

TRANSLATION OF WORDS SPECIFIC TO KHOREZM CULTURE

Abdullayeva Mohinur

Urgench State University

Master's Department, Comparative Linguistics and Translation Studies

Second-year Master's student

Abstract

This article analyzes how words related to Khorezm culture are translated in academic articles, dissertations, and books. It also examines the problems and difficulties encountered in translating culture-specific words. The article provides both practical and theoretical value for translators.

Keywords

Culture-specific words, national coloring, realia, transliteration, descriptive translation, transcription, equivalent.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that language is not merely a means of communication but also a factor that reflects a nation's values, traditions, and customs. If a language disappears, the identity and nationality of its people disappear as well.

In translation, culture-specific words — such as realia, national customs, traditional foods, clothing, religious or historical concepts — require special attention. Since these words often lack direct equivalents in other languages, the translator must understand them correctly and convey them appropriately within context. Otherwise, the original spirit, national coloring, and spiritual meaning of the text may be lost.

This article analyzes the role of culture-specific lexical units in translation, the main challenges arising in the translation process, and the strategies and methods applied to address them. In addition, based on specific examples, accurate and ineffective translations of cultural words are compared, and practical recommendations for translators are provided.

Every language reflects its own culture, history, and mentality. Therefore, a translator must understand not only the words but also the cultural meaning and essence behind them, serving as a bridge between speaker and listener. Especially in communication between representatives of different cultures, cultural differences and varying perspectives naturally arise. In one word, translation can be described as a process of transformation.

Types of Culture-Specific Units**1. Realia**

The term *realia* (from the Latin *realis* – “real”) refers to material or non-material phenomena and objects that express national specificity related to a particular people's history, culture, customs, or state structure, and which do not have direct equivalents in other languages. Such units create difficulties in translation and play an important role in studying intercultural relations in linguistics.

(Example from Khorezm culture: *manatli taxya*)

2. Religious and Historical Concepts

Religious and historical concepts form the foundation of human culture and worldview, shaping beliefs, traditions, and state development.

(Example: *Mo'illo* – Mullah)

3. Socio-cultural Phenomena

These include holidays, ceremonies, and customs.

(Example: *Lachak toy*)

4. National Symbols and Images

These include folk expressions, proverbs, legendary heroes, and characters from folklore. (Example: *Lazgi*)

The examples mentioned above have been translated or used in several international academic articles. Translating such words can present several difficulties.

Main Problems in Translating Culture-Specific Words

1. The Problem of Equivalence

Since each culture possesses its own specific realities, some words may not exist in other languages. Therefore, preserving the exact meaning while translating culture-related words can be difficult.

(Example from Khorezm culture: *cho 'girma*)

2. Loss of National Coloring

Sometimes translators choose an easier approach and generalize culture-specific words. This results in the loss of the national spirit and coloring of the text. For example: *chopon* translated simply as *coat*.

3. Lack of Comprehensibility for the Reader

The main purpose of translation is to make the text understandable to the reader. However, even when cultural units are translated directly, they may remain unfamiliar to the reader. In such cases, the translator must use explanations, clarifications, or contextual descriptions.

To overcome these challenges, a translator must possess intercultural competence, deeply understand cultural differences, and apply creative approaches when necessary. There is no single universal method for translating culture-specific words. Since each cultural unit is unique, the translator must consider the specific situation, genre of the text, target audience, and intercultural differences.

Translation Strategies and Methods

Below are the most common and practically useful translation methods:

Transcription

Writing the word in another language while preserving its original sound form. This method is mostly used for names, toponyms, and brands.

Example: *Qalajiq* (a place name in Khorezm). In an academic article, it is presented as: "Qalajiq means small fortress."

Transliteration

Adapting the letters of the original word to another alphabet. This helps preserve phonetic similarity.

Example: *Chugurma*.

Descriptive Translation (Explicative Translation)

If a direct equivalent cannot be found, the meaning of the word is explained.

Example: *manatli taxya* – "a traditional women's head covering decorated with gold or silver coins and large fur elements, worn in Khorezm."

Alternative Equivalent Selection

This strategy involves choosing a word or phrase from another culture that performs a similar cultural function. For example, the Uzbek word "*to'y*" may be rendered in English as "*wedding ceremony*." In such cases, although an equivalent term exists, the specific rituals, practices, and social functions associated with the event may differ across cultures. Nevertheless, in the reader's imagination, a comparable scene is formed.

Retaining the Original Form

In some cases, it is appropriate not to translate a culturally specific term at all but to retain it in its original form, especially when it conveys national color. To ensure clarity, such terms are usually accompanied by an explanatory note. For example: *Halpa* (in Khorezm weddings, a woman who performs songs during the ceremony).

Cultural Adaptation

Cultural adaptation involves replacing a culture-specific term with a more familiar concept for the target audience. For instance, *patir* may be translated as “*bread*.” However, even in such cases, the substituted term does not fully reflect all the specific details and characteristics of the original item.

The accurate translation of culture-bound words is of utmost importance, as they are not merely lexical units but also carriers of national spirit and identity. Khorezm culture is remarkably diverse, and its vocabulary significantly differs from that of other languages. Therefore, finding precise equivalent terms is often highly challenging.

In conclusion, when translating any historical or culturally specific word, it is essential to consider its meaning within the given context. The translator must fully understand all semantic nuances of the term and the function it performs. Only then can the intended image be effectively conveyed in the reader’s mind.

Below are definitions of culture-specific words related to Khorezm culture provided in the article to ensure better understanding for readers.

Glossary of Culture-Specific Terms

Manatli taxya – A traditional skullcap decorated with coins. Historically, daughters of the Khan’s family wore skullcaps adorned with gold coins and decorated with a large white feather.

Lazgi – A traditional Khorezm national song and dance performance.

Lachak toy – In the past, Khorezm women over the age of 30–40 wore a special headdress consisting of 15–20 scarves. This headdress was called *lachak*, and a special ceremony known as “*Lachak toy*” was held to mark the occasion of wearing it.

Cho’girma – A traditional men’s head covering in Khorezm made of sheepskin or wool.

Mo’llo (Mulla) – A religious figure who delivers sermons and provides religious instruction.

Halpa – Women who sing at weddings in Khorezm.

Patir – A type of bread distinct from other varieties, prepared with added oil and meat.

References

1. Kuvvatova, M., Khamrokulova, M., & Khodjaeva, S. (2025). *Translation of Culture-Specific Words*. Interpretation and Researches, 9(55-2). Retrieved from <https://inlibrary.uz/index.php/international-scientific/article/view/99475>
2. Ibragimova, Z., & Abdullayeva, M. (2022). *The Etymology of Nicknames in Dialects and Their Use in a Positive and Negative Sense (On the Example of the Hazorasp District)*.
3. Davletov, S., & Rajabova, Z. (2021). *Historical and Cultural Heritage Objects in the Khorezm Oasis as a Factor in Increasing Tourism Potential*.
4. Turaeva, R. (2008). *The Cultural Baggage of Khorezmian Identity: Traditional Forms of Singing and Dancing in Khorezm and in Tashkent*.
5. Wikipedia contributors. *Chugurma*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chugurma>