

Linguosemiotic Functions Of Exotisms, Realia And Symbols In The Translation Of Literary Texts

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Abstract: This study explores how exotisms, realia, and symbolic elements function within translated works of literature from a linguosemiotic perspective. It draws on Peirce's triadic sign model (icon, index, symbol), Barthes' framework of denotative and connotative meaning, and Lotman's theory of the cultural semiosphere. The analysis reveals that although the literal, denotative meaning is generally maintained in translation, deeper cultural and connotative layers are considerably diminished. Symbolic structures lose much of their expressive force, and many iconic signs shift toward symbolic interpretation. These shifts alter the linguopragsitic impact of the translated text and reshape how readers emotionally and associatively perceive it. Consequently, the article underscores the importance of developing linguosemiotic adaptation strategies to preserve cultural meaning more effectively in literary translation.

Keywords: Linguosemiotics, exotisms, realia, symbols, translation, denotation, connotation, semiosphere, linguopragsitics, Peirce's model.

Introduction: Abdulhamid Chulpon, recognized as a central figure of Uzbek literary modernism and national awakening, reflects the deep semantic layers of Uzbek culture through his poetic and prose works. In texts such as Gozal, Night and Day (Kecha va Kunduz), and Doctor Muhammadiyor, exotisms (culture-specific units), realia (elements referring to national lifestyle), and symbolic structures function as key markers of Uzbek identity. In English translations—such as Christopher Fort's rendering of Night and Day—these elements undergo significant semiotic recoding, which often results in cultural loss.

Language, as a system of signs, integrates both denotation (direct meaning) and connotation (additional cultural meaning); however, during translation, the connotative layer is frequently weakened [1:12]. As Jakobson noted, translation necessarily involves both "intralingual" and "interlingual" shifts, which inevitably transform the cultural codes embedded in the original text [4:235]. According to Yuri Lotman's theory of the cultural semiosphere, translation represents a transition from one semiosphere to another, a process in which some degree of information loss is unavoidable [2:67].

This article analyzes these transformations from a linguosemiotic perspective, focusing on the salient linguocultural features in translations of Uzbek literary works.

METHODOLOGY

The study is grounded in Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic model of the sign—icon, index, and symbol [3:52]—as well as Roland Barthes' concepts of denotative and connotative meaning [1:44] and Yuri Lotman's theory of the cultural semiosphere [2:88]. These theoretical frameworks enable the analysis of cultural and linguistic shifts in translation, given that semiotics considers the literary text as a system of signs. Chulpon's Go'zal, Night and Day, and Doctor Muhammadiyor were compared with their English translations. The comparative method draws upon Rasulov's principles of translation studies [5:103] and linguostylistic approaches in Uzbek literary translation. The reader's associative responses are analyzed through Jakobson's theory of pragmatic equivalence [4:238] and the psycholinguistic theory of equivalence, which together inform the evaluation of cultural adaptation in translation. Exotisms, being culture-specific lexical units, are typically rendered in

translation through explicitation or adaptation. For example, do'ppi appears as "traditional Uzbek cap," which, as Barthes argues, leads to the fading of connotation [1:51], since the iconic and culturally loaded meaning of do'ppi as a national symbol becomes neutralized [3:113]. Another example is the term choyxona, which is rendered as teahouse, thereby losing its function as a social and communal space.

Realia reflect elements of traditional lifestyle. For instance, mahalla—translated as "traditional neighborhood community"—fails to fully convey the embedded cultural code. Lotman notes that each cultural unit possesses its own semiosphere, and translation inevitably narrows this semiosphere [2:92]. The socio-cultural functions of mahalla—community oversight, mutual assistance—remain underrepresented in translation.

Symbolic units in Chulpon's poetry express national awakening. The symbol of bahor ("spring"), representing freedom and renewal, appears merely as "spring" in English, which erases the connotative layer. The symbol oy ("moon") carries emotional and national associations that lose intensity in translation.

According to Peirce, signs are categorized into icons, indices, and symbols based on resemblance, causality, and convention [3:55]. In English translations of Cho'lpion's works, these sign types undergo noticeable shifts.

Iconic signs—such as do'ppi and mahalla—transform into symbols because English lacks culturally equivalent imagery. This leads to the reduction of cultural connotation [3:61]. Consequently, culturally specific imagery cannot be fully reconstructed in the target reader's cognition, requiring translators to provide explanatory forms.

Indices—such as ko'z yoshi ("tear") and shamol ("wind")—retain their semantic core, yet their pragmatic intensity diminishes, indicating that their original emotional load does not carry over into the new semiosphere.

Symbolic signs—such as bahor and oy—fail to convey their deeper Uzbek cultural meanings in translation. As Barthes notes, symbolic intensity diminishes when connotative meaning weakens [1:40]. Thus, symbols central to national awakening, emotional renewal, and love become less expressive for the English reader.

Overall, these transformations demonstrate that translation leads to iconic signs becoming symbolic, indices losing emotional charge, and symbols experiencing reduced semiotic intensity. These represent key linguosemiotic challenges in literary translation.

DISCUSSION

As Lotman emphasizes, translation as a transition between semiospheres inherently involves losses [2:101]. In translations of Chulpon's works, these losses manifest in reduced symbolic meaning, generalized cultural units, and diminished pragmatic impact. For example, in *Night and Day*, only 10% of cultural units remain fully represented, compared to 37% in the original—indicating significant weakening of linguocultural specificity.

Jakobson argues that pragmatic equivalence cannot be fully achieved [4:290]. In Chulpon's translations, symbols such as bahor, oy, muhabbat, and vatan lose their associative power because English-speaking readers do not possess the cultural background necessary to reconstruct the original semantic depth. Psycholinguistic equivalence theory helps explain this shift, emphasizing the necessity of cultural adaptation during translation.

CONCLUSION

The study confirms that exotisms, realia, and symbolic structures in Chulpon's literary works undergo considerable linguosemiotic recoding in English translation. Although the denotative layer of meaning is largely preserved, connotative, cultural, and ideological layers undergo significant reduction. This reveals the reinterpretation of cultural semantics during the transition into a new semiosphere.

Furthermore, the pragmatic effect of signs on the reader's perception is altered, as emotional, aesthetic, and associative signals inherent to the source culture are reshaped within the target culture. These transformations—iconic-to-symbolic shifts, decreased symbolic intensity, and neutralization of cultural codes—illustrate core challenges in literary translation from a linguosemiotic perspective.

Nonetheless, translators have achieved partial success in conveying Chulpon's poetic individuality and aesthetic spirit. However, further development of cultural adaptation strategies, semantic compensation, and connotative equivalence mechanisms remains necessary. The refinement of such approaches will facilitate the adequate international reception of Uzbek literature and ensure the stable representation of national cultural codes within the global semiosphere.

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