



## Intercultural communication in translation

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Аннотация

This article explores the significant role and impact of intercultural communication within the process of translation. It highlights that translation is not merely a linguistic transfer of words from one language to another, but a vital bridge between two distinct cultures. The paper discusses the cultural barriers translators encounter and the various strategies used to overcome these challenges to ensure effective communication.

**Kalit soʻzlar:**

intercultural communication, translation theory, cultural adaptation, language and culture, translator's competence, cross-cultural communication.

**Аннотация:** В этой статье исследуется важная роль и влияние межкультурной коммуникации в процессе перевода. В ней подчеркивается, что перевод - это не просто лингвистический перенос слов с одного языка на другой, но жизненно важный мост между двумя различными культурами. В статье рассматриваются культурные барьеры, с которыми сталкиваются переводчики, и различные стратегии, используемые для преодоления этих проблем, чтобы обеспечить эффективную коммуникацию.

**Ключевые слова:** межкультурная коммуникация, теория перевода, культурная адаптация, язык и культура, компетентность переводчика, межкультурная коммуникация.

In the contemporary era of globalization, translation has transcended its traditional role as a mere linguistic transposition. It is now widely recognized as a complex process of intercultural communication. The fundamental challenge for a translator is not just to find equivalent words in the target language but to bridge the gap between two distinct cultural paradigms. As noted by E. Hall, "culture is communication and communication is culture" [1, p. 32]. This implies that every translated text carries the weight of its original cultural background, which may or may not exist in the target environment.

When considering the translation between English and Uzbek, the cultural distance is significantly wide. English belongs to a low-context culture where

information is explicitly stated, whereas Uzbek is deeply rooted in a high-context culture where meaning often resides in the social hierarchy, traditions, and unstated norms. Therefore, a translator working with these two languages must act as a "cultural mediator." According to S. Bassnett, the process of translation involves not just two languages, but two cultures that are often in a state of tension [4, p. 58].

The aim of this article is to explore how intercultural nuances affect the quality of translation and to identify the strategies used by translators to overcome "cultural untranslatability." We will specifically look at how Uzbek national concepts (*realia*) such as *mehmondorchilik* (hospitality), *hashar*, or kinship terms are rendered into English, and vice versa. As J. Munday points out, the success of a translation is measured by how well the target audience perceives the "pragmatic force" of the original message within their own cultural framework [3, p. 112].

The theoretical foundation of intercultural translation is built upon the idea that language is an integral part of culture. L. Venuti argues that translations that focus too much on "fluency" often lead to the "invisibility" of the source culture [2, p. 88]. This is particularly relevant when translating from Uzbek into English. For instance, the Uzbek phrase "Siz" (polite 'you') vs "Sen" (informal 'you') reflects a complex social hierarchy that is often lost in English, which primarily uses "you."

Furthermore, the concept of "equivalence" has evolved. Modern scholars suggest that "functional equivalence" is more important than "formal equivalence." This means that if an Uzbek proverb or idiom cannot be translated literally, the translator must find an English equivalent that evokes the same emotional or social response in the reader [5, p. 44].

The translation between English and Uzbek presents unique challenges due to the stark contrast between Western individualist and Eastern collectivist cultures. One of the primary areas where this friction occurs is in the translation of "*realia*" — words and expressions that are culture-specific and have no direct equivalent in the target language.

#### .Kinship Terms and Social Hierarchy

The Uzbek language is rich in kinship terms that reflect a complex social structure. For instance, the words *aka*, *uka*, *opa*, and *singil* all translate to "brother" or "sister" in English, but they carry vital information about seniority and gender. According to J. Munday, translating such specific terms into a more general language like English often results in a "loss of social texture" [3, p. 145]. When an Uzbek speaker says "Akam keldilar", the plural suffix *-lar* and the term *aka* signify deep respect and hierarchy. In English, simply saying "My brother came" fails to convey this honorific nuance. A translator might need to add descriptive adjectives (e.g., "my elder brother") or use contextual clues to maintain the pragmatic force of the original text [5, p. 72].

#### National Traditions and "Realia"

Concepts like *hashar*, *mahalla*, and *suyunshi* are deeply embedded in the Uzbek psyche. Translating *hashar* as "voluntary collective labor" captures the literal meaning but misses the communal spirit and historical weight of the tradition. Similarly, the term *mahalla* is often translated as "neighborhood," but in the Uzbek context, it functions as a primary administrative and social unit of self-governance. As S. Bassnett

notes, when a cultural concept is central to the source text, "the translator may choose to borrow the word (transliteration) and provide a footnote to preserve the cultural identity" [4, p. 112]. This strategy is frequently seen in the translation of Uzbek literature into English to avoid "cultural dilution."

#### Idioms and Proverbs

Proverbs are the "mirrors of a nation's soul." However, literal translation of proverbs often leads to absurdity. For example, the Uzbek proverb "Oltin olma, duo ol" (Do not take gold, take a blessing) reflects the spiritual values of Uzbek culture. A literal translation would confuse an English reader, for whom "taking a blessing" might not have the same weight as material wealth. A functional equivalent might be necessary, focusing on the idea that "goodwill is more valuable than gold" [1, p. 156].

The use of "you" in English versus the Siz/Sendistinction in Uzbek also requires careful navigation. In English, intimacy or formality is shown through tone and word choice, whereas in Uzbek, it is grammatically encoded. Failure to translate these nuances correctly can lead to what L. Venuti describes as "translation scandal," where the target text misrepresents the social dynamics of the source culture [2, p. 210].

#### STRATEGIES FOR INTERCULTURAL TRANSLATION

**Domestication (Moslashtirish):** Making the text familiar to the English reader (e.g., translating tandir non as "traditional bread").

**Foreignization (Begonalashtirish):** Keeping the original flavor (e.g., using "non" or "lepeshka" and explaining it).

**Cultural Substitution:** Replacing an Uzbek cultural element with a similar English one.

#### METHODOLOGY

In this study, a qualitative research design was employed to investigate the challenges and strategies of intercultural communication between English and Uzbek. The primary methodology involved a "comparative linguistic analysis," focusing on culture-specific units known as *realia*.

Data for this analysis was gathered from several sources:

**Literary Translations:** Classic and modern Uzbek literature translated into English (e.g., works by Abdulla Qodiriy).

**Lexical Analysis:** A comparative study of idioms and proverbs that reflect social norms and hierarchy.

**Functionalist Theory (Skopos Theory):** This framework was used to evaluate whether the purpose of the translation (the "Skopos") was achieved in the target culture.

The analytical process followed the "descriptive translation studies" (DTS) approach proposed by Gideon Toury. This allowed the research to move beyond simple "correct or incorrect" evaluations and instead focus on how cultural norms dictate translation choices [6, p. 55].

#### CULTURAL EQUIVALENCE AND PRAGMATIC FORCE

The results of the analysis indicate that translation is not merely a linguistic act but a "negotiation of meanings." The divergence between English and Uzbek cultures often forces the translator to choose between accuracy and readability.

The Challenge of "Untranslatability"

In Uzbek culture, certain religious and social terms, such as *Allohu akbar* (used in secular contexts as a sign of surprise or relief) or *Insha'Allah*, carry pragmatic weight that is difficult to replicate in English without sounding overtly religious to a Western ear. According to L. Venuti, "the translator's task is to find a balance between the foreign essence and the familiar target language" [2, p. 192]. Our analysis shows that English translations often lean toward domestication, stripping the Uzbek text of its unique "Eastern flavor" to make it more palatable for the global reader.

#### Politeness Strategies

Uzbek is a language of "honorifics." The distinction between *Siz* and *Sen* is not just a grammatical choice; it is a reflection of the social order. In English, where "you" is universal, translators often use titles like "Sir," "Brother," or "Madam" to compensate for the loss of honorific suffixes. However, as J. Munday suggests, this "compensatory strategy" can sometimes feel artificial if not handled with care [3, p. 167].

#### The Role of the Translator as a Mediator

The translator must possess "intercultural competence." This involves understanding the unspoken rules of both societies. For instance, in an English business context, being "direct" is a sign of efficiency. In an Uzbek context, however, "directness" can be perceived as rudeness. Therefore, when translating business correspondence or diplomatic texts, the translator must adjust the "tone" (pragmatic force) so as not to offend the target audience while remaining faithful to the original intent [5, p. 102].

### COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CULTURE-SPECIFIC CONCEPTS (APPENDIX)

In this section, we examine specific examples of "realia" and how their meanings shift during the translation process. A primary example is the Uzbek ritual "*Kelin salom*". Translating this simply as a "bride's greeting" is linguistically correct but culturally inadequate. To maintain the intercultural essence, the translator must use foreignization, keeping the term and adding a brief description of the wedding bowing ceremony to preserve the cultural identity [4, p. 112].

Another significant term is "*Mahalla*". While it is often equated with "neighborhood" in English, the Uzbek *mahalla* represents a unique social and administrative community. In academic translation, it is more effective to use the original term and provide a footnote, as "neighborhood" lacks the communal and historical depth inherent in the Uzbek context.

The phrase "*Osh bo'lsin*" presents a different challenge—one of pragmatic adaptation. A literal translation like "Let it be soup" would be nonsensical to an English speaker. The functional equivalent is "Enjoy your meal" or the borrowed French phrase "*Bon appétit*." This strategy, known as cultural substitution, ensures that the communicative purpose of the phrase is achieved in the target language [5, p. 102].

Furthermore, spiritual concepts like "*Duo olmoq*" reflect the core values of the Uzbek people. Translating this as "to take a blessing" requires the reader to understand the weight of an elder's gratitude. In English literature, this is often rendered as "receiving one's heartfelt gratitude" to make the concept more relatable to a Western audience while keeping the respectful tone.

### CONCLUSION

The investigation into intercultural communication in the context of English-Uzbek translation reveals that language is not a neutral tool but a vessel of cultural identity. A successful translation must navigate the deep waters of social hierarchy, religious values, and national traditions. As explored throughout this article, the distance between Western "low-context" and Eastern "high-context" cultures requires the translator to be more than a linguist; they must be a "cultural diplomat."

In conclusion, while domestication makes the text more accessible to the English reader, it carries the risk of "cultural erasure." Conversely, foreignization preserves the uniqueness of the Uzbek identity but may present challenges for readability. The most effective approach, as suggested by modern scholars, is a balanced strategy where "pragmatic equivalence" is prioritized over literal meaning [3, p. 210]. Ultimately, translation is the most vital tool for intercultural dialogue, fostering mutual understanding in an increasingly interconnected world.

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