

Linguopragmatic Features of The Translation of Historical-Ethnographic Realia (A Case Study of The Turkish Translation of Isajon Sulton's Novel Alisher Navoiy)

Sug'diyona Ergasheva

Doctoral candidate (PhD), Kokand University, Uzbekistan

Received: 17 March 2026; **Accepted:** 05 April 2026; **Published:** 30 April 2026

Abstract: This article analyzes the linguopragmatic features of recreating historical-ethnographic realia in the Turkish translation (by Sema Eynel) of the novel Alisher Navoiy by Isajon Sulton, People's Writer of Uzbekistan. The study examines the problem of pragmatic equivalence from the perspectives of translation theory and intercultural communication, drawing in particular on the ideas of Vlahov–Florin and Komissarov. Special attention is paid to the phenomenon of the “illusion of proximity” that arises in translation between the genetically close Uzbek and Turkish languages: the author demonstrates, through the realia *karnay*, *qarqara o'tog'asi*, *tillaqosh* and *nisholda*, the kinds of pragmatic errors this illusion produces in practice. Using comparative, contextual and linguopragmatic methods of analysis, the translator's techniques of functional analogue, transliteration and footnoted commentary are evaluated. The analysis shows that the genetic closeness of the languages does not simplify translation: some functional equivalents fail to convey the national-historical colouring of the realia in full and cause pragmatic loss. This confirms that, in the translation of realia, the translator's background knowledge as a representative of two cultures is of decisive importance. At the same time, the translator gradually corrected the initial inaccuracies through transliteration and notes over the course of the work, which is assessed as a positive tendency. The results of the study can serve to improve the practice of translating the Uzbek literary heritage into foreign languages and, in particular, to develop methodological guidelines for translators working with pairs of cognate languages.

Keywords: Historical-ethnographic realia, linguopragmatic analysis, pragmatic equivalence, literary translation, functional analogue, illusion of proximity, transliteration, national colouring, cultural compensation, addressee factor.

Introduction: The analysis of the process of literary translation, as well as of published translation samples, is currently among the pressing issues of translation studies. The re-expression of a literary text in another language is closely connected not only with conveying its content but also with preserving the aesthetic value of the original. In this respect, translation is one of the important sources that shape literary culture. The principal aim of this article is to study the issues involved in re-expressing the national-cultural content, the pragmatic features and the artistic-aesthetic load of the historical-ethnographic realia of Uzbek literature

when they are rendered into Turkish. In the course of the study, the ways in which historical realia are conveyed in translation are analyzed, and their role in preserving the meaning of the source text and the author's intention is highlighted. It is substantiated, on scholarly grounds, that in translating historical realia it is necessary to ensure not only semantic accuracy but also pragmatic expressiveness.

Historical realia are concepts specific to a particular historical period, place or culture that have no direct equivalent in other languages and cultures. They constitute a complex linguistic phenomenon located at

the intersection of disciplines such as language, history, ethnography and cultural studies. For this reason, the question of translating and reconstructing them is important not only for translation studies but also from the standpoint of intercultural communication and the study of cultural history. The realia in any historical work embody both national and historical colouring, because the way of life, culture, views and social, political and economic development of a given people across various historical periods inevitably leave their imprint on the meaning of the term “realia”. The correct translation of historical realia plays an important role in strengthening intercultural understanding and preserving historical memory.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

At the present stage in the development of translation theory, it is becoming increasingly evident that adapting linguistic units on a purely formal level is not sufficient, since any text embodies not only semantic content but also a particular communicative purpose and a pragmatic aspect. For this reason, the relationship between translation and pragmatics is regarded as one of the important issues of translation studies. “Pragmatics” (from the Greek *pragma* – deed, action) is, in origin, a philosophical concept. Pragmatics first emerged not directly in the field of translation studies but as a pragmatist current in philosophy; it was in use even in pre-Socratic times and was later adopted from Aristotle by philosophers such as J. Locke and I. Kant [1, 6]. The concept of pragmatics was first introduced into scholarly usage in the 1930s in semiotics by the American scholar Ch. Morris [2, 6]. The emergence and delimitation of pragmatics as a new object of research in linguistics is inextricably linked with the ideas of Ch. S. Peirce; with speech act theory, which arose on the basis of the logical-philosophical views of J. R. Austin, J. R. Searle and Z. Vendler in the 1960s–1970s; with Paul Grice's pragmatic analysis of meaning; and with the theories of reference of L. Linsky, J. R. Searle and P. F. Strawson [1, 6]. Ch. Morris divided semiotics into three component parts: syntactics, which studies the relations between signs; semantics, which studies the lexical and grammatical meanings of language units (words, phrases, sentences) and their semantic structure; and pragmatics, which studies the relation between a sign and the one who uses it (the interpreter, that is, the one who constructs or understands it) [2, 6]. “If we take into account that most, perhaps all, interpreters of signs are living organisms, the essential characteristic of pragmatics is that it embraces the biological aspects of the process of semiosis. That is, in explaining how signs function, it helps to take into account the psychological, biological and social factors connected

with the activity of human beings and other living organisms” [3, 63]. These views of his on semiotic relations were later continued, from the standpoint of translation theory, in the research of V. N. Komissarov. According to him, every language unit by its very nature combines three types of relation: semantic, syntactic and pragmatic. The semantic relation denotes the connection between the linguistic sign and the object or phenomenon it expresses; the syntactic relation expresses the interrelation of the given sign with other units in the language system; and the pragmatic relation expresses the relation between the language unit and the person who uses or receives it in the process of speech [4, 101]. Therefore, a language unit possesses not only denotative content but also syntactic and pragmatic layers of meaning. In the process of translation, one must simultaneously take into account not only the structure of the language but also meaning, effect and purpose, because the pragmatic factor – namely, by whom, to whom and with what communicative purpose an utterance is directed – is of decisive importance for a full understanding of linguistic phenomena. Taking precisely this aspect into account, we may state that the translation process is not a simple linguistic transformation but manifests itself as a complex communicative activity. It is the pragmatic component that determines the effect produced on the addressee, which is considered the most delicate and responsible aspect of translation. In other words, the principal task facing the translator is not limited to preserving the semantic and syntactic features of language units, but also consists in adequately recreating their pragmatic load.

In Russian translation studies, the concept of “realia” in its modern sense was first introduced into scholarly usage in 1952 by the Russian scholar L. N. Sobolev; as V. S. Vinogradov notes, realia are “lexical units that reflect the life of society and the material way of life, are specific only to a particular region or nation, and have no full equivalent in the language and thought of other peoples” [5, 87]. The work *Neperevodimoe v perevode* (“The Untranslatable in Translation”) by the Bulgarian scholars S. I. Vlahov and S. P. Florin is considered one of the most fundamental sources of the theory of realia in translation studies. This work is of particular importance as a study that systematized, on a scholarly basis, the problem of “untranslatable units” in twentieth-century translation theory, precisely defined the concept of realia, and described in detail the ways of translating them [6]. According to the subject criterion, the scholars divide realia into geographic, ethnographic and socio-political realia; according to spatial reference, into one's own realia

(national, local, micro-realia) and foreign realia (international, regional); and according to the time criterion, they conditionally divide realia into two groups, namely contemporary and historical realia. This classification is, of course, carried out on a well-grounded basis, taking into account the connection of realia with object and time, their position from the standpoint of time, and their assimilation through literature and through foreign languages. In the work, archaisms are mentioned alongside historicisms as one variety of historical realia [7, 136].

The study employed descriptive, comparative-analytical, contextual and linguopragmatic methods of analysis. The descriptive method was used to explain the concepts of realia and pragmatics, as well as the form, function and cultural content of the units examined – karnay, qarqara o'tog'asi, tillaqosh and nisholda. The comparative-analytical method served as the basis for a pairwise comparison of the source text (Isajon Sulton) and the Turkish translation (Sema Eynel) and for assessing the appropriateness of the chosen equivalents. The contextual method served to determine the meaning of the realia within the literary text and the cultural situation, while linguopragmatic analysis was used to study the phenomena of pragmatic equivalence, the effect on the addressee, and pragmatic loss.

At the same time, a number of auxiliary methods can be observed in the analytical part of the article: componential (sememic) analysis in comparing the layers of meaning of realia – for instance, comparing the units tillaqosh and sorguç by where they are worn, by whom, and their function; linguocultural analysis in elucidating questions of national colouring, cultural lacunae and the translator's background knowledge; historical-etymological analysis in revealing the origin and historical use of the realia (such as the use of the word o'tog'a in the Boburnoma); lexicographic-definitional analysis based on the definitions of explanatory dictionaries; and the analysis of translation transformations in classifying the techniques used by the translator (functional analogue, transliteration, footnoted commentary).

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Pragmatic meaning is a dynamic, multi-layered semantic phenomenon that arises from the interaction of a text with the speech situation, the participants in communication, and the cultural context. The pragmatic meaning of historical realia is doubly subtle, since yet another complex layer – the historical-cultural context – is added.

A translator must be not merely a specialist who knows two languages, but, in effect, a representative of two

cultures. The translator's background knowledge is especially important in interpreting realia, because a realia embodies not only lexical meaning but also cultural experience. If the translator does not grasp these cultural foundations, the content of the text is conveyed only superficially and the national colouring of the original goes unnoticed. Therefore, in translating historical realia, the translator's range of knowledge must not be limited to linguistic competence but must also be enriched with cultural competence. One of the questions frequently raised in translation theory is whether the translation process between closely related cognate languages has its own specific features, or whether the general principles of translation apply equally to all language pairs. At first glance, translation between genetically and typologically close languages – for example, between members of the Uzbek and Turkic language group – seems considerably simpler: one might assume that a common lexical fund, a similar grammatical structure and a close cultural context ease the translator's task. However, it is precisely this illusion of “proximity” that may open the way to serious methodological errors in translation practice. If the translation process is carried out merely by directly transferring the familiar words of the source text into the target language and explaining unfamiliar units in footnotes, such an approach may negate the very essence of translation. Translation is, moreover, the re-creation of the original text in another language, its transfer into a new linguocultural environment while preserving its lexical-semantic and pragmatic potential. From this point of view, the fundamental principle remains unchanged both in translation between cognate languages and in translation between genetically distant languages.

In the novel, the historical and cultural environment and the social life of the era in which Alisher Navoiy lived, as well as the realia characteristic of that period, are vividly expressed through artistic depiction; their types, content and pragmatic features are analyzed below on the basis of the following examples.

Let us compare. Source text: “Har zamonda karnaylar sadosi tinib, jarchi bugungi tantana sababini ma'lum qilib jar solardi” (I.S. 9) [“Each time the sound of the karnays fell silent, the herald proclaimed the reason for that day's celebration”]. In the target language: “Her zaman olduğu gibi borazanların sesi kesildi, tellal bugünkü şenliğin sebebini duyurdu” (S.E. 11). The sentence in the source language serves to render linguistically the architectonics of the traditional mass gatherings, festivals and folk celebrations of the Uzbek people. Although the words karnay and jarchi (herald) used in the text are not purely historical realia, they are ethnographic units expressing the distinctiveness of

Uzbek national and everyday life and culture; and since this is the first study devoted to the translation of this work, we have undertaken their analysis. For the Uzbek karnay, the translator chose the word *borazan*, which is characteristic of Turkish cultural life and military traditions. Both instruments perform the same function – producing sound, signalling to a crowd and attracting attention. The general equivalence of meaning is preserved, but the linguistic form and the national feature have changed. Sema Eynel applied the functional analogue technique. For the Uzbek people, the karnay is a straight, smooth, tube-shaped wind instrument with a deep sound, usually 2–3 metres long and made of copper or brass, which opens weddings and celebrations. In the Turkish reader's mind, this *realia* is replaced by the *borazan* – compact, with metal tubes bent several times into a spiral, close to the Western “trumpet”, with a sharp sound and used mainly as a military signalling device. By offering this variant, the translator was able to convey to the Turkish reader the meaning of “a ceremonial summoning sound”. However, for the associative imagination of the Turkish reader, the Uzbek colouring was sacrificed. On page 135 of the translation, the word *karnay* is given through transliteration with an explanatory footnote; this time the translator, realizing the error, corrected it. But this occurred when the translation had not yet been fully completed – the translated work consists of 338 pages in total. The translator should have gone back and removed the word *borazan*, or – as was done with the other historical *realia* explained in footnotes – provided the word *karnay* in a footnote. As it stands, the Turkish reader encounters two different renderings in two places and imagines two different instruments.

As Qudrat Musayev has noted, in rendering culture-specific words into the target language it is first necessary to determine the informational and stylistic functions they perform in a particular context, and then to select, in the target language, lexical means that correspond to them in every respect while at the same time conforming to the norms and culture of that language [8, 141].

Another example. Source text: “Karnaylar o'kirib, dovullar gumburladi, shu tantana sadolari ostida ko'shk darvozasidan oq otda ustiga zar to'n kiyib, sariq sallasiga qarqara o'tog'asi qadalgan ulug' yoshli bir kishi yetakchiligida arkoni davlat ko'rindi” (I.S. 11) [“The karnays blared and the kettledrums thundered; amid these festive sounds, through the palace gate, on a white horse, wearing a gold-embroidered robe, with a qarqara plume pinned to his yellow turban, an elderly man appeared at the head of the dignitaries of state”]. This sentence is rendered into Turkish as: “Borazanlar çalınıp davullar vuruldu. Bu tentene sesleri altında

köşkün penceresinden beyaz atın üstünde, altın bir kaftan giymiş, sarı renkli sariğini çengelli iğneyle tutturmuş, görünüşünden yetmişlerine vardığı anlaşılan bir adamın önderliğinde devlet erkânı göründü” (S.E. 13). The qarqara o'tog'asi denotes a precious ornament pinned to the turbans of rulers, commanders and members of the upper class in the Timurid, Mughal and Ottoman courts. Qarqara is the name of a bird; because this bird's feathers were very rare and beautiful, they were pinned only to royal headdresses. The o'tog'a setting was adorned with various precious jewels and emerald stones, among which the qarqara feathers were placed. This word is used in Babur's *Boburnoma*, where o'tog'a – in the sense of an ornament for headwear, an aigrette, a plume – is applied to Sultan Husayn: “Sulton Husayn axyonan iydlarda kichik sepech dastorini yap-yassi namoyon chirmab, qarqara o'tog'asini sanchib, namozga borur edi” [9, 236]. In the translation it is rendered as çengelli iğne (safety pin). In present-day Uzbek, its counterpart would be a pin (to'g'nog'ich) or a safety pin. We use this object frequently in everyday life – for instance, to fasten a torn or undone part of a garment, or to secure a headscarf. There is no historical grandeur or aesthetic value in this word. When the Turkish reader reads the text, instead of the image of a majestic, dignified person, what is conjured up is an ordinary old man who has pinned his turban with a simple wire pin so that it would not come undone. To apply çengelli iğne to the owner of a gold robe (altın kaftan), worn by people of the highest lineage, is logically incongruous.

The function of the o'tog'a is not merely that of an instrument for holding cloth in place; it marked a person's social status and position within the structure of power. This same functional load was borne in the Ottoman Empire by the Turkish word *sorguç* – that is, a feathered ornament attached to turbans. Evidently, the translator did not use the correct variant in providing an analogue. Significantly, on page 135 of the translation this same word recurs; this time the translator uses transliteration plus a footnote, partly correcting the error. However, the translator explains qarqara only as a bird and renders o'tog'a as the two feathers placed on the head of that bird. The Turkish reader thus imagines an ordinary feather tucked into a turban rather than magnificence. Had the footnote given the full definition of qarqara o'tog'asi cited above, the aim would have been achieved.

Above, we cited the word *sorguç* as the best variant for qarqara o'tog'asi; this unit also functions as a historical *realia* in Turkish. The translator used precisely this word for the term *tillaqosh* that appears in the source language. Source text: “Xaltachalarning birida yong'oq

kattaligidagi tengi yo'q dur, ikkinchisida esa qizil va sariq tilladan ishlanib, marvaridlar qadalgan tillaqosh bor ekan" (I.S. 342) ["In one of the small pouches there was a peerless pearl the size of a walnut, and in the second a tillaqosh wrought of red and yellow gold and set with pearls"]. In translation: "Keselerden birinde ceviz büyüklüğünde eşsiz bir inci, ikincisinde ise kırmızı ve sarı altınla işlenmiş ve incilerle süslenmiş bir sorguç vardı" (S.E. 264). In a footnote it is explained as follows: "Türkçede bazı kuşların tepesinde bulunan uzun tüylere verilen bu ad, daha sonra kadınların başlıklarının üzerine takılan çeşitli mücevherle yapılan bir süsün adı olarak kullanılmıştır. Bu sözcük Özbekçede 'tillekaş' olarak kullanılmıştır" – that is, "In Turkish, this name, given to the long feathers on the crest of certain birds, later came to be used as the name of an ornament made of various jewels and attached to women's headdresses. This word is used in Uzbek in the form tillaqosh." This very definition substantiates our point above. The translator describes sorguç only as an ornament attached to women's headwear; yet in Turkish history it was used not only by women but also by sultans and princes. Tillaqosh, it is true, is not a historical lexeme, since today it is increasingly fashionable, adding beauty to every Uzbek bride; nevertheless, we have made it our aim to analyze it, without leaving it out of account, as a purely Uzbek realia. Tillaqosh is an ornamental item, made of gold or gold-plated, worn by women, attached to the forehead and hanging down to the eyebrows [10, 263]. First, only women wear the tillaqosh; second, unlike the sorguç, it is attached not to headwear but directly to the forehead, and it has no connection whatsoever with any bird feather. Although both are used as ornaments, their form and appearance differ. Because of the cultural and semantic differences between tillaqosh and sorguç, we cannot regard them as adequate equivalents. The footnote, however, compensated for the pragmatic loss that had occurred.

The translation scholar Xayrulla Hamidov expresses the following view on this matter: "In translation, the work should reflect not the territory, natural conditions and customs of the people into whose language it is being translated, but the territory, natural conditions and national features of the people from whose language it is being translated. Hence, in a work being rendered from Uzbek, serious attention must be paid to preserving the features characteristic of the Uzbek people" [11, 209].

In translation studies, the concept of pragmatic loss is interpreted in various ways. J. Catford regards it as a limitation of translation equivalence [12, 94]. E. Nida, within the framework of the principle of functional equivalence, distinguishes two types of loss: loss of

information and loss of effect [13, 24]. As an example, the source text reads: "Bir chetda sopol nisholda ko'valari tizilgan, shuningdek, qovoq ustiga qiyom quyib tayyorlanadigan 'chakrak' degan shirinlik ham tayyor, bola-baqra og'izlarini sap-sariq qilib undan yeb yurishardi" (I.S. 9) ["On one side, earthenware pitchers (kuva) of nisholda were lined up, and there was also ready a sweet called chakrak, made by pouring syrup over pumpkin; the children went about eating it with their mouths all yellow"]. It is rendered into Turkish as follows: "Bir yanda seramik muhallebi kapları dizilmişti. Ayrıca kabağın üstüne reçel konularak hazırlanan 'çakrak' adlı tatlı da hazırды. Çoluk çocuk, ağızları sapsarı olmuş ondan yiyorlardı" (S.E. 11). The lexical unit nisholda does not have the status of a historical realia; it is a sweet still consumed today in Central Asia, Iran, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and in our own country. The person who prepares it is called a nisholdachi. During the month of Ramadan, the iftar table cannot be imagined without it. In the work it acquires important pragmatic value as an ethnographic realia expressing the people's traditional food culture and national way of life; it cannot be excluded from the analysis on the grounds that it is "not a historical realia". Has this concept, connected with the national and religious tradition of Ramadan, been rendered adequately in translation? Nisholda is a foamy, thick, white sweet prepared by whipping egg white until frothy and adding sugar syrup [14, 381]. In the translation it is rendered as muhallebi, the meaning of which is "süt, şeker ve pirinç ununun kaynatılmasıyla yapılan bir tatlı" – that is, a sweet made by boiling milk, sugar and rice flour together. Although these two different sweets seem identical in form and outward appearance, they involve different ingredients and a distinct preparation process. While reading, the target-language reader understands their own national sweet, muhallebi, and not nisholda. This is not a simple pragmatic loss – it is an "incorrect filling of a cultural lacuna" [15, 178–185]. Kuva (rendered in the translation as ko'va) and chakrak are realia with an archaic colouring. In the work, kuva is used in the sense of a long earthenware vessel with a somewhat narrow neck, used for holding liquids such as water, milk and the like [16, 954]. The equivalent of kuva is given correctly in Turkish as kap, and the word çakrak is translated by means of transliteration. For these realia the translator was able to find an adequate strategy.

CONCLUSION

The pragmatic interpretation of the historical realia in the Turkish translation of Isajon Sulton's novel Alisher Navoiy has been analyzed on the basis of practical examples. The analysis shows that the genetic closeness of the Uzbek and Turkish languages does not

simplify translation; on the contrary, this closeness prompts the translator to accept as equivalents units that essentially carry a different meaning. It was shown that the principal causes of pragmatic loss are the cultural differences between the two languages, the translator's incomplete grasp of the historical-cultural context underlying the text, and the phenomenon of the "illusion of proximity" between genetically close languages. For many of the realia encountered in the work, including the historical realia, the translator strove to select alternative equivalents that would be comprehensible to the target-language reader. However, in order to preserve the national-historical colouring of the realia, the translator in some cases used a partially matching equivalent within the text while applying transliteration plus explanation in the footnotes. Although such an approach makes it easier for the reader to perceive the text, the use of an alternative equivalent within the text in some cases led to the partial loss of the national and historical features of the realia. This shortcoming was remedied by means of transliteration and notes. In a number of cases, Sema Eynel corrected, in later passages, an inappropriate equivalent introduced on the early pages of the work – which is assessed as a step-by-step improvement of the translation process.

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