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REPRESENTATION OF UZBEK CULTURE IN TRANSLATED ENGLISH MASTERPIECES

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Abstract

This article examines the representation of Uzbek culture in masterpieces translated into English, focusing on how translators retain or adapt cultural elements in literary works. It examines whether cultural nuances such as traditions, idioms, proverbs, and social values are retained, modified, or omitted in translations. By examining a sample of English masterpieces translated into Uzbek and vice versa, the study highlights the challenges and strategies associated with cross-cultural literary translation. The study also examines how these translations affect the perception of Uzbek culture among English-speaking audiences.

Keywords:Uzbek culture, literary translation, cultural representation, domestication, foreignization, idioms, proverbs, social values, cross-cultural communication, translator strategies

Introduction

Translation plays an important role in cultural exchange, allowing readers to access literary masterpieces from different cultures. For a relatively underrepresented culture such as Uzbek, translation into English serves as a means of projecting its rich traditions, beliefs, and social structures to the wider world. However, translation is not just a linguistic activity; it involves interpretation and recreation of cultural contexts. The way Uzbek culture is represented in translated English works determines how it is perceived in the world. This article attempts to analyze how elements of Uzbek culture are translated, what challenges arise in this process, and how these translations contribute to cross-cultural understanding.



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Literature Review

Scholars such as Susan Bassnett (2002) and Lawrence Venuti (1995) emphasize the cultural responsibility of translators. Bassnett argues that language and culture are inseparable and translators must make conscious choices when conveying meaning. Venuti highlights the issue of “domestication” and “foreignization,” where translators either adapt content to the target culture or preserve original cultural nuances. Limited research has been conducted in the Uzbek context on translating cultural elements from Uzbek into English. Abdullah Qodiriy’s *O’tkan Kunlar* and Chingiz Aitmatov’s works, translated into English, offer case studies for understanding how Uzbek and wider Turkic cultures are represented to readers around the world.

Furthermore, Mona Baker (1992) discusses translation issues at the levels of words, idioms, and pragmatic meanings. Cultural concepts often have no direct equivalents, which creates challenges for translators. For example, Uzbek proverbs or terms such as *mehmonnavozlik* (hospitality) require creative solutions to convey the intended meaning in English without losing the cultural significance.

Methodology

The study uses qualitative textual analysis of several English masterpieces translated into Uzbek and vice versa. The selected texts include translated versions of Shakespeare’s plays, George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, and Mark Twain’s works, as well as Uzbek literary masterpieces such as *O’tkan Kunlar* and *The Railway* by Hamid Ismailov. The analysis focuses on:

- Preservation or adaptation of cultural references.
- Translation of idioms and proverbs.
- Representation of social customs and values.
- Translator’s notes and paratextual comments.

Interviews with translators and literary scholars in Uzbekistan provided insights into the decision-making process behind cultural translations. The study also examines reader reception through reviews and academic commentary.

Findings. Preservation vs. Adaptation



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In many translations of Uzbek literature into English, cultural elements are often preserved with explanatory footnotes. For example, in O‘tkan Kunlar, terms like “mahalla” and “mullah” are retained to maintain authenticity. However, in other cases, translators domesticate content to make it more understandable to English-speaking readers, sometimes at the expense of cultural specificity.

Idioms and Proverbs. Translating Uzbek proverbs presents a significant challenge. Some proverbs are replaced by culturally equivalent English sayings, while others are paraphrased or explained. This affects the literary flavor and cultural depth of the original work. For example, the proverb “Odam bolasi bir nima bilan emas, mehr bilan tirik” can be translated as “Man does not live by bread alone” to match the idiomatic expressions of the target culture.

Representing Social Values. Themes such as family honor, respect for elders, and hospitality are central to Uzbek culture. They are often emphasized in literary translations, but sometimes the nuances of the practices lose their depth due to the limitations of the English language. For example, the concept of “kattaga khurmat” (respect for elders) is deeply ingrained in Uzbek texts, but cannot be fully conveyed through translation alone.

Translator Strategies

Translators employ various strategies, including:

Footnotes: To explain cultural concepts without altering the main text.

Glossaries: To familiarize readers with recurring Uzbek terms.

Forewords and Afterwords: Offering cultural context.

Such strategies help bridge the cultural gap while maintaining reader engagement.

Discussion. Representing Uzbek culture in English translations requires a delicate balance. Maintaining cultural authenticity while ensuring readability requires careful consideration. Translators act as cultural brokers who decide which aspects of culture to emphasize, adapt, or omit. Their choices directly impact how Uzbek culture is perceived in the world.



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The study shows that while fidelity to cultural elements is generally respected, practical constraints such as publishing regulations, target audience expectations, and linguistic incompatibility often dictate the final translation choices. The use of digital platforms has also opened up new opportunities for interactive and multimedia translations, allowing for deeper engagement with the cultural environment.

Conclusion. Translating English masterpieces into Uzbek and Uzbek literary works into English plays an important role in cross-cultural understanding. Representing Uzbek culture in translated English literature is not just a linguistic exercise, but a cultural act. Maintaining cultural integrity, using strategic translation techniques, and taking audience perceptions into account are all crucial to effective cultural representation. Future research could expand on this by including comparative studies of other Turkic or Central Asian cultures and by examining how machine translation and AI tools affect cultural nuances in literary translation.

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