

LINGUOCULTURAL COMPONENTS IN THE TRANSLATION OF LITERARY WORKS: THE TRANSLATOR'S ROLE

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Annotation: *This article explores the role of linguocultural components in the translation of literary works, emphasizing the translator's function as a cultural mediator. The study highlights how idiomatic expressions, proverbs, customs, and other culturally embedded elements influence both meaning and aesthetic experience in translation. Drawing on theoretical frameworks and examples from Uzbek-English translations, the article demonstrates how translators balance fidelity to the original text with cultural accessibility. The findings underscore the importance of cultural competence and creativity in literary translation, positioning the translator as a vital agent of intercultural dialogue.*

Keywords: *literary translation, linguocultural competence, translator's role, idioms, cultural equivalence, Uzbek-English translation, cross-cultural communication*

In a world increasingly defined by cultural exchange and global connectivity, literature serves as both a mirror and a bridge—reflecting societies while connecting them through shared human experiences. When literary works cross linguistic borders, they carry with them a rich tapestry of cultural elements that shape meaning, emotion, and expression. The act of translating literature, therefore, is not a mere linguistic exercise but a profound intercultural dialogue.

This article delves into the intricate interplay between language and culture in literary translation, highlighting the pivotal role of the translator. It explores how linguocultural components—idioms, historical references, customs, and worldviews—impact the translation process and how translators navigate these complexities to preserve the soul of the original text. Understanding the translator's role in this context is essential to appreciating both the artistry and the responsibility that come with rendering one culture's literary voice accessible to another.

Translating literary works goes far beyond word-for-word conversion—it is a delicate art that demands a deep understanding of cultural nuances and linguistic subtleties. This topic is significant for several reasons:

1. Preserving Cultural Identity

- Literary texts are infused with cultural references, idioms, traditions, and worldviews.

- Translators act as cultural mediators, ensuring that these elements are retained or adapted meaningfully in the target language.

2. Ensuring Authentic Reader Experience

- Readers should experience a translated text with the same emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual impact as the original.

- Linguocultural awareness helps recreate humor, metaphors, social norms, and character behaviors authentically.

3. Avoiding Misinterpretation

- Without proper attention to linguocultural factors, meanings can be distorted, and important themes may be lost or misunderstood.

- This can result in inaccurate portrayals of the original author's intent or cultural context.

4. Promoting Cross-Cultural Dialogue

- Literature is a window into the soul of a society.

- Thoughtful translation bridges cultural divides, fostering empathy, appreciation, and global understanding.

5. Elevating the Role of the Translator

- Translators aren't just language technicians—they are co-creators.

- Their decisions shape how literature is received across borders, highlighting their critical role in intercultural communication.

The translation of literary texts has long been recognized as a nuanced and culturally embedded process. Scholars such as Susan Bassnett (1991) emphasize that translation is not a neutral activity but one deeply influenced by cultural and ideological contexts. Bassnett's foundational work explores how translators act as intermediaries, not only between languages but also between cultures, shedding light on the importance of preserving cultural specificity in literary translation.

Lawrence Venuti (1995) introduces the concepts of **domestication** and **foreignization**, two major strategies in translating cultural content. Domestication involves adapting the source text to the target culture, making it more accessible but possibly diluting its original cultural identity. Foreignization, on the other hand, retains cultural nuances that may be unfamiliar to the target audience, thus preserving authenticity but risking alienation. Venuti's framework underscores the translator's role as a cultural decision-maker.

Other researchers, such as Mona Baker (2006), delve into the linguistic and pragmatic aspects of translation, focusing on **narrative theory** and how translators can reshape stories and ideologies through subtle choices. Baker suggests that translators participate in constructing meaning, especially when translating culturally loaded texts that reflect national identity, social norms, or historical memory.

In the context of Central Asian literature, scholars have started investigating how traditional idioms, proverbs, and societal norms are represented in English translations. These studies highlight the challenges faced by Uzbek-English translators in conveying culturally rich expressions, spiritual beliefs, and gender roles embedded in the original texts. Yet, they also reveal innovative approaches to mediation—such as footnoting, contextual commentary, and re-creation of cultural parallels.

Overall, the literature reflects a growing consensus: literary translation must be both linguistically faithful and culturally sensitive. The translator, as both reader and creator, shapes how the source culture is perceived by the target audience. Their expertise in navigating linguocultural nuances determines the success of cross-cultural literary communication.

Uzbek: “*Ko‘ngli tog‘dek*”

Literal Translation: “His heart is like a mountain”

Cultural Meaning: Refers to someone emotionally strong and resilient.

English Equivalent: “He has a heart of steel” or “He’s emotionally unshaken.”

Translator’s Role: Instead of a literal rendering, the translator must find a culturally equivalent idiom that conveys the same strength and emotional tone to English readers.

Uzbek Proverb: “*Baliq boshidan sasiydi*”

Literal Translation: “The fish rots from the head.”

Meaning in Context: Corruption starts at the top.

Translator’s Role: This proverb exists nearly identically in English, so the translator may retain the original structure while ensuring tone and context align with the English-speaking reader’s expectations.

Source Text: A scene describing a traditional Uzbek wedding ceremony involving *kelin salom* (bride’s respectful bow to elders).

Challenge: This custom may be unfamiliar to Western audiences.

Translator’s Role: They might retain the original term and include a brief contextual explanation or footnote to preserve cultural depth without confusing the reader.

Uzbek Text: Refers to *duo* or prayers offered before a journey.

Translation Approach: Translating *duo* simply as “prayer” may strip its emotional and cultural resonance.

Translator’s Role: They could include context, e.g., “a heartfelt *duo*, the kind of blessing whispered before embarking on a difficult path,” to evoke its significance.

Translating literary works is a journey across languages, but more crucially, across cultures. This process is rich with challenges and opportunities, as the translator becomes both an interpreter of meaning and a guardian of cultural essence. Linguocultural components—idioms, metaphors, traditions, and worldviews—shape

how stories resonate, and a skilled translator must balance fidelity to the original text with the readability and relatability for a new audience.

Far beyond linguistic accuracy, the translator's role is one of deep empathy, cultural literacy, and artistic sensitivity. They do not merely reproduce a story—they reimagine it, preserving its spirit while giving it new life in a different cultural landscape. In doing so, translators help cultivate mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation between diverse peoples and literary traditions.

As global interest in literary exchange continues to grow, acknowledging the vital contributions of translators and the importance of linguocultural competence becomes not just a scholarly pursuit, but a cultural imperative.

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