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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**PROPER NAMES AS LINGUOCULTURAL REALIA: TRANSLATION STRATEGIES
IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LITERARY TEXTS****Mushtariy Akhmedova**

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ABOUT ARTICLE

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Abstract: This paper examines proper names as a specific type of linguocultural realia in translation between English and Uzbek literary texts. Proper names often carry cultural, historical, and social meanings that go beyond simple identification, making their translation particularly challenging. The study aims to analyze how different translation strategies are applied to render proper names and how these strategies affect the transfer of cultural meaning. A qualitative comparative approach is used, based on selected literary examples. The findings show that transliteration, adaptation, and descriptive rendering are the most common strategies. While transliteration preserves form, it may obscure meaning, whereas adaptation and explanation improve understanding but can alter cultural nuances.

Introduction. Proper names have traditionally been treated as neutral referential units whose primary function is to identify individuals, places, or institutions. However, contemporary research in translation studies and linguoculturology increasingly recognizes that proper names in literary texts often function as linguocultural realia, carrying culturally embedded meanings that extend beyond simple reference. These meanings may include social status, historical associations, ideological connotations, and symbolic functions that contribute to characterisation and narrative structure (Munday, 2016; Baker, 2018).

In literary discourse, proper names frequently encode implicit cultural information that is readily accessible to source-language readers but may remain opaque to target-language audiences. For example, personal names, titles, and place names can signal class affiliation, regional identity, or cultural stereotypes. As a result, their translation is not a purely technical operation but a complex interpretive process requiring the negotiation of linguistic form and cultural meaning. This aligns with the broader view of translation as intercultural mediation, in which the translator must bridge differences between cultural systems while maintaining textual coherence (Katan & Taibi, 2021).

The challenge of translating proper names lies in the absence of a single universally accepted strategy. Unlike common lexical items, proper names may be transferred unchanged, transliterated, adapted, or supplemented with explanatory elements depending on the communicative context. Each of these strategies has different implications for meaning transfer. Transliteration, for instance, preserves phonetic form but may obscure semantic or cultural associations, whereas adaptation and descriptive rendering enhance comprehensibility but can alter stylistic or cultural nuances (Pym, 2018).

Recent developments in translation studies emphasize that such decisions should be evaluated not only in terms of equivalence but also in relation to function and reader interpretation. House (2015) argues that translation quality depends on achieving functional adequacy within the target context, while Munday (2016) highlights the importance of considering discourse-level effects, including characterization and narrative voice. In this regard, proper names play a significant role, as they contribute to the construction of fictional worlds and the representation of cultural identity.

Despite growing interest in linguocultural realia, most studies have focused on broader categories such as food, traditions, or institutions, while the specific case of proper names has received comparatively less systematic attention, particularly in the English–Uzbek context. Existing research often treats proper names as secondary elements or addresses them within general discussions of translation strategies without detailed analysis. This creates a gap in understanding how proper names function as carriers of cultural meaning and how their translation affects interpretation.

The present study seeks to address this gap by examining proper names as a distinct category of linguocultural realia in English and Uzbek literary texts. The research aims to identify the main strategies used in their translation and to analyze how these strategies influence the transfer of cultural meaning. By focusing on a narrowly defined yet culturally

significant group of elements, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of translation as a process that involves both linguistic transformation and cultural interpretation.

Methodology. This study adopts a qualitative comparative research design to examine the translation of proper names as linguocultural realia in English and Uzbek literary texts. The qualitative approach is appropriate because the analysis focuses on culturally embedded meanings, contextual functions, and translation choices rather than on quantitative measurement. The study is grounded in a functional and cultural approach to translation, which views proper names not merely as referential labels but as elements carrying social, historical, and symbolic significance (Baker, 2018; Munday, 2016).

The data for the study consist of selected examples of proper names extracted from English and Uzbek literary works and their corresponding translations. The selection was based on specific criteria: (1) the presence of proper names with potential cultural or semantic significance, (2) their relevance to characterization, social identity, or narrative context, and (3) their occurrence in translated texts available in both languages. The dataset includes different categories of proper names, such as personal names, titles, place names, and culturally marked naming forms, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis.

The analytical procedure involves several stages. First, proper names are identified in the source texts and classified according to their type and function within the narrative. Second, their semantic and cultural features are examined, with particular attention to any implicit meanings, connotations, or social markers they may carry. Third, the corresponding translations are analyzed to determine which translation strategies have been applied. These strategies include transliteration, adaptation, descriptive rendering, omission, and mixed approaches. Finally, the impact of each strategy is evaluated in terms of how effectively it preserves the original cultural meaning and narrative function.

The analysis is carried out through close textual comparison, enabling the identification of recurring patterns in translation choices. Rather than focusing on isolated examples, the study seeks to reveal systematic tendencies in how proper names are handled across the two languages. Interpretive analysis is used to assess the implications of these strategies, particularly in relation to cultural representation and reader understanding.

To ensure consistency, all examples are analyzed using the same criteria, including the type of proper name, its function in the source text, the strategy applied in translation, and the resulting shift or preservation of meaning. While the study is limited by its focus on selected literary texts and does not include a large corpus, the chosen examples provide sufficient depth

to illustrate key patterns and support meaningful conclusions about the translation of proper names as linguocultural realia.

Results and Discussion. The analysis demonstrates that the translation of proper names between English and Uzbek follows consistent and functionally motivated patterns. In literary texts, proper names act not only as referential labels but also as linguocultural markers that encode historical, geographical, and social meaning. The findings reveal that translators employ several recurring strategies, including transliteration, adaptation, descriptive rendering, omission, and mixed approaches. Each of these strategies affects the degree to which cultural meaning is preserved.

One of the most dominant patterns is transliteration, particularly in the translation of personal and place names.

Example 1: Oliver Twist → Oliver Tvist

This strategy preserves the phonetic and formal structure of the original name, maintaining its foreign identity. However, transliteration does not convey any additional semantic or cultural meaning that may be associated with the name. Therefore, while formal equivalence is achieved, interpretive depth remains limited for the target reader.

A similar pattern can be observed in the translation of geographical proper names.

Example 2: Qo‘qon → Kokand

Here, the name is adapted to the phonological and orthographic norms of English while preserving its referential identity. This type of transliteration ensures recognizability across languages but does not provide any cultural or historical context associated with the place. As a result, the translation remains accurate but culturally neutral.

Another important pattern involves the adaptation of titles and forms of address, which are often adjusted to match target-language conventions.

Example 3: Mr. Darcy → Janob Darsi

In this case, the addition of *janob* introduces a culturally appropriate marker of respect in Uzbek. This strategy allows the translator to convey social hierarchy and politeness, which are significant elements in both cultures. However, such adaptation may slightly alter the stylistic nuance of the original, particularly in contexts where English titles carry specific historical connotations.

The analysis also reveals the use of descriptive rendering, especially when proper names include semantically meaningful elements.

Example 4: Little Dorrit → Kichkina Dorrit

The adjective Little is translated to preserve its descriptive and characterizing function. This strategy successfully maintains both referential and semantic aspects of the name, demonstrating that proper names with transparent meaning allow for more effective transfer of cultural information.

A more complex pattern is observed in mixed strategies, where transliteration is combined with partial translation or explanation.

Example 5: Bibixonim masjidi → Bibi-Khanym Mosque

In this example, the name Bibixonim is transliterated as Bibi-Khanym, while the common noun masjidi is translated as mosque. This hybrid approach allows the translator to preserve the cultural identity of the name while ensuring clarity for the target audience. Such strategies are particularly effective in maintaining both recognizability and comprehensibility.

Another mixed strategy can be seen in cases where explanatory elements are added.

Example 6: Ebenezer Scrooge → Ebenezer Skruj (xasis qahramon)

Here, transliteration is combined with a descriptive explanation that conveys the character's defining trait. This approach helps compensate for the lack of cultural familiarity and enhances reader understanding, although it introduces interpretive intervention by the translator.

Discussion of Findings. The results indicate that the choice of strategy in translating proper names is largely determined by the function of the name within the text. Names that primarily serve an identificatory function tend to be transliterated, while those with descriptive or symbolic meaning are more likely to be adapted or explained.

Transliteration emerges as the most stable and widely used strategy, as it preserves the formal integrity of proper names. However, it often fails to communicate cultural or semantic nuances. In contrast, adaptation and descriptive rendering improve accessibility and interpretability but may lead to partial transformation of meaning.

Mixed strategies appear to be the most effective in balancing these competing demands, as they combine preservation of form with clarification of meaning. This suggests that the translation of proper names requires flexible and context-sensitive approaches rather than rigid adherence to a single method.

Overall, the findings confirm that proper names function as linguocultural realia and require careful translation decisions. Their treatment reflects broader challenges in translation, where the need to maintain cultural specificity must be balanced with the goal of ensuring reader comprehension.

Conclusion. This study has examined proper names as a specific type of linguocultural realia in English–Uzbek literary translation, demonstrating that they function not only as identifiers but also as carriers of cultural, historical, and social meaning. The analysis shows that translators rely on a range of strategies, including transliteration, adaptation, descriptive rendering, and mixed approaches, each of which has different implications for meaning transfer.

The findings indicate that transliteration is the most commonly used strategy due to its ability to preserve the formal structure of proper names. However, it often fails to convey deeper cultural or semantic associations. In contrast, adaptation and descriptive translation improve accessibility and comprehension but may lead to partial transformation of meaning. Mixed strategies, combining preservation and explanation, appear to be the most effective in maintaining both clarity and cultural identity.

Overall, the study highlights that translating proper names requires context-sensitive decision-making. Proper names should be treated as meaningful linguistic units rather than neutral labels. The results contribute to a more nuanced understanding of translation practices and emphasize the importance of balancing form, meaning, and cultural function in literary translation.

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