



Functional And Semantic Aspects Of National Realia In Translation

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the functional and semantic dimensions of national realia within the framework of translation studies. National realia are culturally marked linguistic elements that embody not only referential meaning but also historical, cultural, and pragmatic implications specific to a given society. The research examines how such elements operate in literary discourse and how their semantic and functional properties are conveyed in the target language. Particular emphasis is placed on translation techniques that aim to maintain functional-semantic correspondence. The study concludes that the effective translation of national realia relies heavily on the translator's intercultural awareness and ability to preserve communicative impact while ensuring textual clarity.

KEYWORDS: National realia, literary translation, functional-semantic analysis, cultural meaning, equivalence, translation techniques.

INTRODUCTION

Translation is a complex intercultural activity rather than a simple linguistic transfer between languages. It serves as a medium through which cultural values, social norms, and national identity are communicated across linguistic boundaries. One of the most challenging aspects of this process is the translation of national realia—culture-specific expressions that reflect the distinctive traditions, historical background, and worldview of a particular nation.

In literary texts, national realia play a crucial role in creating authenticity and cultural depth. If these elements are inadequately rendered, the translated text may lose its cultural resonance and functional effectiveness. For this reason, investigating the functional and semantic characteristics of national realia is essential for improving translation practices. This thesis aims to analyze the semantic complexity and functional significance of national realia and to identify effective strategies for their translation.

Semantic Characteristics of National Realia

From a semantic perspective, national realia differ significantly from neutral lexical items due to their multilayered meaning. In addition to denotative reference, they contain cultural, emotional, and associative meanings formed through a nation's historical experience and social development.

During translation, this semantic richness presents considerable difficulties. Many national realia denote concepts that lack direct equivalents in the target culture. Consequently, translators must interpret both the explicit meaning and the implicit cultural content of such



units. Neglecting this dual nature often results in semantic reduction or misrepresentation of the original message.

Functional Significance of National Realia in Literary Discourse

National realia perform several interconnected functions within literary texts. First, they fulfill a cultural-identification function by anchoring the narrative within a specific national context. Through these elements, readers gain insight into the cultural environment depicted in the text.

Second, national realia serve an informative function, introducing culture-bound concepts to readers unfamiliar with the source culture. In translated works, this function becomes particularly important, as it facilitates cross-cultural understanding.

Finally, national realia contribute to the stylistic and expressive quality of a text. They enhance imagery, deepen characterization, and support thematic development. Preserving these functions in translation is essential to maintaining the artistic and communicative value of the original work.

Functional-Semantic Challenges in Translation

One of the primary challenges in translating national realia lies in retaining both semantic content and functional effect. Literal translation often fails to transmit cultural associations, whereas excessive adaptation can diminish national specificity. Translators must therefore strike a balance between semantic precision and functional relevance.

Additionally, differences in cultural perception between source and target audiences may alter the impact of national realia. Elements that carry strong symbolic or emotional significance in the source culture may appear unfamiliar or insignificant in the target context. In such cases, translators may resort to compensatory techniques, such as contextual clarification or explanatory additions.

Translation Strategies and Functional-Semantic Correspondence

Various strategies are employed to address these challenges. Transcription and transliteration help retain the original form and cultural flavor of national realia, though they often require supplementary explanation. Descriptive translation enables clearer semantic transmission but may reduce stylistic economy.

Functional substitution involves replacing a source-culture element with a target-culture concept that performs a similar communicative role. While this approach enhances reader comprehension, it may partially weaken national coloration. As a result, translators frequently combine multiple strategies to achieve functional-semantic correspondence, prioritizing the preservation of communicative effect over formal equivalence.

Conclusion

In summary, national realia constitute linguistically and culturally complex units that play a vital functional-semantic role in literary texts. Their translation demands not only linguistic

proficiency but also cultural sensitivity and analytical judgment. Functional-semantic analysis provides a valuable framework for understanding the role of national realia and selecting appropriate translation strategies.

The findings of this study indicate that although complete equivalence is rarely achievable, a carefully balanced functional-semantic approach allows translators to convey the cultural significance and communicative purpose of national realia. Consequently, translation emerges as an effective instrument of intercultural communication and literary exchange.

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