



PAPER

## LEXICAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE TRANSLATION OF UZBEK LINGUOCULTURAL UNITS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ENGLISH VERSIONS OF “O‘TKAN KUNLAR”

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### Abstract

This study investigates the role of lexical transformations in the translation of Uzbek linguocultural units from Abdulla Qodiriy’s “O‘tkan kunlar” (2018) into English. Three English translation versions by Carol Ermakova (2018), Mark Edward Reese (2018), and I.M.Tukhtasinov (2017) were analyzed to determine how transliteration, calque, concretization, generalization, modulation, and compensation were applied. Results indicate that lexical transformations are critical for maintaining semantic, stylistic, and cultural equivalence. Each translator adopted a distinct strategy: Carol Ermakova emphasized cultural authenticity, Mark Edward Reese focused on functional equivalence, and I.M.Tukhtasinov employed generalization to enhance comprehensibility. The study demonstrates that effective translation of linguocultural units requires both linguistic proficiency and intercultural competence, highlighting the translator’s role as a mediator between languages and cultures.

**Key words:** lexical transformation, linguocultural units, translation, Uzbek literature, “O‘tkan kunlar”

### Introduction

Translation is a complex linguistic and cultural activity that involves transferring meaning from a source language (SL) into a target language (TL). According to Munday (2008), translation

encompasses three dimensions: the field of study, the process of translating, and the translated product. The translator’s role extends beyond linguistic conversion, requiring careful attention to cultural and contextual factors.

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Linguocultural units – words, expressions, or phrases that carry culturally specific meanings – pose a particular challenge in translation. In the Uzbek literary canon, Abdulla Qodiriy’s “O‘tkan kunlar” (2018) represents a rich repository of such units, reflecting national customs, historical concepts, and idiomatic expressions. This study investigates how three English translation versions of “O‘tkan kunlar” apply lexical transformations to convey linguocultural meaning, contributing to the broader field of translation studies and intercultural communication.

Based on the classifications of lexical transformations proposed by leading linguists as L.S.Barhudarov (1975), Y.I.Retsker (2007), V.N.Komissarov (1990), Z.G.Proshina (2008), E.S.Aznaurova (1989), the following types of lexical transformation were selected as the object of this study: the method of transliteration, calque (loan translation), concretization, generalization, modulation, and compensation. During translation, it often becomes necessary to move beyond linguistic equivalence to convey the cultural context, national heritage, and conceptual worldview inherent in linguocultural units. Lexical transformations, in this regard, serve as essential tools that ensure semantic adequacy while helping translators preserve the stylistic and cultural nuances of the source text.

This article explores the classification and application of lexical transformations in translation studies, drawing on the theoretical frameworks proposed by the above given linguists that six primary methods are examined as core strategies for achieving semantic and cultural adequacy in translation. The study highlights the relevance of these methods in preserving meaning, stylistic nuance, and cultural context between source and target languages.

## Method

The study adopted a qualitative and quantitative comparative approach. As a result of the comparative study of the English translations of the linguocultural units used in “O‘tkan kunlar” (2018), a masterpiece of Uzbek culture, it was revealed that lexical transformations play a crucial role in the translation of linguocultural elements. The analysis was conducted based on three English

translations of “O‘tkan kunlar” carried out by Carol Ermakova (2018), Mark Edward Reese (2018), and I.M.Tukhtasinov (2017). The study examined which lexical transformation methods were applied in the translation of linguocultural units.

The study analyzed the source text to identify linguocultural units, then compared their rendered forms in the three English translations. Quantitative data were collected to determine the frequency of each lexical transformation type across the translations.

## Results

The comparative analysis revealed that lexical transformations are central to the translation of linguocultural units. Table 1 summarizes the frequency of each transformation type across the three translations (based on the examples of linguoculturemes which are found during the research):

Table 1  
Number of Linguocultural Units Translated Using Lexical Transformations

Lexical Transformation	Carol Ermakova	Mark Edward Reese	I.M.Tukhtasinov
Transliteration	85	80	66
Calque (Loan Translation)	17	27	15
Concretization	22	20	18
Generalization	15	12	17
Modulation	64	62	62
Compensation	17	20	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>196</b>

Transliteration was the most commonly applied method, particularly in Ermakova’s translation, reflecting an emphasis on cultural fidelity. Reese favored calque and compensation, highlighting functional equivalence and dynamic adaptation. Tukhtasinov employed generalization more frequently, prioritizing comprehensibility for English readers.

## Discussion

The findings demonstrate that lexical transformations play a vital role in achieving adequate and culturally appropriate translation of linguocultural units.

Transliteration – This method was the most frequently used by all translators. Carol Ermakova employed it in 85 cases, showing her preference for maintaining fidelity to the original. Reese used it 80 times, while Tukhtasinov applied it 66 times.

Calque (Loan Translation) – Reese relied on this technique the most (27 instances), compared to Ermakova (17) and Tukhtasinov (15).

Concretization – Ermakova led in this category (22 examples), striving to provide clearer and more specific renderings of general cultural concepts.

Generalization – Tukhtasinov most frequently employed generalization (17 examples), indicating a tendency to simplify culture-specific meanings for broader understanding.

Modulation – All three translators made extensive use of modulation (62–64 examples each), confirming that this is a universal strategy for maintaining adequacy and bridging intercultural differences.

Compensation – Reese used compensation slightly more often (20 cases), indicating his effort to restore lost stylistic or cultural nuances through contextual means.

The findings confirm that lexical transformations facilitate both linguistic and cultural equivalence. Transliteration preserves the national identity of terms, while calque, concretization, and modulation provide semantic and stylistic adaptation. Compensation helps recover lost nuances, and generalization simplifies culturally specific concepts for the target audience.

Ermakova's frequent use of transliteration aligns with Barhudarov's (1975) notion of form-bound meaning, ensuring cultural authenticity. Reese's strategy reflects Komissarov's (1990) emphasis on dynamic equivalence, balancing accessibility and cultural fidelity. Tukhtasinov's generalization demonstrates Aznaurova's (1989) principle of prioritizing comprehensibility in cross-cultural translation.

Overall, lexical transformations mediate meaning between languages, allowing translators to act as cultural intermediaries. Modulation's consistent use across all translations indicates its universality in maintaining naturalness and stylistic fluency (Komissarov, 1990).

These results reveal that each translator adopted a distinct translation strategy: Ermakova emphasized

fidelity to the source text, Reese prioritized cultural and semantic precision, and Tukhtasinov favored generalization. Such diversity in strategies provides deeper insight into issues of equivalence and intercultural adaptation in translation.

The study shows that the translation of linguocultural units from Uzbek into English is a complex process requiring a balance between linguistic accuracy and cultural appropriateness. The comparative data confirm that lexical transformations are indispensable in reproducing the cultural and stylistic depth of the source text.

In this context, the linguocultural approach plays a dual role: it ensures semantic correspondence, and maintains cultural connotation in the target language.

The results highlight that effective translation of linguocultural units depends not only on linguistic proficiency but also on the translator's intercultural competence. Errors in conveying such elements may lead to cultural misinterpretations or the loss of national identity in translation.

Therefore, the research concludes that lexical transformations serve as a foundation for the linguocultural study of translation. The comparison of original and translated linguocultural units demonstrates that the primary goal of translation is not merely to reproduce meaning but to convey cultural connotations as faithfully as possible.

## Conclusion

In summary, the study analyzed the use of lexical transformation methods in translating linguocultural units from Uzbek into English within "O'tkan kunlar". The research identified, classified, and compared translation strategies applied by three translators. The findings demonstrate that transliteration and modulation are the most dominant methods, reflecting a combined effort to preserve both linguistic form and cultural essence.

Ultimately, the research underscores the importance of selecting appropriate translation strategies to ensure adequacy, cultural equivalence, and reader comprehension. Linguocultural analysis, therefore, proves essential in bridging languages and cultures, making the translation not only a linguistic act but also an act of cultural mediation.

The translation of linguoculturemes is inherently linked to the application of lexical transformations,

as these strategies enable the translator to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps and to convey culture-bound meanings accurately in the target language. So there is a close interrelation between lexical transformations and the translation of linguoculturemes, as the use of appropriate transformation techniques often ensures the accurate conveyance of culture-specific meanings from the source language into the target language.

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