

# The Impact of Translation on Cross-Cultural Misunderstandings

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**Abstract:** This scientific article explores the intricate relationship between translations and the potential misunderstandings that may arise when navigating different languages. It also provides examples of semantic differences in Uzbek-English translations. Language, as a complex system of communication, plays a crucial role in human interaction. However, if the cultural difference isn't taken into consideration, translations can contribute to misunderstandings and inaccurate delivery of information. This article delves into various factors that influence the accuracy and effectiveness of translations and examines their implications in intercultural communication.

**Key words:** communication, cross-cultural translation, linguistic ambiguities, cultural nuances, contextual challenges.

## INTRODUCTION:

Translation as a type of mediation is a means not only of interlingual but also of intercultural communication. Serving as a means of communication between people of various ethnic groups, translation is a means of interlingual and intercultural communication. The cultural factor in translation is obvious and undeniable. Not only two languages interact in translation process, but also two cultures having both common features and national specificity. Revealing this specificity is crucial in studying intercultural communication and translation.<sup>1</sup>

Language serves as a tool for expressing thoughts, emotions and ideas, forming the backbone of human communication. As different societies become more interconnected and international relationships develop, the need for translations increases to facilitate understanding among diverse linguistic communities. However, the process of translation includes its pitfalls, and this article aims to explore various intercultural nuances and concepts which contribute to problems in communication.

Professor of Vilnius University Dr Loreta Ulvydiene argues that it's important to increase our awareness of and sensitivity to culturally different modes of behavior. "In the 21<sup>st</sup> century even the most famous business companies e.g. General Motors, IKEA, Electrolux fail to introduce some of their products due to mistakes of inaccurate cross-cultural translation. Thus, translation is a tool for communication between diverse cultures and people from different backgrounds". [1]

## FACTORS INFLUENCING TRANSLATION:

Though one cannot face fairly the problems of translation without reckoning with the many and often striking differences between any two cultures involved, it would be quite wrong to exaggerate the diversity. Without cultural similarities and universals there is no way for people of different cultures to communicate with each other and translation would be impossible. However, there are no absolute cultural universals or cultural similarities. Generally speaking, for two sentences from

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<sup>1</sup> Baker, M. "Linguistic perspectives on translation", In: France, P. (ed.), The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 20-25. 2000.

different languages to be translationally equivalent they must convey the same referential, pragmatic and intralingual meanings. However, due to differences between two cultures semantic equivalence are limited to some degree. For those cultural-specific terms and expressions, we cannot find their referents in the target culture.<sup>2</sup>

1. Linguistic ambiguities. Languages often contain nuances and ambiguities that may not have direct equivalents in other languages. For example, in Uzbek language there are words like “ibo, hayo “, which are characteristics mainly used for girls. They can be translated as “shyness, shame or modesty “, but don’t exactly represent this meaning, because they are the words originated from Uzbek culture, religion and translations.
2. Cultural nuances. Cultural differences can pose challenges in accurately conveying the intended meaning from one language to another. Suky Gu, specialist of professional translation and localization, comes up with an example to support the idea that culture can affect the transmission of information. “In Chinese culture red represents auspiciousness and joy, while in Western culture red is usually associated with danger and warning. If this cultural difference isn’t taken into account, it may lead to misunderstandings “, she explains. [2]
3. Contextual challenges. The context in which words are used can significantly impact their meaning. This is best illustrated through idioms, proverbs or poems in which words don’t actually mean what they say. For example “Fire, set the Thames on “. If we translate it literally like this, it is very difficult for Uzbeks to understand. [3] Instead, we can interpret it using a substitute Uzbek proverb “Qalovini topsang qor yonar” with the same meaning not to lose its characteristic – concise words and precise structure.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Translators should use different strategies to enhance the accuracy of translations and reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings. This may include doing research on cultural nuances , using context-aware translation tools or acquiring the skill of coming up with better alternatives for particular words. It is important not to lose the richness and originality of one language while translating it into another.

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