



## RECREATING HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL REALITIES: CHALLENGES IN TRANSLATING UZBEK HISTORICAL TEXTS INTO ENGLISH

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**Annotation.** This article explores the main challenges in translating historical texts from Uzbek into English, focusing on linguistic, cultural, and stylistic issues. The study aims to identify key difficulties that arise when rendering historically and culturally specific content into a different linguistic context. The research is based on a comparative analysis of selected Uzbek historical texts and their English translations. The findings show that major problems include the translation of culture-specific realia, historical terms, and socio-political titles that lack direct equivalents in English. Stylistic features such as archaic language and figurative expressions also complicate the preservation of the original tone and authenticity. In addition, differences in readers' background knowledge create pragmatic challenges.

The study concludes that translators should prioritize functional adequacy, combining linguistic accuracy with cultural clarity through appropriate translation strategies.

**Key words:** historical text translation; Uzbek-English translation; cultural realia; translation challenges; equivalence; adequacy; translation strategies; linguistic and cultural barriers.

### Introduction

The translation of historical texts represents one of the most complex areas in translation studies due to the dense interaction between language, culture, and historical context. Unlike contemporary texts, historical works are deeply embedded



in the socio-political, cultural, and ideological realities of their time, which makes their accurate and adequate translation particularly challenging. In this regard, the translation of Uzbek historical literature into English remains an underexplored field, despite its rich literary heritage and growing international relevance.

Uzbek historical texts often contain culture-specific elements, archaic vocabulary, and historically bound concepts that do not have direct equivalents in English. These include socio-political titles, forms of address, customs, and references to Islamic and Eastern traditions. As a result, translators are required not only to transfer linguistic meaning but also to reconstruct the historical and cultural context for the target audience.

The problem addressed in this study lies in the difficulty of achieving equivalence when translating such texts, as semantic accuracy often conflicts with cultural intelligibility. Therefore, translators must make strategic decisions that inevitably involve a degree of loss, adaptation, or reinterpretation.

The aim of this article is to identify and analyze the main challenges encountered in translating historical texts from Uzbek into English. To achieve this aim, the study focuses on linguistic, cultural, stylistic, and pragmatic aspects of translation, using comparative analysis of selected examples.

### **Literature review**

The issue of translating historical texts has been widely discussed within translation studies, particularly in relation to equivalence, cultural transfer, and stylistic preservation. The concept of equivalence has been interpreted differently by scholars, with some emphasizing its limitations in culturally bound texts and proposing adequacy as a more achievable goal<sup>1</sup>.

Another important theoretical framework is the distinction between domestication and foreignization, which highlights the translator's role in either

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<sup>1</sup> Eugene Nida, E. A. (1964). *Toward a Science of Translating*. Leiden: Brill.



adapting the text to the target culture or preserving its foreign elements<sup>2</sup>. This is particularly relevant in the translation of historical works, where cultural realia play a central role.

Scholars also emphasize the importance of pragmatic adaptation, as historical texts often assume shared cultural knowledge that may not be accessible to the target audience<sup>3</sup>. In such cases, translators must employ strategies such as explanation or contextualization.

Despite extensive research in translation theory, the specific challenges of translating Uzbek historical texts into English remain underexplored. This study seeks to address this gap by systematizing common translation problems within a concrete linguistic and cultural framework.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive, and comparative approach to the analysis of translation problems in historical texts. The research is based on the comparison of selected excerpts from Uzbek historical literature and their English translations. The examples are analyzed in terms of linguistic, cultural, stylistic, and pragmatic features.

The method of analysis includes identifying problematic units in the source text, examining their equivalents in the target text, and evaluating the translation strategies used. Particular attention is paid to cases where semantic loss, cultural transformation, or stylistic shifts occur. The study also considers the effectiveness of different translation strategies, such as transliteration, adaptation, omission, and explanation.

Through this approach, the research aims to classify the most common types of translation difficulties and to assess how successfully they are resolved in practice.

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<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Venuti, L. (1995). *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London: Routledge.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. New York: Prentice Hall.



## **Analysis and Discussion**

The analysis reveals that the translation of Uzbek historical texts into English involves several interconnected challenges, which can be classified into the following categories:

### **Lexical Challenges**

One of the primary difficulties lies in the translation of historical and archaic vocabulary. Uzbek historical texts frequently employ terms that are no longer in common use or that refer to specific historical institutions and roles. Words such as titles, administrative positions, and social ranks often lack direct equivalents in English.

In such cases, translators tend to use transliteration or descriptive translation. However, both strategies have limitations: transliteration may obscure meaning for the target reader, while descriptive translation can lead to loss of conciseness and stylistic elegance.

### **Cultural Challenges**

Cultural realia represent a significant obstacle in translation. Uzbek historical works are rich in references to traditions, customs, and social practices that are unfamiliar to English-speaking audiences. These include elements related to family structure, gender roles, ceremonies, and everyday life.

The translator must decide whether to preserve these elements in their original form or adapt them to the target culture. Retaining the original terms helps maintain authenticity but may reduce comprehensibility, whereas adaptation improves readability but risks distorting the cultural meaning.

### **Stylistic Challenges**

Historical texts are often characterized by a high literary style, including the use of archaic forms, rhetorical devices, and expressive language. Reproducing these stylistic features in translation is particularly difficult, as the target language may not have equivalent stylistic resources.



As a result, translations may lose the original tone, emotional depth, or aesthetic quality. Maintaining a balance between readability and stylistic fidelity is therefore one of the key tasks of the translator.

### **Pragmatic Challenges**

Pragmatic issues arise from differences in background knowledge between the source and target audiences. Historical texts often contain implicit meanings, references, and assumptions that are easily understood by the original readers but not by the target audience.

To address this problem, translators may use additional explanations, footnotes, or contextualization. However, excessive explanation can disrupt the flow of the text, while insufficient explanation may lead to misunderstanding.

### **Strategies for Overcoming Translation Problems**

The analysis shows that no single strategy can fully resolve all translation difficulties. Instead, effective translation requires a combination of approaches, including transliteration, adaptation, and explanatory techniques. The choice of strategy depends on the specific context, the type of text, and the intended audience.

Ultimately, the translator must act as a mediator between cultures, striving to preserve the historical and cultural essence of the original while ensuring clarity and accessibility for the target reader.

### **Conclusion**

The study has demonstrated that translating historical texts from Uzbek into English involves a wide range of linguistic, cultural, stylistic, and pragmatic challenges. These difficulties are primarily caused by the absence of direct equivalents, the specificity of cultural realia, and differences in background knowledge between source and target audiences.

The findings confirm that achieving full equivalence in the translation of historical texts is rarely possible. Instead, translators should aim for functional adequacy by balancing accuracy with cultural intelligibility. The use of flexible and



context-sensitive translation strategies is essential in preserving both the meaning and the aesthetic value of the original text.

This research contributes to the field of translation studies by providing a systematic classification of translation problems and highlighting practical approaches to their resolution. It also emphasizes the need for further research on Uzbek-English translation, particularly in the domain of historical literature.

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