



TRANSLATION OF NATIONAL REALIA IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: A SEMANTIC AND PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The translation of national realia presents significant challenges in cross-cultural communication, particularly between linguistically and culturally distinct languages such as English and Uzbek. This study explores the semantic and pragmatic aspects of translating national realia, focusing on how culturally bound terms are interpreted, adapted, or preserved. Using a comparative analysis method, the research examines examples from literary and non-literary texts to identify translation strategies and their effectiveness. The findings reveal that achieving equivalence in translating realia requires balancing semantic accuracy with pragmatic appropriateness. The study contributes to translation studies by highlighting the importance of cultural context and communicative intent in rendering national realia.

Keywords: Translation studies, English-Uzbek translation, Pragmatic analysis, Culture-specific items (CSI), Cross-cultural communication, Translation strategies, Linguistic equivalent, Descriptive translation, Lexical gaps.

INTRODUCTION

Language reflects the cultural identity of its speakers, and one of the most complex elements in translation is the rendering of national realia—words and expressions that denote culturally specific objects, traditions, or concepts.¹ In the context of English and Uzbek, differences in historical development, social norms, and cultural practices make the translation of such elements particularly challenging.

National realia include items such as traditional clothing, food, social institutions, and cultural practices that may not have direct equivalents in another language. Translators must therefore employ various strategies to convey both meaning and cultural nuance.² This study aims to analyze the semantic and pragmatic dimensions of translating national realia between English and Uzbek, identifying common challenges and effective solutions.

¹ qizi Furqatova, H. A., & qizi Najmiddinova, M. N. (2025). SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF CONCEPTS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK CULTURES. *International Journal American Journal of Modern World Sciences*, 2(7), 59-67. <https://phoenixpublication.net/index.php/TANO/article/view/3802>

² Najmiddinova, M.N. (2025). Comparative cultural analysis similarities and differences between values in English and Uzbek cultures // Useful proposals and innovative approaches in the development of science. *Spain Journal*//Impact Factor 13(67), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16754896>

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of realia has been widely discussed in translation studies. Scholars define realia as culture-specific lexical units that lack direct equivalents in other languages. Previous research emphasizes strategies such as borrowing, calque, descriptive translation, and cultural substitution.

Semantic analysis focuses on the meaning of words and their equivalence across languages, while pragmatic analysis examines how meaning is influenced by context, intention, and audience interpretation. Researchers argue that translation is not only a linguistic process but also a cultural and communicative act.

Studies on Turkic and Indo-European language pairs highlight that cultural distance increases the complexity of translation. However, there is limited research specifically addressing English-Uzbek translation of realia, which this study seeks to address.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative comparative analysis approach. Data were collected from:

- A. Uzbek literary texts and their English translations
- B. English texts translated into Uzbek
- C. Cultural and media materials containing realia

The selected examples were analyzed based on:

1. **Semantic equivalence** – accuracy of meaning
2. **Pragmatic adequacy** – appropriateness in context
3. **Translation strategy used**

Common strategies identified include:

1. Borrowing (transliteration)
2. Explanation (descriptive translation)
3. Functional equivalence
4. Cultural substitution

RESULTS

Semantic Challenges

Many Uzbek realia, such as *mahalla*, *sumalak*, and *do`ppi*, do not have direct English equivalents. Translators often use borrowing combined with explanation:

- 1) *Mahalla* → *mahalla* (*traditional neighborhood community*)

Similarly, English realia like *Thanksgiving* require descriptive translation in Uzbek:

- 2) *Thanksgiving* → *Shukronalik bayrami* (*AQSh an'anaviy bayrami*)

Semantic loss may occur when cultural connotations are not fully conveyed.

Pragmatic Considerations

Pragmatic factors include audience knowledge, purpose of translation, and communicative context.³ For example:

1. In academic texts, detailed explanations are preferred.
2. In literary works, preserving cultural flavor is more important.

The same term may be translated differently depending on context:

³ Nadjmiddinova, M. N. (2025, October). NEW INTERPRETATIONS OF THE TRANSLATION METHOD IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING. In CONFERENCE OF MODERN SCIENCE & PEDAGOGY (Vol. 1, No. 7, pp. 112-116). <https://tjst.org/index.php/USA/article/view/1090>

- *Tea* in English may simply mean a drink, while Uzbek *choy* carries strong cultural and social significance.

Translation Strategies

The study identified the following dominant strategies:

Borrowing

- I. Preserves cultural identity
- II. Example: *plov*, *navruz*

Descriptive Translation

- i. Explains meaning
- ii. Example: *sumalak* → *a traditional sweet paste made during Navruz*

Functional Equivalence

- a. Uses a similar concept in the target culture
- b. Example: *college* → *oliy o'quv yurti*

Cultural Substitution

- a. Replaces with a familiar concept
- b. May reduce authenticity

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that no single strategy is sufficient for translating national realia. Instead, translators must adopt a flexible approach depending on the text type and audience. Semantic accuracy alone is not enough; pragmatic effectiveness plays a crucial role in ensuring that the message is understood and culturally appropriate.

The study also highlights the importance of translator competence in both languages and cultures. Misinterpretation of realia can lead to misunderstandings or loss of cultural richness.

CONCLUSION

The translation of national realia between English and Uzbek requires careful consideration of both semantic meaning and pragmatic context. Effective translation involves not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural awareness and communicative sensitivity.

This research demonstrates that:

1. Realia pose significant translation challenges due to cultural specificity
2. A combination of strategies is necessary for accurate translation
3. Pragmatic factors are as important as semantic ones

Future research may explore quantitative approaches or focus on specific genres such as audiovisual translation or academic discourse.

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