Classification Of Cultural Components In The Translation Of Literary Works

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Abstract: This article provides information on translation activity and its significance, as well as on the components that should be taken into consideration when translating literary works. Cultural components, which play a crucial role in the translation process, serve as a bridge between two cultures in the translation of literary texts and enable a work to be adapted into another language. In addition, the views of a number of scholars are presented and explained through relevant examples. To prevent difficulties in the translation of realia, the article also outlines the main strategies applied in the translation process.

Introduction: Translation activity has been practiced since the early periods of human history and has become an integral tool of intercultural communication and knowledge exchange. The development of translation theory has been shaped by the influence of numerous factors, and at the modern stage it is regarded as an independent discipline. According to I. S. Alekseeva, today translation theory "embraces all approaches that study translation as both a process and a result" [2:352]. The translation process is a complex cognitive activity closely connected with linguistic, cultural, and individual factors. While translation was initially viewed within the framework of searching for linguistic equivalence, at the present stage it is evaluated on the basis of semantic, pragmatic, stylistic, and linguocultural components.

Cultural components play a crucial role in the translation process. Especially in the translation of literary works, these components acquire distinct semantic, stylistic, and connotative significance. Literary translation is a complex creative process that serves as a bridge between two cultures; therefore, it requires an interdisciplinary approach that involves not only philology but also such fields as cultural studies, psychology, sociology, and semiotics.

At the same time, scholars propose different perspectives on the classification of cultural components and their function in translation. For instance, V. N. Komissarov viewed cultural components as one of the central pragmatic challenges in translation, whereas Y.I.Recker argued that in certain cases it is more appropriate not to preserve cultural units verbatim, but to substitute them with functionally equivalent alternatives that align with the target language and culture. A. V. Fedorov, in turn, supported the stylistic adaptation of cultural elements in literary texts, emphasizing their integration into a newly formed cultural context rather than their literal transfer. Consequently, the rendering of cultural components in translation is a multifaceted issue, the resolution of which depends on the translator's aesthetic position, the genre of the text, the characteristics of the target audience, and the communicative purpose.

These components reflect the national spirit of a literary work, the author's aesthetic stance, and its socio-cognitive context. Cultural components are closely connected with national culture, traditions and

customs, historical events, religious views, ethical norms, aesthetic values, and other sociolinguistic factors. According to Sh. S. Safarov, cultural components are directly related to the cognitive foundations of translation, as they require the interpretation of information conveyed in the text not only through linguistic means, but also through conceptual models and sociocultural knowledge [1:85–87]. Consequently, when interpreting such units, the translator relies on mental models and contextual relationships, which shape the conceptual and cognitive nature of the translation process.

The translator should perceive such units not merely as linguistic elements, but as discursive units that convey the multilayered signs of culture. Cultural components represent elements that extend beyond the surface level of language into deeper semantic structures. Their adequate rendering in translation requires linguocultural competence, intercultural pragmatics, and the application of appropriate strategic approaches. Therefore, every realia, metaphor, or phraseological unit within a text must be analyzed not only at the semantic level, but also within its cultural context. Based on general classifications in translation theory and linguocultural studies, the following main groups of cultural components are identified. At the same time, it should be noted that some scholars hold distinct views regarding the classification of these components and their role in translation.

Realia are units that do not exist in another culture or that possess a different cultural meaning. They mainly include names of objects, phenomena, and concepts associated with everyday life, lifestyle, historical conditions, geographical names, national foods, religious traditions, or elements of folklore. For example, in the Karakalpak language, such units as "súmelek", "Nawrız", "taqıya", "qazan" and "oramal" do not have direct equivalents in English. Likewise, realia encountered in English culture—such as "Thanksgiving", "pub" or "Sherlock Holmes" —are difficult to render into Karakalpak with their full cultural and symbolic connotations intact.

In such instances, the translator utilizes the following strategies:

Explanatory translation, in which the meaning of a realia is clarified for the reader. This method is used when the cultural element of the source language is unfamiliar or has no direct equivalent in the target language. In this approach, the translator includes an explanatory note in the text. For example, the Karakalpak term "súmelek" can be rendered in English as "a sweet paste made from wheat sprouts, traditionally prepared for Navruz holidays." This strategy helps preserve the semantic and cultural integrity of the text, although it may sometimes reduce its readability or fluency.

Transcription or transliteration involves rendering the original form of a cultural unit phonetically or graphically. In this strategy, the translator attempts to convey the cultural element either in the original language or to the target audience through spoken or written forms. For example, the English word "pub" is transliterated in translation as "pab". This method is particularly used for traditional or branded names, place names, personal names, and religious or historical terms. While transliteration may affect the natural flow of the text, it helps preserve the original cultural core of the realia.

Functional equivalent entails replacing the source cultural unit with another culturally and semantically appropriate unit that is familiar and meaningful to the target audience. For instance, the English holiday "Thanksgiving" can be translated into Karakalpak as "Ónim bayramı" or "Shukirana". In this case, the original concept is lost, but the replacement provides a comprehensible and culturally relevant element for the reader. This strategy ensures communicative effectiveness, although it may sometimes result in the loss of cultural connotations.

Contextual adaptation involves translating a realia in accordance with its logical and cultural context. Instead of a literal translation, the translator presents the cultural element in a form that aligns with the reader's familiar cultural and contextual framework. This strategy is particularly effective when the source realia has no equivalent in the target language or culture. For example, the English phrase "fourth of July barbecue" can be translated into Karakalpak as "ǵárezsizlik bayramı" or "bayramǵa say ǵósh", adapting it to a culturally meaningful context. In this way, the translator preserves the original idea while making it relatable to the target audience's cultural experience.

Accurately and faithfully translating realia is closely connected not only to the translator's linguistic competence but also to their cultural literacy, communicative competence, and interpretive potential. This is because such units convey the national spirit, historical and cultural content, as well as the semantic and aesthetic qualities of the text. In the translation process, they serve to provide the reader with access to the source culture or, conversely, to subtly preserve the cultural nuances. Misinterpretation or improper transmission of these units can negatively affect the functional, aesthetic, and semiotic layers of the text. Therefore, the translator must adequately understand cultural realia and render them in a form that communicates equivalent meaning within an intercultural context.

V. N. Komissarov comments on this issue as follows: "When translating realia, the translator, acting as an intercultural mediator, must reconcile the intended meaning for both audiences" [4:163]. He also emphasizes that the translator must maintain three types of fidelity—toward the author, the reader, and themselves—balancing them equally. This perspective is one of the essential theoretical principles for ensuring the effective and balanced rendering of cultural components in the translation process.

Next, we consider metaphors, which constitute a key element of the cultural conceptual map. Each language and culture possesses a distinct metaphorical system, which reflects human thought, imagination, and emotional experience through language. Metaphors, therefore, function not only as a linguistic tool of communication but also as a means of expressing cultural memory, value systems, and social consciousness. As Sh. S. Safarov notes, metaphors serve as a cognitive unit, bridging language and thought, as well as culture and knowledge. Through metaphors, humans interpret the world, process it conceptually in the context of cultural experience, and represent it linguistically [1:102–104].

For example, the English metaphor "time is money" reflects the perception of time as an economic value in Western thought. This metaphor embodies the pragmatic and utilitarian value system characteristic of Anglo-Saxon culture. In Karakalpak, however, expressions such as "waqıt suwday aǵadı" ("time flows like water") are commonly used, portraying time as a natural flow or as an unpredictable, transient phenomenon.

Phraseological units are one of the key means of conveying a community's cultural experience, but their translation often poses challenges for literary methods and can lead to incorrect results. The English idiom "kick the bucket", if translated literally, becomes a meaningless expression such as "shelekti tebiw" in Karakalpak. Its appropriate equivalents in Karakalpak are "dúnyadan ótiw" or "opat bolıw". In translating phraseological units, it is necessary to analyze not only the superficial semantic equivalence of linguistic units but also the cultural concept, metaphorical content, and stylistic coherence they convey.

In this regard, G. Gachechiladze emphasizes that it is essential to find the functional-equivalent meaning of idioms in translation; that is, the semantic and cultural impact of the phraseological unit must be conveyed through a form appropriate to the new cultural context [3:44]. Similarly, Sh. S. Safarov notes that phraseological units must be analyzed through the cognitive dimension of the translation process, taking into account conceptual domains, sociocultural experience, and mental models. According to him, translating phraseological units requires attention not only to semantic or grammatical features but also to their sociocultural significance, the cultural logic underlying them, and the system of national images. Translators must understand these factors deeply and adapt the translation to the communicative context to convey the intended meaning effectively [1:108–110].

Thus, in literary translation, each cultural component presents the translator with specific tasks. Translating each cultural unit requires not only linguistic equivalence but also attention to cultural adequacy, emotional connotation, contextual appropriateness, and communicative fidelity. Therefore, the translator must operate not only at the linguistic level but also take into account the target culture, mentality, conceptual framework, and sociocultural codes. Accordingly, the translator should analyze each cultural component individually and render it in a way that ensures intercultural comprehension, while maintaining conceptual and cognitive integrity.

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