

ADAPTATION AS A COGNITIVE AND TRANSLATIONAL MECHANISM

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**Annotation:** *The article examines adaptation as both a cognitive and a translational mechanism that enables the translator to achieve equivalence between languages with different cultural, semantic, and structural systems. The cognitive basis of adaptation is explored through the processes of conceptual mapping, categorization, and mental modeling, while its translational manifestation is analyzed through techniques of cultural substitution, modulation, explicitation, and stylistic adjustment. The study demonstrates that adaptation serves as a bridge between linguistic and extralinguistic realities, ensuring the naturalness and communicative adequacy of translation.*

**Keywords:** *adaptation, translation, cognitive linguistics, equivalence, cultural mediation, cognitive mechanism.*

**Аннотация:** *В статье адаптация рассматривается как когнитивный и переводческий механизм, позволяющий переводчику достичь эквивалентности между языками с различными культурными, семантическими и структурными системами. Когнитивная основа адаптации исследуется с помощью процессов концептуального картирования, категоризации и ментального моделирования, в то время как ее трансляционное проявление анализируется с помощью методов культурной замены, модуляции, экспликации и стилистической корректировки. Исследование демонстрирует, что адаптация служит связующим звеном между лингвистической и экстралингвистической реальностями, обеспечивая естественность и коммуникативную адекватность перевода.*

**Ключевые слова:** *адаптация, перевод, когнитивная лингвистика, эквивалентность, культурное посредничество, когнитивный механизм.*

Adaptation is one of the central mechanisms in the process of translation, functioning simultaneously at the cognitive and linguistic levels. As a cognitive mechanism, adaptation reflects the translator’s mental effort to interpret, restructure, and recontextualize meaning between two linguistic worldviews. As a translational mechanism, it manifests as a set of strategies aimed at achieving communicative equivalence and cultural acceptability.

According to Vinay and Darbelnet, adaptation is “a technique of creating equivalence between two situations that are the same in meaning but different in form” [1, p. 46]. In

modern translation studies, this notion has expanded to include the translator's mental and interpretive processes [2, p. 75].

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, the act of translation is a process of conceptual restructuring. Each language encodes a unique model of reality, and the translator must map concepts from one conceptual system onto another [3, p. 22]. This mapping involves three major cognitive operations:

Categorization – defining the relevant concept within the cognitive framework of the target language.

Conceptual Blending – integrating source and target meanings to form a coherent mental model [4, p. 97].

Framing – adjusting cultural and pragmatic contexts to align with the recipient's background knowledge.

For example, when translating English idioms into Uzbek or Russian, a literal rendering often fails to convey the intended meaning. Instead, the translator must cognitively identify the functional equivalent that aligns with the target language's cultural schema.

In translation practice, adaptation is often associated with cultural and pragmatic transformation. It goes beyond literal transfer and involves the modification of lexical, syntactic, and stylistic features to preserve communicative effect.

Catford defined translation as “the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language” [5, p. 20]. However, when equivalence cannot be achieved through direct correspondence, adaptation becomes essential.

Common types of adaptation include:

Cultural substitution: replacing a culturally specific item with one familiar to the target audience.

e.g., baseball → football (for cultural accessibility).

Explication: making implicit meaning explicit to aid comprehension [2, p. 118].

Modulation: changing the point of view or semantics to maintain naturalness.

Stylistic adaptation: adjusting tone, formality, and rhetorical conventions to fit target norms [6, p. 142].

Through these techniques, adaptation allows the translator to preserve functional and emotional

The interaction between cognitive and translational dimensions of adaptation illustrates how mental operations guide linguistic choices. As Bell notes, “translation is not merely a linguistic process but a cognitive one, where meaning is interpreted, reconstructed, and re-encoded” [7, p. 33].

For instance, when translating metaphorical language, the translator must first comprehend the source conceptual metaphor and then reconstruct it within the cognitive system of the target language. The adaptation process thus reflects not only linguistic but

also conceptual creativity a dynamic negotiation between the source and target mental models [4, p. 101].

Adaptation also serves as a mechanism of intercultural mediation, bridging differences in worldview, social norms, and communicative behavior. As Newmark emphasizes, “translation is not the transfer of words but of cultures” [8, p. 94].

For example, in translating English politeness formulas into Uzbek or Russian, direct equivalents often sound either too formal or too casual. The translator therefore modifies the expression to fit the pragmatic norms of the target language an act of adaptation both cognitive (reconceptualizing politeness) and linguistic (rephrasing it appropriately).

Adaptation, as both a cognitive and translational mechanism, is essential for achieving meaningful equivalence across languages and cultures. It unites mental interpretation, linguistic creativity, and cultural negotiation, ensuring that translated texts remain coherent, natural, and communicatively effective. Understanding adaptation as a cognitive operation deepens our appreciation of translation as an intellectual process not merely linguistic substitution but a re-creation of meaning within a new cognitive and cultural framework.

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