

CULTURAL AND CONTEXTUAL PROBLEMS IN THE TRANSLATION OF SPECIALIZED TERMINOLOGY

G'afurova Nazokat Bakhridin's daughter

student of Tashkent State of transport university

Annotation: This article explores the cultural and contextual challenges that arise in the translation of specialized terminology. It examines theoretical frameworks including pragmatic translation, the concept of realia, untranslatability, and cultural equivalence. Drawing on examples from medical, legal, and technological fields, the paper discusses how linguistic and extra-linguistic factors affect term transfer. The analysis suggests that successful translation requires balancing terminological accuracy with cultural intelligibility.

Keywords: cultural equivalence, pragmatic translation, untranslatability, realia, context, terminology, specialized language

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada soha terminlarini tarjima qilishda uchraydigan madaniy va kontekstual muammolar o'rganiladi. Unda pragmatik tarjima, realiyalar, tarjimabop bo'lmagan birliklar va madaniy ekvivalentlik kabi tushunchalar tahlil qilinadi. Tibbiyot, huquq va texnologiya sohalaridan olingan misollar asosida til va tilga bog'liq bo'lmagan omillar terminlarni tarjima qilish jarayoniga qanday ta'sir ko'rsatishi ko'rsatib o'tiladi. Muallif terminologik aniqlik bilan bir qatorda madaniy tushunarlilikni ta'minlash zarurligini ta'kidlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: madaniy ekvivalentlik, pragmatik tarjima, tarjimabop bo'lmaslik, realiyalar, kontekst, terminologiya, sohaviy til

Аннотация: В статье рассматриваются культурные и контекстуальные проблемы, возникающие при переводе специализированной терминологии. Анализируются такие понятия, как прагматический перевод, реалии, непереводаемость и культурная эквивалентность. На примерах из медицины, юриспруденции и технологий показано, как языковые и внеязыковые факторы влияют на перевод терминов. Делается вывод о необходимости баланса между точностью терминологии и культурной доступностью перевода.

Ключевые слова: культурная эквивалентность, прагматический перевод, непереводаемость, реалии, контекст, терминология, специализированный язык

In scientific and technical translation, achieving semantic accuracy is not the only challenge; cultural and contextual compatibility are equally crucial. Many specialized terms are deeply embedded in the cultural or institutional frameworks of the source language, and their equivalents may be absent or misleading in the target language. These challenges are often grouped under the umbrella of **cultural and contextual problems**,

which encompass **pragmatic mismatches**, **realia**, **untranslatability**, and **cultural equivalence** [1, p. 112; 2, p. 87].

This paper aims to explore how these phenomena affect the translation of specialized terminology and how translators can address them effectively.

Pragmatic translation and contextual factors

Pragmatic translation focuses on how meaning is shaped by context, purpose, and communicative function [3, p. 45]. For instance, a term such as *informed consent* carries different legal and ethical weight in different countries. Translators must consider the **legal systems**, **audience expectations**, and **register** of the target culture.

"Meaning is not merely what words denote, but how they function in a particular communicative situation" [3, p. 46].

Contextual factors include:

- Institutional structures (e.g., court systems)
- Sociocultural norms (e.g., health practices)
- Communicative settings (e.g., academic vs. public discourse)

The challenge of realia

Realia refers to culture-specific terms that denote objects, practices, or concepts unique to one culture [4, p. 79]. These terms pose serious challenges in translation because there may be no direct equivalent.

Examples:

• *Mahalla* (Uzbek cultural unit): No exact English equivalent, may be translated as *neighborhood community*, though it lacks institutional depth.

• *Baccalauréat* (French academic diploma): Usually explained descriptively in English contexts.

Translation strategies include:

- **Calque** or **loan translation**
- **Footnotes** or **glosses**
- **Descriptive paraphrasing**

Untranslatability in specialized terminology

Untranslatability may be either **linguistic** or **cultural**:

- **Linguistic**: grammatical categories that have no counterpart
- **Cultural**: concepts or practices absent in the target culture [5, p. 131]

A well-known example is the term *Zaibatsu* in Japanese economic history. Though technically it refers to conglomerates, the cultural connotation of state-sponsored monopoly is hard to express in other languages.

"Untranslatability is not a barrier, but a signal that cultural negotiation is needed" [5, p. 133].

Cultural equivalence: strategic solutions

Cultural equivalence seeks to produce the same effect in the target audience, even if the translation is not literal [6, p. 211]. This is closely related to **functional equivalence** and often requires adaptation.

Strategies include:

- **Functional substitution** (e.g., using a similar concept from the target culture)
- **Localization** (adapting time, unit, format)
- **Neutralization** (avoiding culture-bound terms)

For example, a British text referring to *NHS* may be translated in Uzbek as *Davlat tibbiy xizmatlari*, which, while not institutionally identical, provides functional equivalence.

Comparative analysis

Problem Type	Description	Strategy	Example
Pragmatic Mismatch	Term meaning shifts by context	Functional translation	“Consent” in medical vs. legal contexts
Realia	Culture-bound terms with no equivalent	Descriptive gloss, footnote	“Mahalla”, “Thanksgiving”
Untranslatability	Linguistic/cultural non-equivalence	Adaptation, cultural substitution	“Zaibatsu”, “NHS”
Cultural Equivalence	Audience-centered adaptation	Localization, neutralization	Time formats, legal references

The translation of specialized terminology goes beyond linguistic substitution; it is a **cultural act** shaped by context, norms, and pragmatic goals. Cultural and contextual challenges such as **realia**, **untranslatability**, and **pragmatic variation** demand that translators make informed decisions to balance **accuracy**, **clarity**, and **cultural resonance**.

The translator must act as both a linguistic expert and cultural mediator, employing strategies that ensure functional and cultural equivalence. While some terms may lack direct counterparts, effective translation is always possible through **creativity**, **contextual awareness**, and **theoretical insight**.

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