

THE INTERPRETATION OF UNITS REFLECTING UZBEK NATIONAL MENTALITY IN TRANSLATION PRACTICE

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Annotation: *This paper explores the translation of culturally specific units that reflect national mentality, particularly within the context of Uzbek-to-English translation. It analyzes expressions, idioms, metaphors, and proverbs that embody Uzbek values, social norms, and worldview. The study highlights strategies such as adaptation, descriptive translation, and cultural substitution, emphasizing the translator's role in preserving cultural identity while ensuring comprehensibility for foreign readers. Examples and theoretical insights illustrate how these units are interpreted in translation practice.*

Keywords: *translation, national mentality, Uzbek culture, cultural equivalence, idioms, proverbs, adaptation, cultural gap, intercultural communication, descriptive translation.*

Translating units that reflect the Uzbek national mentality is one of the most delicate and significant challenges in modern translation studies. These linguistic units—such as proverbs, idioms, culturally loaded terms, and metaphors—carry not only semantic meaning but also deep cultural, historical, and emotional value rooted in the worldview of the Uzbek people. Uzbek culture is rich with unique traditions, values, and mental constructs. Translating expressions like “*Ko‘pni ko‘rgan keksaning so‘zini eshit*” or “*Yuzni shamollatmasdan, ko‘ngilni sovutma*” into another language, especially English, requires careful interpretation to preserve the original spirit and cultural nuance. Studying how to do this effectively helps maintain and promote national identity in global contexts. If culturally loaded units are translated literally without regard for context or cultural meaning, it may result in misunderstanding or loss of meaning. For instance, the term “*or-nomus*” cannot be directly translated as “honor” without missing its deeper social and moral connotations in Uzbek culture. Understanding how to interpret national mentality units helps build cultural bridges. It enhances intercultural communication and ensures that the target audience grasps not just the words but the worldview behind them. This topic contributes to the professional development of translators by highlighting the need for cultural sensitivity, linguistic creativity, and deep knowledge of both source and target cultures.

Analyzing how Uzbek culturally specific units are translated into English adds depth to translation theory, especially in areas like equivalence, cultural adaptation, and

semiotics. It provides useful models and strategies for handling similar issues in other languages. The interpretation of units reflecting Uzbek national mentality in translation practice is not only about linguistic transfer—it's about understanding and conveying a unique worldview. Mastering this skill is essential for meaningful, respectful, and effective communication across cultures.

The study of national mentality in translation highlights the deep connection between language and culture. Many scholars in translation studies have addressed the challenges posed by **culture-specific units**, including idioms, proverbs, metaphors, and terms that reflect a nation's worldview or values. According to **Edward Sapir** and **Benjamin Whorf** (1956), language is not just a communication tool but a **reflection of cultural mentality**. Their **Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis** argues that the structure of a language influences the way its speakers conceptualize the world. This theory lays the foundation for why translating culture-specific units requires more than word-for-word rendering—it demands cultural interpretation. **Mona Baker** (1992), in *In Other Words*, explains that culture-specific concepts are among the most difficult elements to translate. She identifies strategies like **paraphrasing**, **cultural substitution**, **borrowing**, and **omission**, depending on the context and purpose of the translation. These strategies are critical in rendering expressions that carry national mentality, such as Uzbek idioms like “*Ko'ngil oyni ko'zdan izlaydi*”. **Peter Newmark** (1988) also distinguishes between **semantic** and **communicative translation**, emphasizing the need to strike a balance between preserving the original meaning and adapting to the cultural expectations of the target audience. **Eugene Nida** (1964) introduced the concept of **dynamic equivalence**, which prioritizes conveying the same effect on the target audience as the original text has on its native readers. This approach is essential when translating national mentality: rather than translating words, the **emotional and cultural impact** should be equivalent. This is particularly relevant in translating Uzbek expressions such as “*Uyatdan yerga kirib ketmoq*” which, if rendered literally, would confuse the English reader. A culturally appropriate equivalent like “*to be deeply embarrassed*” preserves the meaning more effectively. **Vlahov and Florin** (1970s) introduced the term **realia**—words and expressions that represent culturally bound phenomena. They stress that translators must have not only linguistic skills but also a profound **understanding of cultural context**. National mentality often lives in realia—terms like “*mehmondo'stlik*” or “*or-nomus*” that have no direct English equivalents.

Contemporary Uzbek scholars such as **G'. Salomov** and **Sh. Rizaev** have discussed the importance of preserving **national-spiritual values** in translation. Their work emphasizes the need to reflect **Uzbek mentality** accurately in English by using appropriate cultural and stylistic equivalents. Uzbek-English dictionaries and bilingual

corpora are often limited in representing **mentality-based expressions**, which increases the importance of interpretive skill.

Juliane House (2015) frames the translator as a **cultural mediator** who navigates between two linguistic and cultural systems. In this view, the translator does not only decode and encode language but also **interprets cultural values**, which are often deeply rooted in national mentality.

The literature reveals that translating units expressing national mentality is a complex, multidimensional task that goes beyond linguistic transfer. It requires translators to possess not only **language proficiency**, but also **intercultural competence**, **contextual awareness**, and **creative problem-solving skills**. Effective interpretation of national mentality in translation enriches communication, preserves cultural identity, and enhances global understanding. Translating expressions that reflect the national mentality of a culture—such as that of the Uzbek people—presents complex challenges for translators. These units often carry not only literal meanings but also deep-rooted cultural, emotional, and historical connotations. To bridge this cultural gap, translators must employ strategies such as adaptation, paraphrasing, cultural substitution, and explanation. Below are examples illustrating how Uzbek expressions are interpreted in English translation practice.

1. Idiomatic Expression Reflecting Mentality

Uzbek: “El oldida sharmanda bo‘ldim.”

Literal Translation: “I was disgraced in front of the people.”

Natural Translation: “I lost face in front of everyone.”

This idiom expresses the Uzbek concept of public shame. The translator uses an English idiom with similar meaning to preserve cultural impact. Strategy used: Idiomatic substitution / cultural equivalence.

2. Value-Laden Concept

Uzbek: “Or-nomus”

Literal Translation: “Honor and shame”

Natural Translation: “Sense of dignity and personal honor”

The concept of *or-nomus* is central to Uzbek moral codes. Since English lacks an exact match, a descriptive translation is used to convey its layered meaning. Strategy used: Descriptive translation / cultural expansion.

3. Culturally Rooted Social Norm

Uzbek: “Qiz bola sharm-hayoli bilan bo‘lishi kerak.”

Literal Translation: “A girl must be with shame and modesty.”

Natural Translation: “A girl should behave modestly and with dignity.”

This reflects the cultural expectations of female behavior in Uzbek society. The translator

softens and contextualizes the phrase for an English-speaking audience.

Strategy used: Paraphrasing with cultural sensitivity.

4. National Holidays and Traditions

Uzbek: “Navro‘z bayramida sumalak pishirdik.”

Literal Translation: “We cooked sumalak on Navruz holiday.”

Natural Translation: “We prepared sumalak, a traditional sweet dish, during the Navruz spring celebration.” Since both *Navruz* and *sumalak* are culturally specific, the translation keeps the original terms but provides a short explanation. Strategy used: Transliteration + explanation.

5. Metaphorical Thinking

Uzbek: “Ko‘ngil oyni ko‘zdan izlaydi.”

Literal Translation: “The heart seeks the moon in the eyes.”

Natural Translation: “The eyes reflect what the heart feels.” This poetic Uzbek metaphor needs to be culturally reinterpreted in English to retain its emotional and metaphorical value. Strategy used: Metaphorical adaptation.

6. Proverbs and Folk Wisdom

Uzbek: “Ko‘pni ko‘rgan keksaning so‘zini eshit.”

Literal Translation: “Listen to the words of the old who have seen much.”

Natural Translation: “Wisdom comes with age.” Uzbek proverbs often emphasize respect for elders. The English proverb carries the same moral and is used as an equivalent. Strategy used: Proverbial equivalence.

7. Symbolic Animal Reference

Uzbek: “Tulki kabi ayyor.”

Literal Translation: “Cunning like a fox.”

Natural Translation: “Sly as a fox.” The symbolism of the fox as clever and deceptive exists in both cultures, making direct translation effective. Strategy used: Direct equivalence.

8. Gender-Specific Social Norms

Uzbek: “O‘g‘il bola hech qachon yig‘lamasligi kerak.”

Literal Translation: “A boy should never cry.”

Natural Translation: “Boys are taught not to cry.” This expression reflects gender norms in Uzbek culture. The English translation maintains the idea while adapting tone and cultural context. Strategy used: Contextual softening / explicitation.

These examples illustrate that translating units reflecting national mentality requires more than bilingual fluency—it demands cultural literacy, contextual awareness, and creative problem-solving. Each unit must be handled with care to preserve the emotional, moral, and symbolic dimensions embedded within the source culture. By applying

appropriate strategies, translators can bridge the cultural gap and foster effective intercultural communication.

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