

Equivalence of National-Cultural Units in Translation Between Turkish And Uzbek

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Abstract: This article examines the issue of ensuring the equivalence of national-cultural units in the process of translation between Turkish and Uzbek. Translation involves not only transferring lexical and grammatical meaning from one language into another, but also adequately conveying the national worldview, customs, traditions, historical experience, and cultural values characteristic of the source language in the target language. Although the historical and cultural proximity of the Turkish and Uzbek peoples facilitates the translation of certain national-cultural units through direct or functional equivalents, units associated with the specific socio-cultural experience of each nation present particular challenges for translators. The article analyzes the role of realia, phraseological units, proverbs and sayings, forms of address, and lexical units with cultural connotations in the translation process. It also highlights the importance of such methods as equivalence, functional substitution, descriptive translation, calque translation, and explication in translating national-cultural units.

Keywords: Turkish language, Uzbek language, translation, national-cultural units, linguoculturology, equivalence, adequacy, realia, phraseological unit, national colouring, translation strategy.

Introduction: The intensification of globalization and intercultural communication has further increased the academic and practical significance of translation between the languages of different peoples. In particular, the study of translation between Turkish and Uzbek, which are considered related languages, is important not only from the perspective of translation studies but also from the viewpoints of linguistics, linguoculturology, and intercultural communication.

One of the main objectives of translation is to convey the content of the source text as fully and naturally as possible in the target language. However, in literary and journalistic texts, the author's ideas are often closely connected with the historical, social, and cultural experience of a particular nation. In such cases, simple lexical correspondence is not sufficient. The translator must understand not only the denotative meaning of a linguistic unit in the source language but also its national and cultural significance.

National-cultural units refer to linguistic units that express the lifestyle, customs, traditions, historical events, national cuisine, clothing, kinship relations, social institutions, and other cultural phenomena characteristic of a particular nation. Such units reflect the national specificity of a language and may create certain difficulties when translated into another language.

The historical roots, cultural relations, and linguistic affinity of the Turkish and Uzbek peoples provide an important advantage in the translation process. For example, units such as "anne – ona" (mother), "baba – ota" (father), "kardeş – aka/uka/opa/singil" (brother/sister), "düğün – to'y" (wedding), "bayram – bayram" (holiday/festival), and "misafir – mehmon" (guest) have close meanings or direct equivalents in the two languages. At the same time, although the external forms or lexical meanings of certain units may be similar, their cultural connotations may not correspond completely.

Therefore, the study of the equivalence of national-cultural units in translation between Turkish and Uzbek represents a relevant and significant issue in contemporary translation studies.

The study employs comparative-descriptive, contextual, linguocultural, and translation studies methods of analysis. National-cultural lexical, phraseological, and paremiological units in Turkish and Uzbek were examined comparatively. Particular attention was paid to the possibilities of rendering these units in translation and to the translation strategies employed in the process.

The main focus of the study was not limited to the lexical correspondence of national-cultural units; rather, it was directed toward identifying their contextual, functional, and cultural equivalence.

National-Cultural Units and Their Role in Translation

Language and culture are inseparable phenomena. Every language reflects the historical memory, worldview, and cultural experience of the people who speak it. Therefore, particular linguistic units may not have exactly the same meaning and connotations in another language.

An important characteristic of national-cultural units is that, in addition to naming an object or phenomenon, they also express its place and significance in the life of a particular people. For example, the Uzbek term “mahalla” does not simply refer to a “neighborhood” or “residential area”; it also denotes a historically formed socio-cultural institution. Although the Turkish word “mahalle” is formally and etymologically close to it, its socio-cultural meaning in certain contexts may not be

completely equivalent to that of the Uzbek “mahalla.”

Similarly, the Turkish term “kahvaltı” is generally translated into Uzbek as “nonushta” (breakfast). However, the concept of kahvaltı in Turkish culture, particularly in the context of a traditional breakfast table, may differ in certain respects from the Uzbek concept of “nonushta.” Thus, even when formal correspondence exists in translation, complete correspondence at the cultural level cannot always be observed.

Equivalence of National-Cultural Units in Turkish and Uzbek

The concept of equivalence occupies an important place in translation theory. Equivalence refers to the semantic, functional, and communicative correspondence between the source text and the target text. When translating national-cultural units, however, the issue of equivalence becomes considerably more complex.

National-cultural units occurring in Turkish and Uzbek can be conditionally divided into several groups:

1. units with direct equivalents;
2. units with partial equivalents;
3. units rendered through functional equivalents;
4. units for which no direct counterpart exists in the target language.

Direct Equivalents

Due to the historical and cultural proximity of the Turkish and Uzbek peoples, many concepts have closely corresponding names in both languages.

Turkish Unit	Uzbek Equivalent	Comment
anne	ona	direct equivalent
baba	ota	direct equivalent
kardeş	aka / uka / opa / singil	differentiated in Uzbek according to gender and age
misafir	mehmon	culturally close unit
düğün	to'y	functionally close equivalent
bayram	bayram	similar in form and meaning
komşu	qo'shni	direct equivalent
gelin	kelin	direct equivalent

damat

kuyov

direct equivalent

For these units, the main challenge for the translator is not finding an equivalent, but rather using the appropriate equivalent correctly in accordance with the context.

Partial Equivalents

Some units exist in both languages, but their semantic scope or range of use differs from one language to another.

For example, the Turkish word “kardeş” generally refers to a brother or sister. In Uzbek, however, kinship relations are distinguished more precisely according to age and gender: “aka,” “uka,” “opa,” “singil.” Therefore, the translator must select the appropriate variant based on the context.

This demonstrates the necessity of taking into account the communicative meaning of a linguistic unit rather than merely its formal structure in translation.

Functional Equivalence

In some cases, it is possible to find the exact lexical equivalent of a source-language unit, but it may not perform the same communicative function in the target language. In such situations, the use of a functional equivalent is appropriate.

For example, the Turkish expression “eline sağlık”, when translated literally, would have a form similar to “health to your hands.” However, in Uzbek, its communicative function can be conveyed through contextual expressions such as “Qo’lingiz dard ko’rmasin” (“May your hands never suffer”), “Barakalla” (“Well done”), or “Mehnatingizga rahmat” (“Thank you for your effort”).

Here, the translator seeks to preserve not the external form of the words, but rather the pragmatic function and cultural meaning of the expression.

Equivalence in the Translation of Phraseological Units

Phraseological units are among the most vivid linguistic means reflecting national-cultural meaning. Turkish and Uzbek contain numerous phraseological expressions that are similar in form or meaning. However, they are not necessarily used in the same situations.

For example:

Turkish: “etekleri zil çalmak”

If this expression is translated literally as “one’s skirts ringing,” it does not convey a natural meaning in Uzbek. Semantically, it can be rendered through expressions such as “ichiga sig’may quvonmoq” (“to be overjoyed”) or “xursandligidan boshi osmonga yetmoq” (“to be extremely happy”).

Thus, in translating phraseological units, semantic and functional equivalence, rather than literal equivalence, should serve as the principal criterion.

Another important aspect is that the national imagery of phraseological units may be lost in translation. If the translator conveys only the general meaning, the national colouring of the source text may be partially lost. Therefore, in literary translation, the translator should maintain a balance between meaning, imagery, and national colouring.

National Colouring in the Translation of Proverbs and Sayings

Proverbs and sayings reflect the centuries-old experience, worldview, and moral values of a people. Turkish and Uzbek contain numerous proverbs that are close to one another in meaning.

For example:

Turkish: “Damlaya damlaya göl olur.”

Uzbek: “Toma-toma ko’l bo’lur.”

In this case, the proverbs in the two languages are very close not only in meaning but also in imagery. Therefore, a direct functional equivalent can be used in translation.

In other cases, however, a proverb in the source language may not have a ready-made equivalent in Uzbek. In such situations, the translator may choose one of two main approaches: expressing the meaning of the proverb descriptively or translating it in a way that preserves its imagery as far as possible.

Specific Features of Translating Realia

Realia are linguistic units that denote objects, phenomena, or concepts characteristic of the material and spiritual culture of a particular people. They are among the units that create the greatest difficulties in the translation process.

Turkish units such as “lokum,” “simit,” “hamam,” “kahve,” “yörük,” “çayhane,” and “bayramlık” may be understandable to Uzbek readers to some extent. However, their cultural meanings and contextual uses do not always correspond exactly.

The following methods can be used when translating such units:

- transliteration or transcription;
- explanatory translation;
- descriptive translation;
- functional equivalent;
- calque translation;
- contextual substitution.

For example, the unit “simit” may be adopted into Uzbek in its original form as “simit” and, where necessary, explained as “a Turkish ring-shaped bread covered with sesame seeds.” Such an approach helps preserve the national colouring while also enabling the reader to understand the meaning.

Strategies for Ensuring Equivalence in Translation

When translating national-cultural units, translators can effectively employ the following strategies.

First, the use of a direct equivalent. If a unit with a corresponding meaning and function exists in the target language, this method is considered the most appropriate.

Second, functional substitution. When the source-language unit has no exact counterpart in the target language, a unit that is close in terms of its communicative function is selected.

Third, descriptive translation. If a national-cultural unit is unfamiliar in the target language, its meaning is explained descriptively.

Fourth, transliteration. When preserving the national colouring is important, the form of the source-language unit is retained in the target language.

Fifth, explication. Particularly when translating units with historical, religious, or ethnographic content, providing an explanation helps the reader understand the cultural context.

The Translator’s Linguocultural Competence

The successful translation of national-cultural units cannot be limited to the translator’s knowledge of two

languages. The translator must also have a thorough understanding of the cultural values, customs, historical traditions, and social relations characteristic of both the source and target languages.

In particular, in translation between Turkish and Uzbek, the linguistic affinity of the two languages may sometimes lead translators to the misconception that “if the words are similar, their meanings must also be identical.” In reality, formal similarity does not always imply complete semantic and pragmatic equivalence.

Therefore, the translator’s linguocultural competence should encompass the following aspects:

- knowledge of the national-cultural characteristics of both languages;
- identification of realia and cultural markers;
- understanding the implicit meanings of phraseological units;
- determination of contextual meaning;
- preservation of national colouring;
- ensuring comprehensibility for the reader.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study demonstrate that ensuring the equivalence of national-cultural units in translation between Turkish and Uzbek is a multi-stage process. The linguistic affinity of the two languages and the historical and cultural proximity of the two peoples make it possible to identify direct or functional equivalents for many units. At the same time, the distinctive cultural experiences of each nation may make it difficult to find complete equivalents for certain units in translation.

Based on the analysis, three levels of equivalence can be distinguished in the translation of national-cultural units:

1. Semantic equivalence — the basic lexical meaning of the unit is preserved.

2. Functional equivalence — the communicative function of the unit in the text is preserved.

3. Linguocultural equivalence — the national-cultural meaning, connotations, and national colouring of the unit are preserved as far as possible.

In an ideal translation, these three levels should complement one another. However, in practical translation, it is not always possible to preserve all of

them fully and simultaneously. Therefore, the translator should select an appropriate strategy depending on the genre, purpose, and target audience of the text.

CONCLUSION

The equivalence of national-cultural units in translation between Turkish and Uzbek is one of the important issues in translation studies. National-cultural units reveal not only the nominative but also the cultural and communicative potential of a language. Therefore, relying solely on lexical correspondence is insufficient when translating such units.

The linguistic affinity of Turkish and Uzbek and the historical and cultural proximity of the two peoples create numerous advantages in the translation process. However, when translating realia, phraseological units, proverbs and sayings, forms of address, and units with national connotations, it is necessary to take context, functional meaning, and cultural characteristics into account.

The results of the study demonstrate the importance of such strategies as direct equivalence, functional substitution, descriptive translation, transliteration, calque translation, and explication in translating national-cultural units. Their appropriate selection contributes to ensuring the semantic accuracy, communicative adequacy, and national colouring of the translated text.

Thus, in the Turkish-Uzbek translation process, equivalence should not be assessed merely as a formal correspondence between linguistic units of the two languages, but rather as an integrated system of semantic, functional, and linguocultural correspondence. This approach provides an important theoretical and practical basis for improving translation quality, facilitating effective intercultural communication, and further developing literary and cultural relations between Turkic peoples.

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