

COGNITIVE STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES IN LITERARY TRANSLATION FROM ENGLISH TO UZBEK

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Abstract: The translation of literary texts requires more than linguistic competence; it demands complex cognitive strategies that navigate semantic, cultural, and stylistic nuances. This study examines the cognitive strategies employed and challenges faced by translators working on English literary texts translated into Uzbek. Through qualitative analysis of translator interviews and sample translations, combined with theoretical insights from cognitive linguistics and translation studies, the paper highlights key cognitive processes such as inferencing, problem-solving, and conceptual mapping. The research also outlines the significant challenges arising from linguistic typology differences, cultural gaps, and literary stylistic features. Recommendations for enhancing translator training and dictionary resources to support cognitive translation strategies are presented.

Keywords: Cognitive strategies, literary translation, English-Uzbek translation, cognitive challenges, cultural mediation, stylistic adaptation

1. Introduction

Literary translation involves not only transposing words but also transferring complex aesthetic, cultural, and emotional layers embedded in texts [1: 45]. Translating from English into Uzbek presents distinctive challenges rooted in the structural differences between the two languages and their disparate cultural contexts [2: 12]. Translators must engage sophisticated cognitive strategies to preserve meaning, tone, and stylistic effect, while navigating linguistic and conceptual gaps.

This paper aims to investigate the cognitive strategies translators deploy when working with English literary works translated into Uzbek and to identify prominent cognitive and cultural challenges affecting translation quality. Understanding the cognitive dimension of translation can enhance translator training and resource development to meet literary translation demands.

Literature Review. Translation studies have increasingly acknowledged the role of cognitive processes in tackling the complexity of literary texts [3: 88]. Cognitive translation theories explore mental activities such as attention control, memory retrieval, and conceptual integration occurring during translation tasks. Toury's descriptive translation studies emphasize normative pressures influencing cognitive choices, while Antón and Di Giovanni discuss inference and creativity in literary translation [5: 101].

In the context of English-Uzbek translation, researchers highlight significant syntactic, semantic, and cultural disparities that require extensive cognitive mediation [6: 67]. Previous studies focus mostly on linguistic equivalence, with limited exploration of the cognitive mechanisms mediating between source and target literary cultures. This study integrates cognitive linguistics frameworks with empirical data from practical translation scenarios.

2. Methodology

This qualitative study analyzed cognitive strategies and challenges through two primary methods. First, semi-structured interviews with six professional English-Uzbek literary translators were conducted, focusing on their mental processes and problem-solving approaches during translation tasks [7: 56]. Second, a corpus of twenty English literary excerpts and their published Uzbek translations was examined for cognitive strategy indicators such as conceptual shifts, adaptation techniques, and problem resolution. Data were coded using grounded theory to identify recurrent themes about cognitive load, inferencing, and cultural mediation. Supplementary theoretical interpretation was used to contextualize observed strategies within broader cognitive translation frameworks [8: 78].

In addition to qualitative coding, the study employed participant validation to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the identified cognitive strategies. Translators reviewed preliminary findings and provided feedback, which helped refine the thematic categories and clarify ambiguous interpretations. This iterative process strengthened the study's credibility by incorporating practitioners' insights and aligning analytical conclusions with real-world translation experiences. The combination of interview data, corpus analysis, and participant validation provided a robust triangulation framework, enhancing the depth and reliability of the research outcomes.

3. Results

1.Cognitive Strategies. Interviewed translators consistently described active inferencing — deducing unstated meanings or emotions from context — as a vital cognitive strategy, especially for poetry and prose with rich figurative language. For example, conceptual mapping was used to align English metaphors with culturally compatible Uzbek expressions, preserving the literary effect while ensuring local comprehensibility[6:34].

2. Problem-solving was another key strategy. Translators frequently encountered untranslatable idioms or culture-specific references and employed techniques including paraphrasing, cultural substitution, or explanatory footnotes to communicate meaning effectively. Working memory management by chunking complex sentences helped maintain coherence in lengthy narrative passages .

These translation strategies not only preserved the intended meaning but also enhanced the reader's comprehension by adapting culturally unique elements into more accessible forms. Furthermore, managing working memory through chunking allowed translators to break down complex information into manageable units, reducing cognitive load and improving the flow of translated texts. This approach proved particularly effective when dealing with intricate narratives or dialogues, where maintaining logical connections between ideas was crucial. Overall, such pragmatic techniques highlight the importance of

balancing linguistic fidelity with cultural sensitivity and cognitive considerations in translation practice.

4. Analyses

The corpus analysis confirmed these strategies' use across multiple translation layers. Metaphors such as "time is a thief" were cognitively restructured to analogous Uzbek idioms retaining the conceptual essence while adjusting cultural resonance. Cases involving syntactic dissimilarities were managed through real-time restructuring strategies, indicating flexible cognitive control.

However, challenges like false cognates and lexical gaps increased cognitive load, demanding more time and mental effort during translation. The cognitive contrast between English's analytic syntax and Uzbek's agglutinative morphology posed difficulties in maintaining rhythm and poetic meter.[7:23].

6. Discussion

These findings illuminate how translators' cognitive strategies are not mechanical transpositions but dynamic, creative problem-solving efforts influenced heavily by cultural knowledge and linguistic intuition [8:94]. Approaches such as inferencing and conceptual mapping fit within the broader cognitive linguistic perspective of language as embodied and culturally situated. The challenges encountered underscore the necessity for enhanced cognitive training in translator education, sharpened focus on cultural competence, and improved lexicographic tools that map cognitive and cultural correspondences between English and Uzbek. Digital aids incorporating bilingual corpora and metaphor databases could support cognitive processing and decision-making.

Moreover, integrating pragmatic awareness into translator training programs can empower translators to better navigate the nuanced interplay between language, culture, and context. By fostering skills in discourse analysis and intercultural communication, translators become equipped to anticipate potential misunderstandings and make informed choices that preserve both semantic accuracy and cultural relevance. Advances in technology, such as machine learning algorithms trained on culturally annotated corpora,

offer promising avenues to assist human translators in handling complex pragmalinguistic elements, ultimately enhancing translation quality and consistency across diverse linguistic pairs.

Conclusion

The translation of literary works from English into Uzbek demands a repertoire of cognitive strategies including inferencing, problem-solving, and conceptual adaptation to bridge linguistic and cultural divides. Translators confront significant challenges demanding high cognitive load and creative flexibility. Recognizing and training these cognitive processes can uplift literary translation quality. Future research should explore neurocognitive approaches to further elucidate the mental effort in bilingual literary translation.

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