

OVERCOMING LEXICAL CHALLENGES IN INTERPRETING CULTURE- AND HISTORY-RICH CONTENT

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ANNOTATION: *This extended research paper examines the full range of lexical, cultural, and historical challenges that interpreters face when working with speeches, interviews, and analytical reports rich in heritage, identity, and historical references. The study details polysemy, ambiguity, culture-bound terminology, historical registers, metaphorical complexity, ideological vocabulary, and proper names in multi-cultural contexts.*

АННОТАЦИЯ: *В этой расширенной исследовательской работе рассматривается весь спектр лексических, культурных и исторических проблем, с которыми сталкиваются переводчики при работе с речами, интервью и аналитическими отчётами, богатыми отсылками к культурному наследию, идентичности и историческим фактам. В исследовании подробно рассматриваются полисемия, неоднозначность, культурно обусловленная терминология, исторические регистры, метафорическая сложность, идеологический словарь и имена собственные в мультикультурном контексте.*

ANNOTATSIYA: *Ushbu kengaytirilgan tadqiqot maqolasida tarjimonlar meros, o'ziga xoslik va tarixiy manbalarga boy nutqlar, intervyular va tahliliy hisobotlar bilan ishlashda duch keladigan leksik, madaniy va tarixiy muammolarning to'liq to'plamini ko'rib chiqadi. Tadqiqotda ko'p ma'nolilik, noaniqlik, madaniyat bilan bog'liq terminologiya, tarixiy registrlar, metaforik murakkablik, mafkuraviy lug'at va*

ko'p madaniyatli kontekstdagi o'ziga xos ismlar batafsil yoritilgan. Maqolada qat'iy tayyorgarlik usullari, ilg'or stend strategiyalari, terminologiya ish oqimlari va ma'no, niyat va madaniy qadr-qimmatni himoya qilish uchun zarur bo'lgan axloqiy mulohazalar taqdim etilgan.

Key words: *lexical challenge, interpreting, culture-specific terms, historical terminology, idioms.*

Ключевые слова: *лексическая проблема, интерпретация, культурно-специфические термины, историческая терминология, идиомы.*

Kalit so'zlar: *leksik muammo, izohlash, madaniyatga xos atamalar, tarixiy terminologiya, idiomalar.*

INTRODUCTION:

Interpreting content that draws heavily on culture and history demands far more than linguistic accuracy. It requires a deep sensitivity to collective memory, identity politics, cultural traditions, historical narratives, and the ways in which societies represent themselves. Such interpreting is fundamentally an act of cultural mediation. The interpreter must balance fidelity to the source with accessibility in the target language, ensuring that nuance, emotional tone, and historical weight are preserved. This paper systematically outlines the challenges and provides comprehensive solutions.

SECTION 1. UNDERSTANDING LEXICAL CHALLENGES

Polysemy and Ambiguity

Words like “canon,” “tradition,” “liberal,” “republic,” or “reform” vary across historical periods and ideological contexts. For example, “liberal” may refer to a political orientation in modern Europe, an economic stance in Latin America, or a philosophical movement in the Enlightenment. Interpreters must decode meaning in real time using contextual, historical, and pragmatic clues.

Culture-Bound Terms

Terms such as “mestizaje,” “ubuntu,” “samizdat,” “mahalla,” “teyvat,” or “shura” carry unique cultural significance. Literal translations often distort meaning. Instead, interpreters must choose between borrowing, descriptive translation, or functional equivalence.

Historical Registers

Historical terminology reflects specific time periods and political structures. Examples: “satrap,” “levée en masse,” “mandate territory,” “Caliphate administration,” “vassalage.” These require chronological accuracy and must not be modernized.

Metaphors and Idioms

Metaphors like “iron curtain,” “paper tiger,” “speak truth to power,” “blood and soil,” or “open-door policy” are deeply tied to political history. Their literal translation may confuse audiences. Cultural metaphors require function-based equivalents.

Proper Names and Titles

Dynasties, empires, and indigenous entities often have different name variants across languages—e.g., “Qing,” “Ch’ing,” “Manchu Dynasty.” Interpreters must rely on standardized forms recognized by academic or international institutions.

Reclaimed and Evolving Terminology

Modern communities often reclaim terms (e.g., “Two-Spirit,” “Indigenous,” “Afrofuturism”). Interpreters must follow current accepted usage and avoid outdated or colonial labels.

SECTION 2. PRE-EVENT PREPARATION

Terminology Reconnaissance

An interpreter must compile glossaries including dates, institutions, periods, ideologies, and minority group names. This ensures accuracy under pressure.

Building a Cultural Corpus

Parallel materials—UNESCO briefs, museum texts, academic articles, historical maps—prepare the interpreter for recurring terminology.

Stakeholder Collaboration

Interpreters should request scripts, slides, bibliographies, pronunciation lists, and speaker bios. Clarification of contested or sensitive terms prevents misinterpretation during live delivery.

Scenario Rehearsal

Simulating Q&A allows interpreters to anticipate ideological framing, references to conflicts, or linguistic nuance.

Pronunciation Training

Interpreters must master names of historical figures, tribes, dynasties, and geographic features using IPA or phonetic systems.

SECTION 3. IN-BOOTH STRATEGIES FOR SPEECHES

Sense-First Comprehension

Instead of word-for-word processing, interpreters must extract propositions, identify argument flow, and compress information logically.

Controlled Generalization

When encountering unknown terminology, interpreters may temporarily generalize (“a regional coalition,” “a ceremonial role”) and refine later.

Metaphor Management

Culture-specific metaphors require careful handling. The interpreter should search for equivalents or paraphrase (“a powerful but fragile threat”).

Timestamping

Unknown names or terms should be flagged mentally or on paper for later review.

Register Reproduction

The emotional, ceremonial, or academic tone must be preserved without embellishment or simplification.

SECTION 4. STRATEGIES FOR INTERPRETING INTERVIEWS

Managing Disfluencies

Spontaneous speech includes fillers, repetitions, and unstable syntax.

Interpreters must streamline without erasing identity.

Referential Context

Interviewees often reference prior speeches, episodes, or personal works.

Interpreters can add brief cues when required.

Code-Switching

Multilingual expressions may be preserved, translated, or glossed depending on context and audience expectations.

Ethnonyms and Identity Terms

Using correct, current identity terms (Indigenous, Afro-descendant, First Nations, diaspora descriptors) ensures respect.

SECTION 5. TRANSLATING REPORTS ON CULTURE AND HISTORY

Terminological Consistency

Complex projects demand locked termbases. Every reference to a dynasty, treaty, or ethnic group must be uniform.

Citation and Reference Accuracy

Treaties, archives, organizations, and historical documents have official multilingual names. Misnaming them undermines credibility.

Periodization Discipline

Chronologies must remain consistent—Julian vs Gregorian calendars, dynastic eras, centuries, revolutions.

Integrating Data with Text

When reports contain statistical or geographical information, interpreters must maintain internationally standardized terminology.

Bias and Ideological Awareness

Historical writing often reflects ideological positions. Interpreters should preserve attribution (“according to the report...”).

SECTION 6. WORKING WITH CULTURE-BOUND TERMS

Borrowing with Framing

The source term is preserved with a short explanation: “minka, a communal labor practice.”

Calques

Calques are suitable only when transparent (“open-door policy,” “three-field system”).

Descriptive Translation

When no equivalent exists, interpreters must paraphrase function, connotation, and cultural resonance.

Glossing Techniques

Live interpreting favors short inline glosses; written work can use footnotes or endnotes.

CONCLUSION:

Interpreting culture- and history-rich material requires linguistic expertise, historical knowledge, cultural literacy, and ethical responsibility. With structured preparation, strategic in-booth decision-making, and disciplined terminology management, interpreters can successfully mediate meaning across cultures while preserving nuance, identity, and historical integrity.

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