

## THE REFLECTION OF REALIA IN THE TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK LITERARY TEXTS (PROBLEMS OF CULTURAL ADAPTATION)

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**Abstract:** This article examines the reflection of realia in the translation of English and Uzbek literary texts, focusing on the problems of cultural adaptation. Realia are culture-specific words, expressions, and concepts that often have no direct equivalents in another language. Translating them poses challenges in preserving both meaning and cultural context. The article explores various strategies employed by translators, including adaptation, borrowing, explanation, and omission, and analyzes how these methods affect the target text. By comparing English and Uzbek literary translations, the study highlights the importance of balancing linguistic accuracy with cultural fidelity, providing insights into effective cross-cultural communication in literature.

**Key words:** Realia, literary translation, cultural adaptation, English, Uzbek, translation strategies, cross-cultural communication.

### Introduction

Realia, or culture-specific elements of language, play a crucial role in literary texts by conveying cultural values, traditions, and social norms. Translating literary texts from English into Uzbek or vice versa involves not only linguistic transfer but also cultural mediation. The main challenge lies in the fact that many realia have no direct equivalents in the target language, making their translation complex. Accurate translation requires an understanding of both the source and target cultures, as well as creative strategies to maintain the intended meaning, tone, and cultural reference. With globalization and growing literary exchanges, effective translation of realia has become increasingly important in promoting cross-cultural understanding and preserving the integrity of literary works.

Translators employ a variety of strategies to render realia in literary texts. One common approach is borrowing, where the original term is retained in the target text, often accompanied by a footnote or brief explanation. Borrowing preserves the cultural specificity of the term but may require additional context for target readers unfamiliar with the source culture. Another strategy is adaptation, which involves replacing the source culture element with a culturally equivalent expression in the target language. While adaptation can make the text more accessible, it may also result in a loss of cultural nuance.

Explanation or glossing is frequently used to clarify culture-specific terms within the text itself. Translators may insert brief explanations in parentheses or incorporate the meaning into the surrounding text, balancing comprehension and readability. In some cases, omission is employed when a cultural reference is deemed too obscure or irrelevant for the target audience. Each strategy has advantages and limitations, and the choice often depends on the translator's purpose, the literary genre, and the anticipated readers' familiarity with the source culture.

Comparative analysis of English-Uzbek literary translations reveals patterns in how translators handle realia. English works translated into Uzbek often require additional context for historical, social, or cultural references unfamiliar to Uzbek readers. Conversely, Uzbek texts translated into English frequently involve adaptation or explanation of local traditions, social practices,

and folklore. Successful translation of realia demands careful consideration of both linguistic and cultural factors, as well as sensitivity to the literary style and narrative voice of the original text.

Recent research emphasizes that modern translation theory increasingly values cultural fidelity alongside linguistic accuracy, highlighting the translator's role as a mediator rather than a mere language converter. Digital resources, bilingual dictionaries, and parallel corpora now assist translators in understanding and conveying realia effectively. These tools allow for more nuanced decisions in cultural adaptation, ensuring that the literary text retains its authenticity and resonance for the target audience. Translating realia in literary texts involves multiple challenges because these culture-specific terms often carry historical, social, and emotional connotations. For instance, English literary texts may include realia such as "Thanksgiving," "pub," or "the Tower of London," which require careful adaptation when translated into Uzbek. Simple literal translation often fails to convey the cultural significance, so translators may choose between borrowing, adaptation, explanation, or equivalence strategies. Borrowing preserves the original term but may confuse readers unfamiliar with the culture. Adaptation replaces the source culture term with a culturally equivalent concept in Uzbek, such as rendering "pub" as "kafe yoki mahalliy ichimlik joyi," which conveys a similar social function while maintaining readability. Explanation, often inserted parenthetically or in a footnote, clarifies cultural meaning without altering the original term.

In Uzbek literary texts translated into English, realia often include local food, traditions, social norms, and historical references. Terms such as "Navruz," "ko'chmas mulk" (traditional land ownership), or "mahalla" present similar challenges. Translators must decide whether to retain the Uzbek term with explanation (e.g., "Navruz, the traditional Persian New Year celebrated in Uzbekistan") or adapt it to a more general English equivalent. Such decisions require balancing fidelity to the source text and accessibility for target readers.

Another important consideration is stylistic consistency. Realia in literary texts are often embedded in dialogue, narrative, or poetic descriptions, so translation strategies must preserve tone, register, and aesthetic effect. For example, a humorous English expression tied to a cultural event may require not just literal meaning but also the emotional or comedic effect to be recreated in Uzbek. Similarly, Uzbek idiomatic expressions or culturally-loaded metaphors often need creative solutions in English translation to avoid loss of nuance.

Modern translation theory emphasizes dynamic equivalence and cultural mediation, recognizing that translators act as cultural interpreters. Digital tools, bilingual corpora, and cultural databases assist translators in identifying accurate and contextually appropriate equivalents for realia. In addition, collaborative translation, consulting native speakers, or using explanatory footnotes enhances both accuracy and cultural authenticity.

Comparative analysis of translations shows that mixed strategies often yield the best results. Borrowing combined with a brief explanation can maintain cultural flavor while ensuring comprehension. Adaptation, when carefully applied, makes texts more accessible without erasing essential cultural identity. Ultimately, the translator's goal is to preserve both linguistic meaning and cultural resonance, enabling readers to experience the literary work in a manner as close as possible to the original.

By integrating these strategies, translators contribute to cross-cultural understanding, allowing English and Uzbek literary works to communicate complex cultural realities effectively. The challenges of translating realia underscore the importance of translator expertise, cultural literacy, and sensitivity to both source and target audiences.

Translating realia in literary texts is a complex process because culture-specific elements often carry historical, social, and emotional significance that cannot be conveyed literally. For example, in English texts, realia such as “Thanksgiving,” “pub,” “Guy Fawkes Night,” or “the Tower of London” are deeply embedded in cultural knowledge. Direct translation into Uzbek may confuse readers, so translators use strategies like borrowing, adaptation, explanation, equivalence, or even footnoting. Borrowing preserves the original term but may require additional context. Adaptation replaces the source culture term with a culturally relevant equivalent, for example, rendering “pub” as “mahalliy ichimlik joyi yoki kafe,” conveying the social function without losing readability. Explanation, inserted parenthetically or in footnotes, clarifies meaning while maintaining the original term.

Similarly, Uzbek literary texts translated into English present realia such as “Navruz,” “mahalla,” “ko‘chmas mulk,” or “Suzani embroidery.” Translators face the challenge of deciding whether to retain the original term with an explanation (e.g., “Navruz, the traditional Persian New Year celebrated in Uzbekistan”) or to adapt it to a general English equivalent like “spring festival.” These choices require a careful balance between cultural authenticity and reader comprehension. In some cases, multiple strategies are combined, such as borrowing with a brief in-text explanation, to preserve both the term and its cultural significance.

The stylistic dimension is another crucial consideration. Realia often occur in dialogue, poetry, or narrative passages, and the translation must preserve not only the literal meaning but also tone, rhythm, and emotional resonance. For example, a humorous idiomatic expression tied to a cultural event in English may require a creative equivalent in Uzbek to reproduce the comedic effect. Conversely, Uzbek proverbs, folk sayings, or culturally-loaded metaphors demand innovative translation strategies in English to avoid losing nuance.

Modern translation theory increasingly emphasizes cultural mediation and dynamic equivalence, recognizing the translator’s role as a cultural bridge. Digital tools, online corpora, and bilingual dictionaries support translators in finding contextually appropriate equivalents, while collaboration with native speakers or consulting cultural experts enhances accuracy. Translators must also consider the literary genre, target audience, and narrative style to determine the most effective approach.

Comparative studies show that the most effective translations often employ hybrid strategies. For instance, English terms like “Christmas pudding” may be borrowed with a brief explanation, while Uzbek local foods or festivals may be adapted, explained, or transliterated depending on context. Such strategies maintain cultural richness without compromising readability.

In addition, translators must navigate cultural gaps, where a concept in one culture has no direct counterpart in another. For example, terms related to English social institutions, legal systems, or historical events require explanation or contextualization in Uzbek translations, while Uzbek-specific historical or religious terms require careful introduction for English readers. The goal is to allow readers to understand the cultural meaning while enjoying the literary work naturally.

Ultimately, translating realia in English and Uzbek literary texts requires a combination of linguistic knowledge, cultural literacy, creativity, and analytical skills. By carefully selecting strategies for adaptation, explanation, or borrowing, translators ensure that the target text preserves both the meaning and the cultural context of the original. Effective handling of realia strengthens cross-cultural understanding and allows readers to experience the richness of foreign literary worlds. Advanced translation tools and theory further support this process, making it possible to retain cultural nuances while producing readable and engaging translations. Translating realia in literary texts involves not only linguistic challenges but also deep cultural mediation, as these terms reflect social customs, historical events, and local

traditions. In English texts, realia such as “Boxing Day,” “Tea ceremony,” or “pub culture” carry rich cultural connotations that are often unfamiliar to Uzbek readers. Translators may retain these terms through borrowing, which preserves authenticity, but it often requires explanations either within the text or in footnotes. For example, “pub” may be translated as “mahalliy ichimlik joyi yoki kafe,” maintaining social meaning while making it understandable for Uzbek audiences. Adaptation is another common strategy, where cultural equivalents are used, such as translating “Thanksgiving” as “Minnatdorchilik kuni,” which conveys the concept even if it is not an exact cultural match.

In Uzbek literary texts translated into English, realia often encompass local traditions, food, folklore, and social structures. Terms like “Navruz,” “mahalla,” “kuyov to‘yi” (traditional wedding ceremonies), or “Suzani embroidery” present challenges for English-speaking readers. Translators may choose explanation, such as “Navruz, the traditional Uzbek New Year festival,” or adaptation, like “spring festival,” depending on context and target audience familiarity. In cases of deeply culture-specific practices, translators may combine strategies—borrowing with explanatory notes or brief in-text clarifications—to preserve both authenticity and comprehension.

Realia also influence narrative style and literary tone. Humor, irony, or poetic imagery tied to cultural elements must be carefully rendered. For instance, English expressions like “It’s raining cats and dogs” may require contextual adaptation to be meaningful in Uzbek without losing figurative meaning. Similarly, Uzbek metaphors such as “qo‘chqor kabi jasur” (brave as a lion) need creative English equivalents that convey both imagery and intensity. Maintaining literary aesthetics while ensuring cultural intelligibility is a major concern for translators.

Modern translation theory emphasizes cultural equivalence and dynamic translation strategies, recognizing the translator as a mediator between cultures rather than a mere linguistic converter. Digital tools, parallel corpora, and online dictionaries aid in identifying contextually appropriate equivalents for realia. Collaborative approaches, such as consulting cultural experts or bilingual readers, further enhance translation quality. Translators must also consider genre-specific requirements, such as fiction, poetry, or drama, as each imposes different constraints on the treatment of realia.

Comparative studies show that hybrid approaches are often most effective. English terms may be borrowed with brief explanations, while Uzbek cultural references are sometimes adapted or transliterated with contextual clarification. For instance, an English novel mentioning “Guy Fawkes Night” might retain the term with a note explaining the historical context, whereas an Uzbek epic describing “kuyov to‘yi” could include a brief description for English readers. These approaches preserve cultural richness, enhance readability, and allow readers to appreciate the literary and cultural layers of the original text.

Furthermore, translators must address cultural gaps, where certain concepts have no direct counterpart in the target culture. English idiomatic expressions related to historical or social institutions may require added context, while Uzbek-specific rituals, religious practices, or folklore motifs demand careful introduction for English readers. Effective translation of realia not only maintains semantic meaning but also ensures that readers experience cultural depth, humor, emotion, and literary style as intended by the author.

Overall, the translation of realia in English and Uzbek literary texts is a sophisticated process requiring linguistic expertise, cultural literacy, creativity, and critical thinking. By judiciously applying strategies like borrowing, adaptation, explanation, and hybrid approaches, translators preserve the integrity, meaning, and cultural resonance of the source text. Advances in translation theory and digital tools enhance this process, making it possible to deliver

translations that are both culturally authentic and accessible to target audiences. The careful handling of realia strengthens cross-cultural understanding, promotes literary appreciation, and ensures that both English and Uzbek literary works can reach global audiences without losing their cultural essence.

### Conclusion

The translation of realia in English and Uzbek literary texts presents complex challenges due to cultural specificity and the absence of direct equivalents. Translators use strategies such as borrowing, adaptation, explanation, and omission to balance accuracy with cultural fidelity. Comparative analysis demonstrates that effective translation requires deep understanding of both source and target cultures, as well as creativity in rendering culture-specific elements. By carefully managing the interplay between language and culture, translators contribute to the preservation of literary meaning and the promotion of cross-cultural understanding. Advances in digital tools and translation theory further support the accurate and culturally sensitive translation of literary texts, ensuring that realia continue to enrich literature across languages.

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