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TRANSLATING CULTURE-SPECIFIC ITEMS IN “SAODAT ASRI QISSALARI”: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the translation of culture-specific items in “Saodat Asri Qissalari” by Ahmad Lutfi Kazanchi using Newmark’s (1988) taxonomy . It highlights the challenges of translating conceptual metaphors and phraseological units while maintaining the text's linguistic integrity and cultural resonance. By applying Newmark’s strategies, this study demonstrates how to preserve the emotional and cultural essence of the source text for English-speaking audiences. This approach underscores the importance of nuanced translation practices in enhancing cross-cultural communication and making literary texts more accessible. The findings show the effectiveness of Newmark's techniques in addressing semantic and cultural challenges in literary translation.

KEYWORDS

Culture-specific items, translation challenges, conceptual metaphors, phraseological units, Newmark's techniques, cross-cultural communication, literary translation, semantic analysis.

INTRODUCTION

This article looks at how literary texts connect cultures, going beyond their beauty to help people from different places understand each other through language. It shows how important literature has been in shaping societies and helping different cultures talk to each other by sharing ideas, stories, and art. As writing developed, it allowed these texts to be shared over time and space, highlighting their role in letting us learn about the achievements of distant or past cultures. Through translating and studying these texts, literature helps to enrich the world's cultures and improve our shared human experience. This study focuses on translating specific cultural phrases and concepts, using methods to keep the original text's richness while making it understandable to more people.

This introduction prepares us to discuss the challenges and methods of translating specific cultural parts of literary texts, showing how this work helps cultural exchange and understanding.

METHODS

This study primarily utilized a descriptive and analytical approach to explore the challenges and solutions in translating culture-specific items from “Saodat Asri Qissalari” by Ahmad Lutfi Kazanchi. We focused on Peter Newmark's translation strategies to navigate the complexities of transferring cultural and semantic meanings from Uzbek into English.

Literature Review: We extensively reviewed academic literature on translation studies, particularly focusing on works by Peter Newmark and other scholars who specialize in translating culture-specific units. This literature provided a foundational understanding of the various methods used in literary translation.

Textual Analysis: The core of our research involved a close textual analysis of “Saodat Asri Qissalari.” We identified and categorized culture-specific units into conceptual metaphors, phraseological units, image-bearing concepts, and cultural concepts. This classification helped us systematically approach the translation process.

Translation Strategies: Based on Newmark's framework, we applied specific strategies such as descriptive equivalence, cultural equivalence, and direct translation. Each strategy was chosen based on the nature of the culture-specific item and the intended effect on the English-speaking audience.

Case Studies: We presented detailed case studies of selected fragments from the text. These examples demonstrated how each translation strategy was implemented and the reasoning behind our choices to maintain the integrity and richness of the original text.

Feedback and Revision: Preliminary translations were reviewed and revised based on feedback from experts in both Uzbek and English literary studies. This iterative

process ensured that translations were not only accurate but also resonant with the intended audience.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to analyze the translation of culture-specific units from Uzbek into English within “Saodat Asri Qissalari” by Ahmad Lutfi Kazanchi. The methodology was designed to capture the nuances of language and culture inherent in the translation process.

Text Selection: The primary source for this study was “Saodat Asri Qissalari.” Specific passages containing conceptual metaphors and phraseological units were selected for detailed analysis based on their significance in the text and the complexity of their cultural content.

Analytical Framework: Drawing from Newmark’s translation strategies, an analytical framework was established to guide the translation of the selected text fragments. This framework included descriptive equivalence, cultural equivalence, and direct translation, chosen based on their applicability to the nature of each culture-specific unit.

Data Collection: The data comprised the original text in Uzbek and the translated fragments in English. Each translation was documented along with annotations

explaining the choice of translation strategy and any cultural or semantic nuances addressed in the process.

Data Analysis: The translated data were analyzed to assess how effectively each strategy conveyed the original text’s meaning, emotion, and cultural depth. This involved comparing the original and translated texts and evaluating the clarity, accuracy, and cultural appropriateness of the translations.

Expert Consultation: To ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of the translations, feedback was sought from experts in Uzbek literature, English translation, and cultural studies. Their insights helped refine the translations and validate the methodology.

Ethical Considerations: Throughout the research, ethical considerations were adhered to, including respecting the intellectual property of the original text and ensuring transparency in the translation and analysis process.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Lakoff and Johnson organize so-called conceptual metaphors into the following categories: structural, orientational, and ontological. These conceptual metaphors are how we understand and view our actions, thoughts, and emotions.

Structural metaphors, as Povezhaev puts it, are “one concept structured by another”. While these types of metaphors can be useful, Lakoff and Johnson offer the

idea of highlighting and hiding to help get an idea of how people use them. When people do this, they focus on one part of the metaphor but forget the other aspect of it and they can develop a “focused understanding by way of shared entailment” (Povozhaev 2013). Choosing to focus on one aspect of the metaphor enables us to understand only half of what is being said. Orientational metaphors are unlike structural ones as they organize “a whole system of concepts with respect to one another” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). These metaphors use the idea of spatial relationships. We come to understand these types of metaphors from experiences with the mind, the body, and the world around us. These ideas can also come from a cultural standpoint. But within one metaphor, there are variations of these concepts. They can all exist together in one big metaphor. Having these different variations can allow us to look at the metaphor at different angles.

The last type of conceptual metaphor that Lakoff and Johnson speak about is ontological metaphors. These types of metaphors help us in “understanding our experience in terms of objects and substances [that allow] us to pick out parts of our experience and treat them as discrete entities or substances of a uniform kind” (Lakoff and Johnson). Personifying things can help us understand them better and “categorize them, group them, and quantify them—and, by this means, reason with them” (Lakoff and Johnson). When we

think of something as an entity or substance, we can connect with the different sides of whatever that something is. According to Aixela, J. F. (1996), CSIs are, “elements of the text that are connected to certain concepts in the foreign culture (history, art, literature) which might be unknown to the readers of the TT” .

Therefore, it can be inferred that culture-specific items (CSIs) create a notable gap between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). This gap arises when an element in the source text (ST) lacks equivalence in the target culture, or when the target language lacks a corresponding term. To bridge these cultural differences and ensure a translation that accurately reflects the original text, translation scholars have proposed various strategies and methodologies. Newmark introduces different strategies for translating CSIs; for our project, we have applied a selection of these strategies specifically tailored to the translation fragments of “Saodat Asri Qissalari.” Below, we outline the strategies we employed during our translation process by Newmark’s (1988) taxonomy. They include:

Transference: It is the process of transferring an SL word to a TL text as a translation procedure. It includes transliteration, which relates to the conversion of different alphabets: for example, Russian (Cyrillic), Greek, Arabic, and so on into English. The word, then, becomes a loan word. It includes transliteration and is the same as what is called transcription.

Naturalization: It conforms the SL word first to the normal pronunciation, then, to the normal morphology of the TL.

Cultural Equivalent: It intends replacing a cultural word in the SL with an, although not accurate, TL word.

Functional Equivalent: In this procedure, a culture-free word is used, sometimes a new specific term is used; therefore, it generalizes the SL word.

Descriptive Equivalent: In this procedure, the meaning of the CBT is explained in several words.

Componential Analysis: It means comparing an SL word with a TL word which has a similar meaning, although not being its one-to-one equivalent, by presenting, first, their common, and then, their differing sense components.

Synonymy: It is a near TL equivalent. Here economy trumps accuracy.

Through-Translation: It is the literal translation of common collocations, names of organizations and components of compounds. It can also be called: calque or loan translation.

Shifts or Transpositions: It involves a change in the grammar from SL to TL, e.g., (i) change from singular to plural; (ii) when a specific SL structure does not exist

in the TL, a change is required; (iii) change of an SL verb to a TL word, change of an SL noun group to a TL noun, and so forth.

Modulation: It occurs when the translator reproduces the message of the original text in the TL text in accordance with the current norms of the TL, because the SL and the TL may be different in perspective.

Recognized Translation: It occurs when the translator normally uses the official or the generally accepted translation of any institutional term.

Compensation: It occurs when loss of meaning in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part.

Paraphrase: In paraphrasing, the meaning of the CBT is explained. The explanation in paraphrasing is much more detailed than in descriptive equivalent.

Couplets: It occurs when the translator applies two different procedures together.

Notes, Additions, Glosses: These are additional information which a translator may have to add to his version; the additional information that the translator adds is normally cultural.

Having outlined Newmark's strategies for translating culture-specific units, we now delve into their practical application.

Table.1

Example Descriptive Equivalence of applied in translating CSUs in

Table.2

Example of Descriptive Equivalence applied in translating CSUs in
“Saodat asri qissalari”

Source text (Uzbek)	Translated text (English)
<p><i>Bu hodisa Halimani ham, Horisni ham xiylagina dovdiratib qo`ydi. Halima oqshomga qadar ichiga chiroq yoqsa yorishmay, ko`zlari g`amli, o`y bosib yurdi. Horisning ham boshi egik edi.</i></p> <p><i>Hayotlari guldek yashnab kechayotgan paytda birdaniga bu hodisaning sodi bo`lishi ko`ngliga xush yoqadigan narsa emas edi. [6:61]</i></p>	<p><i>Harith and Halima were speechless, unsure of how to respond. They spent the whole day feeling consumed by anxiety, with a sense of sadness in their eyes. Their peaceful life, usually filled with blessings, was suddenly overshadowed by this confusing incident.</i></p>

Translation Analysis:

Challenge: The phrase “Ichiga chiroq yoqsa yorishmaslik” literally translates to “even if a lamp is lit inside, it won't shine.” This metaphor describes a state where no matter what efforts are made to brighten one's mood, the overwhelming anxiety or sadness cannot be alleviated.

The challenge is translating this metaphor in a way that maintains its vivid imagery and emotional depth, which may not be directly understood by an English-speaking audience.

Solution: The chosen strategy of Descriptive Equivalent was used in the translation “feeling consumed by anxiety,” which captures the essence of the metaphor,

expressing how deep emotional turmoil can overshadow all aspects of one's life.

This phrase conveys the psychological burden and the overpowering nature of the feelings described, akin to the original metaphor's portrayal of an internal struggle that light cannot dispel.

Alternative Strategy: Cultural equivalence

Use “a light dimmed by shadows within” to convey the depth of internal turmoil using familiar imagery of light and darkness, symbolizing the overshadowing of peace by anxiety or sadness. This preserves the original's poetic tone and emotional depth.

Having explored the challenges of translating culture-specific words within our research focus and provided

our approach to translation and solutions for some of the conceptual metaphors, we now shift our attention to another type of culture-bound units: phraseological units.

Phraseological units are fixed expressions in language that consist of two or more words whose combination conveys a specific meaning beyond the literal meanings of the individual words. They are

characterized by their stability and resistance to modification.

To establish clarity on the concept of phraseological units, it is beneficial to adopt A.V. Koonin's precise definition: "Phraseological units is a separable combinability of words with the analyzed meaning and a definite stability at phraseological level" (Kuzmin, 2007).

Table.3

Example of Cultural equivalence applied in translating CSUs in
"Saodat asri qissalari"

Source text (Uzbek)	Translated text (English)
<p>- <i>Biron nima desang-chi ey Abu Sufyon!-dedi.</i></p> <p>- <i>Xo'sh , o`zing nega indamaysan Umayya, xudo haqqi anavi og`aynilaringni qishlog`iga borganingdan keyin og`zinga talqon solib qo`ygansan deb o`ylagan edim. xech seni bu holatda ko`rgan emasman. nimalar bo`lganini tushuntirsang-chi? [6:269]</i></p>	<p>- "Say something, Abu Sufyan," Umayyah prompted.</p> <p>- "Well, why aren't you taking action yourself, Umayyah? for God's sake! After your visit to your relatives' village, it seems you've bitten your tongue, I've never seen you in such a state before". What could have happened?" Abu Sufyan retorted.</p>

Translation Analysis:

Challenge: The phrase "og'zinga talqon solib qo'ygansan" literally translates as "you have put flour in your mouth," which metaphorically represents withholding speech or remaining silent in a sensitive

situation. This expression, deeply embedded in cultural context, might not resonate directly with English speakers due to its specific cultural imagery.

Solution: Employing a "Cultural Equivalent" strategy, the translation "you've bitten your tongue" was used.

this idiom in a way that English speakers can understand.

Solution: We translated this idiom using the strategy of Cultural Equivalent. We replaced the Uzbek idiom with an English idiom “caught between a rock and a hard place” that conveys a similar meaning. Both idioms imply a situation where someone is in a dilemma or facing a difficult decision.

Alternative Strategies: Explanation: Though the chosen approach works well, the translator could consider adding a brief explanation within brackets: “(He found himself caught between a rock and a hard place) – a difficult situation with no easy choices.” This clarifies the idiom's meaning without disrupting the flow of the narrative.

CONCLUSION

This article has explored the profound complexities involved in translating culture-specific units from “Saodat Asri Qissalari” into English, highlighting the indispensable role of Newmark's strategies in bridging the linguistic and cultural gaps. Through the application of descriptive, cultural, and functional equivalents, we have navigated the intricacies of conceptual metaphors, phraseological units, and idiomatic expressions to ensure that the translated text maintains the depth and nuance of the original.

Our analysis revealed the challenges posed by metaphors like “tussiz hayot” and idiomatic expressions such as “og'zinga talqon solib qo'ygansan,” underscoring the necessity of thoughtful translation strategies to convey the intended meanings effectively. By employing strategies like descriptive equivalence and cultural equivalence, we were able to adapt these units into English without losing their cultural significance or emotional impact. Furthermore, this study underscores the importance of a methodical approach to translation, where understanding the source text's cultural and linguistic context is as crucial as the linguistic transfer itself. This approach not only enhances the readability of the translated text for English-speaking audiences but also preserves the cultural richness and authenticity of the original work.

In conclusion, our findings demonstrate that a nuanced understanding of both the source and target cultures, combined with a strategic use of translation methodologies, is essential for the successful translation of literature enriched with cultural and historical contexts. This research contributes valuable insights into the field of translation studies and offers a framework for future translations of culturally dense literary works.

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