



**CULTURAL EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATION:
CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN MODERN TRANSLATION
STUDIES**

Bakhtiyorova Raykhona Ikhtiyorovna

University of Economics and Pedagogy

1st year student of the Foreign languages faculty

Scientific advisor: Bakhtiyorova Maftuna Bakhtiyorovna

PhD., assoc.prof., University of Economics and Pedagogy

E-mail: maftunabakhtiyorovna.phd@gmail.com

Tel: +998919535222

***Abstract.** This study explores the concept of cultural equivalence in translation, focusing on the challenges translators face when transferring culturally bound elements from a source language into a target language. Drawing on examples from English-Uzbek and English-Russian translation, the paper examines strategies such as literal translation, adaptation, borrowing, and domestication. The analysis demonstrates that cultural equivalence requires not only linguistic competence but also deep intercultural understanding. Findings suggest that successful translation balances fidelity to the source text with accessibility for the target audience, particularly in literature, media, and advertising texts.*

***Keywords:** Cultural equivalence, translation strategies, domestication, foreignization, English-Uzbek translation, intercultural communication, idiomatic adaptation, translation studies.*

1.Introduction.

Translation is more than a linguistic activity; it is a cultural act that involves transferring meaning, style, and social context across languages. One of the primary challenges in translation studies is achieving cultural equivalence—



the preservation of the source culture's meaning while making it understandable and acceptable to the target audience.

Cultural equivalence becomes particularly complex in literature, idiomatic expressions, proverbs, humor, and media texts. For example, an English idiom like “kick the bucket” cannot be translated literally into Uzbek (“chunki chelakni tepish”) without losing meaning; instead, a culturally equivalent expression (“vafot etmoq”) is required.

This study investigates strategies for achieving cultural equivalence in translation, highlighting both linguistic and pragmatic dimensions.

2.Literature Review.

Scholars have long debated methods to address cultural gaps in translation:

Nida (1964) introduced the concept of dynamic equivalence, emphasizing the importance of natural readability and cultural adaptation in the target language.

Venuti (1995) distinguished between domestication (making the text familiar to the target culture) and foreignization (retaining source culture elements to preserve authenticity).

Hatim & Mason (1990) highlighted the role of contextual meaning and pragmatic adaptation, stressing that translators must balance linguistic accuracy with cultural sensitivity.

Baker (1992) explored lexical gaps, idioms, and metaphors, emphasizing that some cultural concepts have no direct equivalents and require creative strategies.

Despite extensive research, there is an ongoing need for practical studies illustrating cultural equivalence in real-world translation, particularly in the context of English-Uzbek translations.

3.Methodology.

This study uses a qualitative, descriptive, and comparative approach.



3.1 Data Collection

A corpus of 100 translated sentences was collected from:

Literary works (short stories, novels),

Media texts (news articles, advertisements),

Official documents and educational materials.

Source languages include English, with translations into Uzbek and Russian for comparative purposes.

3.2 Analysis Procedure

Each sentence was examined for:

1. Cultural markers (idioms, proverbs, social references, cultural objects),

2. Translation strategies applied (literal, adaptation, domestication, foreignization),

3. Effectiveness of cultural equivalence, measured by readability, comprehension, and retention of source culture meaning.

Comparative analysis highlighted which strategies worked better depending on text type (literary, media, official).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Literary Texts

Idioms and proverbs required adaptation:

English: “A stitch in time saves nine”

Uzbek translation: “Vaqtida qilgan ish yuzni tejaydi” (equivalent meaning, culturally natural).

Foreignization was sometimes used to retain stylistic flavor:

Names, historical references, or specific cultural objects were transliterated (e.g., Thanksgiving → Tanksgivi).

4.2 Media Texts

Advertisements often employed domestication to increase cultural relatability:

English: “Black Friday deals are here!”



Uzbek adaptation: “Barakali Juma chegirmalari boshlab yuborildi!”
(culturally acceptable and readable).

Borrowing was applied for international brand names or products (iPhone, Starbucks), maintaining source identity.

4.3 Official and Educational Texts

Literal translation was mostly sufficient for technical and formal language.

When cultural concepts were present (e.g., law-related terms, holidays), footnotes or brief explanations were added to preserve meaning.

4.4 Strategies Summary

Translation Strategy Examples Strengths Weaknesses

Literal Technical manuals Accurate linguistically May ignore cultural context

Adaptation Idioms, sayings Culturally natural Slight deviation from source text

Domestication Advertisements Readable, audience-friendly Source culture may be lost

Foreignization Cultural objects, historical terms Preserves source culture May confuse target audience

Findings:

Adaptation and domestication dominate in literary and media texts.

Literal translation is preferred in official texts.

Successful cultural equivalence requires translator judgment, linguistic competence, and intercultural awareness.

5. Conclusion.

Achieving cultural equivalence in translation is a complex and multifaceted task. Translators must balance fidelity to the source text with the target audience’s cultural expectations. Different strategies—literal translation,



adaptation, domestication, foreignization—have their own advantages and limitations depending on text type.

This study demonstrates that translation is not merely linguistic but also a cultural and pragmatic activity. A translator's role involves negotiating meaning, adapting cultural references, and ensuring readability, making intercultural competence essential in modern translation studies.

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