languages belong to different linguistic and cultural environments. English is commonly associated with cultural

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

traditions of English-speaking societies, whereas Uzbek reflects the historical experiences, social values, and customs of the Uzbek people. Although both cultures share universal human concepts such as family, respect, friendship, hospitality, and kindness, they may express these concepts through different linguistic forms and cultural images.

One important example is the Uzbek word mahalla. It refers not simply to a neighbourhood but also to a traditional community structure characterized by social relationships, mutual assistance, shared responsibilities, and a sense of belonging. Translating it merely as "neighbourhood" may communicate its geographical meaning but fail to convey its broader social and cultural significance.

Similarly, the Uzbek concept of hashar represents collective voluntary work performed by members of a community to achieve a shared purpose. Its translation as "voluntary work" may express the general activity but does not necessarily preserve its traditional communal character.

The same problem occurs when translating from English into Uzbek. For instance, the expression "Thanksgiving dinner" refers not only to a meal but also to a culturally significant family celebration associated with a particular historical tradition. A literal translation can communicate the words but may not provide sufficient cultural information to an Uzbek reader.

The central problem, therefore, is how to preserve the cultural meaning of an expression while making it understandable and natural in the target language.

Previous translation theories have provided important foundations for addressing this issue. Eugene Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence emphasizes the response of the target audience, while Peter Newmark discusses the importance of cultural words and their translation. Mona Baker also highlights the difficulties of finding equivalence when linguistic and cultural systems differ. Lawrence Venuti's concepts of domestication and foreignization further explain the translator's choices between adapting a cultural expression and preserving its foreign identity.

Although these theories offer valuable principles, their application to English–Uzbek translation requires particular attention to the cultural characteristics of both societies.

The aim of this research is to investigate how linguocultural features are represented in translation between English and Uzbek and to identify the strategies that help preserve their semantic, cultural, and pragmatic meanings.

The research addresses the following questions:

1. What major linguocultural features create difficulties in English–Uzbek translation?
2. How do cultural differences influence the choice of translation strategies?
3. Which translation methods are most effective in preserving cultural meaning?
4. How can translators maintain a balance between cultural authenticity and target-reader comprehension?

The significance of the research lies in its emphasis on cultural meaning as an essential component of translation equivalence. It also aims to provide practical examples that can be useful for translation students, researchers, and professional translators.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

2. METHODS

The research employs a qualitative descriptive-comparative approach to examine the representation of linguocultural features in English and Uzbek. The analysis focuses on linguistic expressions whose meanings are influenced by cultural traditions, social practices, historical backgrounds, and collective values.

The research material consists of selected illustrative lexical, phraseological, and culturally marked expressions from both languages. These examples are organized into five categories:

- Culture-specific lexical units and realia;
- Traditional customs and social practices;
- Proverbs and idiomatic expressions;
- Forms of address and politeness;
- Cultural metaphors and symbolic expressions.

Three principal methods are applied:

1. Comparative analysis. This method is used to compare English and Uzbek expressions in terms of their lexical meanings, cultural associations, and functional equivalents. It helps identify similarities and differences between the two linguistic systems.

2. Contextual analysis. This method examines how the meaning of a culturally marked expression changes depending on the situation in which it is used. Particular attention is paid to implied meanings, emotional associations, and communicative intentions.

3. Descriptive analysis. This method identifies and explains the translation strategies used to convey culture-specific meanings, including borrowing, calque, descriptive translation, functional equivalence, adaptation, and compensation.

For analytical purposes, each expression is examined according to four criteria:

- Semantic preservation: whether the basic meaning of the original expression is retained.
- Cultural preservation: whether the cultural associations of the original are conveyed.
- Pragmatic preservation: whether the communicative intention and social function remain unchanged.
- Readability: whether the translated expression is understandable and natural for the target audience.

The study is qualitative rather than statistical. Its examples are used to demonstrate translation problems and possible solutions, rather than to establish numerical frequencies or claim that one strategy is universally superior.

3. RESULTS

The comparative analysis indicates that linguocultural features are represented differently depending on their cultural specificity, contextual function, and the availability of equivalent expressions in the target language.

Five major groups of linguocultural features were identified.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

3.1. Translation of Culture-Specific Lexical Units

Culture-specific lexical units are words and expressions that refer to objects, traditions, institutions, or phenomena closely associated with a particular culture. They often have no exact equivalents in another language.

The following examples demonstrate the difficulties of translating Uzbek cultural concepts into English.

Uzbek expression	Possible English translation	Cultural meaning
Mahalla	Traditional neighbourhood community	A social structure based on community relationships and mutual support
Hashar	Community voluntary work	Collective work performed voluntarily for a shared purpose
Sumalak	Sumalak (a traditional wheat-based dish)	A traditional food associated with Navruz and communal preparation
Choyxona	Traditional teahouse	A social gathering place where people meet and communicate
Oqsoqol	Community elder	A respected senior figure with social and traditional authority

These examples demonstrate that direct lexical substitution may communicate only part of the original meaning.

For example, translating sumalak as “a traditional sweet dish” gives the reader a general idea of the food but removes its association with Navruz, community participation, and cultural heritage. A more informative translation would be:

Original: Sumalak is traditionally prepared during Navruz.

Suggested translation: Sumalak, a traditional wheat-based dish associated with the Uzbek celebration of Navruz, is prepared collectively by members of the community.

In this example, borrowing is combined with descriptive translation. The original cultural term is preserved, while additional information makes it understandable to foreign readers.

3.2. Translation of Traditional Customs and Social Practices

Customs and social practices represent another important category of linguocultural features. They reflect how people interact, celebrate important events, and maintain relationships within society.

For instance, Uzbek culture places considerable importance on hospitality and respect for guests. The expression mehmon kutish involves more than simply receiving visitors. It may include preparing special meals, offering tea, showing respect, and creating a welcoming atmosphere.

Example 1

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

Uzbek: O‘zbek xalqida mehmon kutish qadimiy an’analardan biridir.

English: In Uzbek culture, welcoming and entertaining guests is a long-established tradition.

The English translation communicates the cultural practice rather than translating each word mechanically. The phrase “welcoming and entertaining guests” is more natural in this context than a literal translation of mehmon kutish.

Example 2

English: The family gathered for Thanksgiving dinner.

Uzbek: Oila Shukronalik bayramiga bag‘ishlangan an’anaviy kechki ovqat uchun yig‘ildi.

The expression “Thanksgiving dinner” carries cultural associations that cannot be fully explained by translating it simply as “a family dinner.” The descriptive translation helps communicate its cultural significance.

These examples show that translators should consider the social and historical context of a custom instead of focusing exclusively on its lexical structure.

3.3. Translation of Proverbs and Idiomatic Expressions

Proverbs and idioms are particularly significant because they contain figurative meanings and culturally established ways of expressing ideas. Their literal meanings may differ considerably from their intended meanings.

The following examples illustrate possible translation solutions.

English expression	Uzbek equivalent	Translation approach
Actions speak louder than words.	Gap bilan emas, ish bilan isbotla.	Functional equivalence
Better late than never.	Hechdan ko‘ra kech yaxshi.	Functional equivalence
To spill the beans.	Sirni oshkor qilmoq.	Semantic equivalence
A piece of cake.	Juda oson ish.	Descriptive translation
East or West, home is best.	O‘z uying — o‘lan to‘shaging.	Cultural and functional adaptation

The example “A piece of cake” demonstrates why literal translation can be misleading. Its meaning is not connected to an actual piece of cake; it describes something that is very easy to do. Therefore, translating its intended meaning is more important than reproducing its original imagery.

The Uzbek proverb O‘z uying — o‘lan to‘shaging also illustrates the importance of cultural adaptation. Although the English and Uzbek expressions use different images, both communicate the idea that one's home is the most comfortable and valuable place.

Thus, functional equivalence can be more effective than literal equivalence when translating figurative expressions.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

3.4. Translation of Forms of Address and Politeness

Forms of address reflect social relationships, age differences, respect, familiarity, and cultural expectations. Their translation requires particular attention because the same expression may have different social functions in different languages.

For example, Uzbek speakers frequently use aka and opa when addressing older men and women, respectively. These expressions can indicate respect even when the people involved are not relatives. English does not always have direct equivalents for these forms of address. Depending on the context, they may be translated using a person's name, “Mr.”, “Ms.”, or an alternative expression of politeness.

Example 1

Uzbek: Opa, sizga yordam kerakmi?

English: Excuse me, do you need any help?

A literal translation such as “Older sister, do you need help?” would sound unnatural in many English-speaking situations. The suggested translation preserves the polite communicative function rather than the literal form.

Example 2

English: Good morning, Mr. Brown.

Uzbek: Xayrli tong, janob Braun.

In this case, the English title “Mr.” has a relatively close functional equivalent in Uzbek, janob.

These examples demonstrate that social and pragmatic equivalence should be considered when translating forms of address.

3.5. Translation of Cultural Metaphors and Symbolic Expressions

Cultural metaphors are expressions whose meanings are influenced by shared cultural associations. They may represent emotions, social values, national identity, and traditional beliefs.

For example, the Uzbek expression ko‘ngli keng describes a generous, kind-hearted, and tolerant person. Its meaning cannot be understood through a literal translation of the word ko‘ngil as “heart” or “soul” alone.

Example 1

Uzbek: Uning ko‘ngli juda keng.

English: He is very generous and open-hearted.

The English expression “open-hearted” preserves part of the metaphorical meaning, while “generous” clarifies the intended personal quality.

Example 2

Uzbek: Yuzim yorug‘ bo‘ldi.

English: I was able to maintain my dignity and good reputation.

The Uzbek expression literally refers to having a bright face, but its contextual meaning may involve honour, dignity, and social reputation. The English version therefore requires semantic and contextual interpretation.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

The analysis demonstrates that cultural metaphors should be interpreted at the conceptual level rather than translated through isolated dictionary meanings.

4. DISCUSSION

The results indicate that the translation of linguocultural features requires a combination of linguistic knowledge, cultural awareness, and contextual interpretation. The main challenge is not always the absence of a lexical equivalent; it is often the difference between the cultural associations attached to apparently similar expressions.

One important finding is that semantic equivalence does not automatically guarantee cultural equivalence. A translated expression may communicate the general meaning of the original while failing to represent its social, historical, or emotional associations.

For instance, translating mahalla as “neighbourhood” is semantically acceptable in certain contexts, but it may not represent the traditional system of community relationships. Similarly, translating hashar as “voluntary work” does not necessarily communicate the collective cultural practice associated with the term.

This observation is consistent with Peter Newmark's approach to cultural vocabulary, which emphasizes the difficulties of transferring culturally specific concepts between languages. It also relates to Mona Baker's discussion of non-equivalence, particularly when a source-language concept has no direct counterpart in the target language.

Another significant finding concerns the relationship between domestication and foreignization. According to Lawrence Venuti, these approaches represent different ways of handling cultural differences in translation.

Domestication makes the translated text more familiar to the target audience, whereas foreignization retains elements of the source culture. Both approaches can be useful in English–Uzbek translation, depending on the purpose and genre of the text.

For example, in translating sumalak, completely replacing the word with “traditional dessert” would make the text easier to understand but would remove an important element of Uzbek cultural identity. Retaining the word sumalak and adding a short explanation would preserve its cultural authenticity while maintaining readability.

The analysis also highlights the importance of pragmatic meaning. Forms of address such as aka and opa demonstrate that words may perform social functions beyond their dictionary definitions. Their translation requires an understanding of the relationship between speakers, their ages, levels of familiarity, and communicative intentions.

Based on these observations, the research proposes a context-oriented model for translating linguocultural features:

Stage 1: Identification of the cultural element. The translator identifies the expression that contains culture-specific information.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

Stage 2: Contextual interpretation. The translator determines its intended meaning, cultural associations, and communicative function.

Stage 3: Selection of a translation strategy. The translator chooses an appropriate method, such as borrowing, descriptive translation, functional equivalence, adaptation, or compensation.

Stage 4: Evaluation of cultural preservation. The translated expression is assessed in terms of semantic, cultural, and pragmatic equivalence.

Stage 5: Assessment of readability. The translator checks whether the target audience can understand the expression without losing essential cultural information.

This model suggests that translation decisions should be based on the relationship between linguistic form, cultural meaning, and communicative purpose.

Importantly, no single translation strategy can be considered universally effective. Borrowing is particularly useful for preserving national realia, while functional equivalence is often more appropriate for idioms and proverbs. Descriptive translation can clarify unfamiliar cultural concepts, whereas adaptation may be necessary when the original expression would otherwise be misunderstood.

Therefore, the translator's task is not simply to replace words from one language with words from another. It is to reconstruct the cultural and communicative meaning of the original text in a different linguistic environment.

5. CONCLUSION

The study has examined the representation of linguocultural features in translation between English and Uzbek, focusing on culture-specific vocabulary, traditional customs, proverbs, idioms, forms of address, and cultural metaphors.

The findings demonstrate that cultural differences significantly influence the process of achieving translation equivalence. Expressions such as mahalla, hashar, sumalak, and ko‘ngli keng contain meanings that cannot always be communicated through direct lexical substitution. Similarly, English cultural expressions such as “Thanksgiving dinner” require contextual and cultural interpretation when translated into Uzbek.

The analysis establishes that successful translation depends on preserving not only the basic semantic meaning but also the cultural associations and pragmatic functions of the original expression. Borrowing, descriptive translation, functional equivalence, adaptation, and compensation are valuable strategies for addressing these challenges.

The proposed context-oriented model emphasizes five essential stages: identification, contextual interpretation, strategy selection, cultural evaluation, and readability assessment.

In conclusion, linguocultural competence is an essential component of professional translation. A translator must understand not only what an expression means but also why it is used, what cultural values it represents, and how it influences the target reader. Preserving this relationship between language and culture makes translation more accurate, natural, and culturally meaningful.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

Further research may examine larger parallel corpora of English and Uzbek literary texts, compare published translations, and investigate how different translation strategies influence readers' understanding of cultural concepts.

REFERENCES

1. Baker, M. (1992). In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation. London: Routledge.
2. House, J. (2015). Translation Quality Assessment: Past and Present. London: Routledge.
3. Newmark, P. (1988). A Textbook of Translation. London: Prentice Hall.
4. Nida, E. A. (1964). Toward a Science of Translating. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
5. Venuti, L. (1995). The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation. London: Routledge.
6. Vlakhov, S., & Florin, S. (1980). Neperevodimoe v perevode. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya.
7. Dosbaeva, N. T. (2021). Specific features of translation of lexical units with linguocultural component from Uzbek into English. Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research, 10(2), 79–89. https://doi.org/10.5958/2278-4853.2021.00053.7
8. Zayniyeva, H., & Xudoyberdiyeva, Z. (2024). Linguocultural features of literary translation. Acta NUUz, 1(1.9.1), 292–294. https://doi.org/10.69617/nuuz.v1i1.9.1.4355
9. Azatova, N. (2025). The transformation of linguocultural themes in translation: A comparative analysis of Uzbek and English fairy tales. Uzbekistan: Language and Culture. https://www.linguistics.tsuull.uz/index.php/uzlangcult/article/view/240
10. Khujanova, M. I. (2025). Linguistocultural features of translation of political-social texts (Uzbek-English) on the example of a newspaper. American Journal of Philological Sciences. https://inlibrary.uz/index.php/ajps/article/view/64824