

PROBLEMS OF EQUIVALENCE IN THE TRANSLATION OF CULTURE-SPECIFIC WORDS

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Abstract: This article examines the problem of equivalence in the translation of culture-specific lexical units (realia) from Russian into Uzbek. Culture-specific words reflect the historical memory, everyday life, social structure, and worldview of a particular nation, and therefore often lack direct equivalents in other languages. The study analyzes theoretical approaches to cultural and linguistic equivalence (L.S. Barkhudarov, S. Vlahov, S. Florin, E. Vereshchagin, V. Kostomarov) and identifies the main strategies used in the translation of realia, including transliteration, transcription, descriptive translation, analogical substitution, and commented translation. A comparative analysis of fragments from F.M. Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and its Uzbek translation demonstrates how the translator negotiates national coloring, semantic accuracy, and stylistic expressiveness. The results show that transliteration accompanied by explanatory commentary most effectively preserves cultural specificity while maintaining communicative and aesthetic equivalence. The study concludes that the translation of realia requires not only linguistic competence, but also deep intercultural awareness, as well as sensitivity to the cultural and historical context of both the source and the target languages.

Keywords: culture-specific words; realia; translation equivalence; transliteration; descriptive translation; cultural adaptation; intercultural communication; F.M. Dostoevsky; Uzbek translation; national coloring.

Introduction

The process of translation is a complex creative activity that encompasses not only linguistic but also cultural, historical, and national dimensions of thought. Rendering the spirit of the original text, the author's aesthetic intention, and national color requires from the translator not only language proficiency but also deep intercultural competence. The issue of equivalence in translation becomes particularly relevant when dealing with culture-specific words (realia), where the lexical, semantic, pragmatic, and stylistic dimensions of meaning must be analyzed in a unified system.

As linguist L.S. Barkhudarov states, "the search for semantic correlation between lexical units of two different languages is the most essential task of translation" [2, 35]. Therefore, ensuring equivalence in the translation of culture-specific words implies not only lexical correspondence but also cultural and semantic adequacy.

Culture-specific words embody aspects of a nation's customs, clothing traditions, cuisine, social structure, art, and belief systems. Since such units often lack direct counterparts in other

languages, translators employ strategies such as transliteration, transcription, descriptive translation, and analogical substitution.

This article examines the problems of equivalence in the translation of culture-specific words through theoretical analysis and comparative study of Russian and Uzbek translations, with reference to F.M. Dostoevsky's works.

Literature Review and **Methodology**. The Concept of Realia and Scientific Interpretation: The term realia (from Latin realia — “material, real objects”) in linguistics refers to words denoting concepts connected with the cultural life, customs, traditions, and everyday practices of a particular nation. O.S. Akhmanova defines realia as “linguistic units denoting objects of existing culture and social life” [1, 381].

According to S. Vlahov and S. Florin, realia are “words and expressions referring to the life, everyday environment, culture, and social development of a given nation, possessing national and historical specificity” [9, 48]. Their definition emphasizes the complex nature of realia in translation.

Nationally specific words represent cultural memory, historical tradition, and national identity. As Q. Musayev claims, “words that express the everyday conceptual world of a people constitute the basis of its national specificity” [Musayev, 2005, 89].

Researchers typically classify realia into the following types [6; 9]:

Geographical realia — toponyms, natural objects;

Ethnographic realia — clothing, food, customs, arts, tools;

Socio-political realia — titles, social strata, administrative institutions.

The methodological basis of this study includes comparative analysis, the theory of intercultural equivalence (Komissarov, Vereshchagin, Kabanov), and linguocultural approach. The Russian text of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and its Uzbek translation by I. G'ofurov are used as comparative material.

Equivalence is defined as the degree of semantic, stylistic, and functional correspondence between the source and target texts. G. Yeger's theory of “communicative and functional equivalence” emphasizes that the aim of translation is to preserve the communicative effect of the original [11, 137].

SEach method has strengths and limitations: transliteration preserves national flavor but may confuse the reader; descriptive translation enhances clarity but reduces aesthetic compactness.

Analysis of F.M. Dostoevsky's Text:

Example 1: “Kaftan”

Original: “...Это был молодой парень в кафтане...”

Uzbek translation: “Bu kaftan kiygan, kalta soqol qo'ygan yigit...”

Explanation: Kaftan was a widespread garment in Russia in the 16th–17th centuries, similar to the Uzbek chopon.

Here, transliteration is accompanied by implicit cultural explanation, ensuring cultural equivalence.

Example 2: “Батистовый галстук”

Original: “...батистовый самый легкий галстучек с розовыми полосками...”

Uzbek translation: “...pishitilgan ingichka ipdan to‘qilgan yupqa, yengil batist galstuk...”

Explanation: Batiste (from French) refers to a fine cotton fabric.

The translator uses transliteration + explanation, ensuring semantic precision and stylistic elegance.

Challenges Identified: Cultural mismatch — the target language lacks conceptual equivalents (балалайка, самовар). Historical mismatch — anachronisms may arise if modern lexical items are used. Pragmatic mismatch — readers may lack cultural background to interpret the realia.

Aesthetic mismatch — long descriptive translations may disrupt artistic style.

Conclusion

Ensuring equivalence in the translation of culture-specific words is primarily a matter of intercultural correspondence rather than lexical substitution. The translator’s role is to convey not only meaning but also national-aesthetic connotations.

Key findings: Transliteration combined with explanatory notes is the most effective strategy for culture-specific terms. Historical consistency must be preserved to maintain authenticity. The translator must interpret and transmit the cultural function of each realia. The linguocultural approach is the most appropriate methodological framework. Some realia (kaftan, batist, shlyapa, guberniya) lack semantic equivalents in Uzbek and are best translated through **transliteration + explanation**.

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