



**PRAGMATIC EQUIVALENCE AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION IN
LITERARY TRANSLATION: STRATEGIES FOR RENDERING REALIA**

Muattar Temirova Amirkul kizi

Teacher at Denau Institute of Entrepreneurship and Pedagogy

fragrant9898@gmail.com

Nabijon Turdiyev Isomiddin ugli

Teacher at Denau Institute of Entrepreneurship and Pedagogy

nabijonturdiyev732@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article examines the challenges of achieving pragmatic equivalence in literary translation, focusing specifically on the translation of “realia” - words and expressions denoting culture-specific items, customs, and concepts. Since language is deeply intertwined with culture, transferring foreign cultural markers into a target text involves more than linguistic substitution; it requires cognitive and pragmatic adaptation. Through a systematic analysis of translation methodologies, this study evaluates the effectiveness of primary strategies such as foreignization and domestication. The findings indicate that while domestication enhances readability, foreignization preserves the cultural identity of the source text, suggesting that an integrated, context-dependent approach is essential for high-quality literary translation.

KEY WORDS

Literary translation, pragmatic equivalence, realia, cultural adaptation, domestication, foreignization.

INTRODUCTION

Translation is no longer viewed merely as a mechanical process of decoding a message from one language and encoding it into another. In contemporary cognitive and cultural linguistics, translation is recognized as a complex act of intercultural communication [1]. The ultimate goal of a translator is to achieve equivalence, not just at the structural or lexical level, but at the pragmatic level—ensuring that the target reader experiences an emotional and intellectual impact similar to that of the original reader [2].

The main obstacle to achieving complete pragmatic equivalence is the presence of “realia”. Realia refers to lexical units that represent objects, customs, habits, and historical facts unique to a specific ethnic group or geographic region, which lack direct equivalents in other languages [3]. When translating literary prose, these cultural markers carry significant narrative weight. Mismanaging them can lead to a phenomenon known as “cultural translation loss”, where the specific worldview embedded in the source text is neutralized or distorted [4]. Therefore, selecting the appropriate

translation strategy for realia remains one of the most debated issues in structural and functional translation studies.

METHODS

This study utilizes a qualitative and comparative linguistic analysis framework. The analytical framework is built upon Venuti's dichotomy of translation strategies - domestication and foreignization - and Newmark's classification of culture-specific words [3, 5].

The research design follows a strict three-step comparative pipeline:

Taxonomy Formulation: Categorizing realia based on thematic fields such as material culture, social life, and ethnographical concepts.

Contrastive Textual Analysis: Evaluating the semantic shift between the source text unit and its translated counterpart in the target language.

Pragmatic Impact Assessment: Analyzing how specific strategies alter the target reader's comprehension, emotional response, and stylistic perception of the text.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The cross-linguistic analysis shows that translators navigating cultural specificities generally lean toward two opposing ideological poles: domestication, which brings the author closer to the target reader, and foreignization, which moves the reader toward the source culture [5]. The linguistic mechanisms employed within these strategies directly determine the degree of pragmatic equivalence achieved in the final text.

When dealing with material culture, such as traditional clothing or food items like *chapan* or *tandır*, translators frequently employ transliteration or direct borrowing. This foreignization technique preserves the local color and historical authenticity of the narrative [4]. For instance, retaining the word *chapan* introduces the target audience to a specific cultural artifact. However, if the text does not provide contextual clues, this strategy increases the cognitive load on the reader. To mitigate this, successful translations often combine transliteration with a subtle descriptive modifier, rendering the term as "traditional *chapan* robe" to maintain narrative flow without requiring external footnotes.

Conversely, the strategy of cultural substitution or domestication is often applied to abstract socio-cultural concepts and idioms. For example, deeply rooted cultural concepts such as *oriyat* represent a complex mix of honor, dignity, and community accountability that lacks a single-word equivalent in Western languages [3]. Replacing such a profound term with a simple English word like "pride" achieves immediate readability and linguistic fluency, but it simultaneously strips the text of its unique philosophical depth [2]. This semantic reduction represents a pragmatic loss, as the target reader perceives a standard psychological trait rather than a specific cultural virtue.

The results of this study indicate that descriptive translation serves as an effective compromise between the two extremes. By explaining the function or appearance of a cultural marker using common lexical units, the translator clarifies the concept perfectly. Although this approach can occasionally slow down the poetic rhythm of literary prose, it ensures that the pragmatic value of the message is not lost [1]. Ultimately, achieving dynamic equivalence requires a fluid adjustment of these methods based on the specific narrative context and the stylistic demands of the text.

CONCLUSION

Achieving pragmatic equivalence in literary translation demands a sophisticated understanding of both linguistic structures and cultural frameworks. The analysis demonstrates that neither absolute domestication nor rigid foreignization serves as a universal solution for translating realia. Translators must balance stylistic fluidity with cultural authenticity. Neutralizing unique cultural markers alienates the text from its roots, while excessive borrowing can make the narrative inaccessible. Ultimately, the preservation of cultural markers through balanced adaptation is vital for fostering true cross-cultural dialogue through literature. Future research should explore how digital corpus tools can assist translators in measuring the frequency and acceptability of these translated terms in the target language.

REFERENCES

1. Baker, M. (2018). In *Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
2. Nida, E. A. (1964). *Toward a Science of Translating*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
3. Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. New York: Prentice Hall.
4. Hatim, B., & Munday, J. (2004). *Translation: An Advanced Resource Book*. London: Routledge.
5. Venuti, L. (2008). *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.