



SOME CHALLENGES IN INTERPRETING LINGUOCULTURAL REALIA

Rashidova Mushtariy Farkhod kizi

Master student of Uzbekistan State World Languages University

Abstract: *The interpretation of linguocultural realia presents a multifaceted challenge in the field of translation studies, particularly when dealing with English publicistic texts. These challenges stem from the inherent characteristics of realia – deeply rooted in specific cultural and linguistic contexts with no direct equivalents in other languages. As Baker notes, this complexity is not just linguistic but cultural, demanding translators to convey not only the words but the cultural ethos they represent.*

Key words: *Realia, translation, translators, interpretation difficulties, terms, English language.*

One of the key challenges in translating linguocultural realia arises from the discrepancies between the linguistic expressions and cultural contexts of the source and target languages. P.A. Newmark's insights in 1988 about realia reflect this challenge vividly. According to him, realia often encapsulate unique cultural concepts, traditions, or historical references that may not have direct equivalents in the target culture.

A quintessential example of this from the English language is the term "Thanksgiving." In the United States, Thanksgiving is not just a holiday marked on a calendar; it represents a significant cultural event with historical, social, and emotional dimensions. While the word could be literally translated into other languages, its cultural richness - rooted in historical events of the 17th century, the celebration of harvest, family gatherings, and specific rituals like the Thanksgiving dinner and parades - is often lost in translation.

For non-American audiences, the mere translation of "Thanksgiving" as a holiday does not convey the full spectrum of its cultural significance. This term embodies narrative of survival, gratitude, and family values deeply ingrained in American culture. It recalls stories of the Pilgrims and Native Americans, symbolizing cooperation, resilience, and the beginning of a complex historical journey.

Translating "Thanksgiving" into languages and cultures without a similar festival or historical context presents a unique challenge. The translator must not only find a linguistically accurate term but also provide cultural context. This might involve a brief explanation of its historical roots, the traditional customs associated with it, and its role in contemporary American society. The challenge is compounded when translating for cultures with different historical experiences and societal values, where the concept of a harvest festival or a day of giving thanks might have different connotations.

This translation difficulty illustrates the broader challenges of handling realia in translation. The process involves a nuanced understanding of cultural nuances and an ability to convey them effectively in the target language. The translator's task extends beyond mere word-for-word translation to encompass cultural interpretation and adaptation. This requires not only linguistic skills but a deep understanding of both the source and target cultures, a sensitivity to cultural nuances, and an awareness of the socio-cultural and historical contexts that give realia their meaning.

In the case of "Thanksgiving," the translator must judiciously decide how to convey its significance in a way that resonates with the target audience while remaining faithful to its cultural essence. This



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might involve a combination of translation strategies, including cultural substitution, annotation, or adaptation, depending on the target audience's familiarity with American culture and the context in which the translation will be used.

The complexity of translating linguocultural realia is significantly influenced by the contextual and connotative elements that these terms carry. Eugene Nida, in his seminal work in 1975, emphasized the importance of understanding the socio-cultural and historical context that imbues realia with meaning. This understanding is crucial, as realia often carry rich connotations, cultural references, and emotional resonances that are deeply embedded in the source culture. Translating these terms into another language, where direct equivalents may be absent, poses a considerable challenge for translators.

To illustrate this complexity, consider the term "American Dream." This concept, deeply rooted in American culture, represents more than just a phrase; it encapsulates a set of ideals that include democracy, rights, liberty, opportunity, and equality. The American Dream suggests that success and prosperity can be achieved by anyone in the U.S. through hard work and determination, regardless of social class or circumstances of birth. However, the translation of this term into other languages and cultures requires more than a literal interpretation; it demands an understanding and conveyance of the historical and cultural narrative that defines the American ethos.

Translating realia, those elements deeply rooted in specific cultural and linguistic contexts, is one of the most nuanced and challenging aspects of translation. It requires a translator to go beyond the realm of linguistic expertise, stepping into the shoes of a cultural mediator. This role demands a blend of linguistic precision, cultural empathy, creative acumen, and ethical sensitivity. Throughout this exploration of realia translation, it has become evident that the translator's role is pivotal in bridging cultural divides, fostering understanding, and enhancing global communication.

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