CROSS-CULTURAL AND INTERCULTURAL PHENOMENON OF TRANSLATION

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Abstract: Translation is inherently grounded in difference, not only between linguistic systems but also between the cultures in which those systems operate. This paper examines translation as a cross-cultural and intercultural communicative act, emphasizing the cultural embeddedness of meaning and the role of translators in mediating between distinct knowledge systems. Drawing on perspectives from intercultural communication and translation studies, the study highlights the challenges posed by culture-specific references such as historical dates, idiomatic expressions, customs, and shared cultural memory. It argues that successful translation requires cultural awareness alongside linguistic competence and positions the translator as an intercultural mediator who enables meaning to travel across cultural boundaries.

Keywords: *translation, intercultural communication, culture, cultural reference, translator competence*

Annotatsiya

Tarjima o‘z mohiyatiga ko‘ra nafaqat til tizimlari o‘rtasidagi farqlarga, balki ushbu tizimlar amal qiladigan madaniyatlar o‘rtasidagi tafovutlarga ham asoslanadi. Ushbu maqolada tarjima madaniyatlararo va madaniyatlar kesishmasidagi kommunikativ faoliyat sifatida tahlil qilinadi hamda ma’noning madaniy ildizlarga ega ekanligi va tarjimonning turli bilim tizimlari o‘rtasida vositachilik qiluvchi roli ta’kidlanadi. Madaniyatlararo kommunikatsiya va tarjimashunoslik yondashuvlariga tayangan holda, tadqiqot tarixiy sanalar, idiomatik iboralar, urf-odatlar va umumiy madaniy xotira kabi madaniyatga xos birliklar yuzaga keltiradigan muammolarni yoritadi. Maqolada muvaffaqiyatli tarjima nafaqat lingvistik kompetensiyani, balki madaniy xabardorlikni ham talab qilishi asoslanadi hamda tarjimon ma’noni madaniy chegaralar orqali yetkazib beruvchi madaniyatlararo vositachi sifatida talqin qilinadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: tarjima, madaniyatlararo kommunikatsiya, madaniyat, madaniy referensiya, tarjimon kompetensiyasi

Аннотация

Перевод по своей природе основан на различиях — не только между языковыми системами, но и между культурами, в рамках которых эти системы функционируют. В данной статье перевод рассматривается как акт межкультурной и кросс-культурной коммуникации, при этом особое внимание уделяется культурной обусловленности значения и роли переводчика как посредника между различными системами знания. Опираясь на подходы межкультурной коммуникации и переводоведения, в исследовании выделяются трудности, возникающие при передаче культурно маркированных единиц, таких как исторические даты, идиоматические выражения, обычаи и общая культурная память. В

статье утверждается, что успешный перевод требует не только лингвистической компетентности, но и культурной осознанности, а переводчик рассматривается как межкультурный медиатор, обеспечивающий перенос смысла через культурные границы.

Ключевые слова: *перевод, межкультурная коммуникация, культура, культурная реалия, компетенция переводчика*

Introduction

Translation has traditionally been understood as a process of linguistic transfer between a source language and a target language. Contemporary translation studies, however, increasingly emphasize that translation also involves the negotiation of cultural difference. Languages are not neutral instruments of communication; they are deeply embedded in the cultures that shape their meanings, conventions, and uses. As a result, translation can be described as a form of cross-cultural communication that brings distinct linguistic and cultural systems into contact (Katan, 2004).

This paper explores translation as both a cross-cultural and an intercultural phenomenon. It focuses on the ways in which culturally embedded meanings influence the translation process and discusses the implications for translators working between cultures with differing conventions, historical experiences, and shared knowledge.

Language, Culture, and Meaning in Translation. Meaning in language cannot be fully understood in isolation from cultural context. Words, phrases, and texts derive much of their significance from socially established conventions, historical references, and shared interpretive frameworks. Consequently, translation inevitably involves more than replacing lexical or grammatical elements in one language with those of another. Instead, it requires sensitivity to the cultural realities that inform language use in both the source and target contexts.

From this perspective, translation may be conceptualized as an act of intercultural communication (Bührig et al., 2009). During this process, the translator must navigate similarities and differences between cultural conventions, as well as mismatches in background knowledge and expectations. Cultural assumptions embedded in the source text may not be shared by readers of the target text, creating potential barriers to comprehension.

Culture-Specific References and Translational Challenges. One area where cultural difference becomes particularly visible is in the translation of culture-specific references. These include expressions, symbols, and allusions that acquire meaning within the historical and social memory of a particular community. For instance, certain calendar dates carry strong national or historical associations in specific countries. While such dates may function as powerful shorthand for shared memory in the source culture, they often lack equivalent significance in the target culture.

In these cases, translators are faced with strategic decisions. They may choose to retain the reference and provide contextual explanation, or they may attempt to replace it with a culturally analogous reference that performs a similar function for the target audience. Neither strategy represents a straightforward solution, as both involve balancing fidelity to the source culture with accessibility for the target readership.

Beyond historical references, culture-specific elements frequently appear in idiomatic language, sports metaphors, customs, and literary allusions. For example, idioms derived from sports that are culturally dominant in one society may be unfamiliar or meaningless in another.

Likewise, references to national traditions or canonical literary works may require mediation if they fall outside the cultural horizon of the target audience.

The Translator as Intercultural Mediator. Given these challenges, the role of the translator extends beyond linguistic expertise. Translators must possess cultural awareness and intercultural competence, enabling them to recognize the cultural implications of the source text and anticipate the interpretive needs of the target audience. This awareness allows translators to make informed decisions about adaptation, explanation, or substitution.

In this sense, the translator functions as an intercultural mediator who facilitates communication between cultural systems rather than merely transferring linguistic form. Successful translation depends on the translator's ability to understand how the translated text will be received in its new cultural environment and how meaning can be reconstructed in a way that is both intelligible and culturally appropriate.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that translation is fundamentally a cross-cultural and intercultural phenomenon shaped by cultural difference as much as by linguistic variation. Because language is inseparable from culture, translators must engage with cultural conventions, shared knowledge, and historical memory in both the source and target contexts. Culture-specific references, in particular, illustrate the complexity of transferring meaning across cultural boundaries. Recognizing translation as intercultural communication underscores the importance of cultural competence and positions the translator as an active mediator between cultures. Such a perspective enriches our understanding of translation as a dynamic and context-sensitive practice rather than a purely technical operation.

References

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