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REPRESENTATION OF OCCUPATION-RELATED LEXICON FROM THE EPIC *ALPOMISH* IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

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ABSTRACT

This study classifies occupation-related lacunae in the epic Alpomish – including socio-political titles, ceremonial institutions, and hierarchical roles – from a semantic-pragmatic perspective, and analyzes translation gaps in the English rendition through the lens of translation strategies. The types of lacuna representation in translation are identified, and annotated transliteration alongside functional equivalents are examined. The findings serve as a theoretical and practical guide for ensuring linguocultural adequacy in the English translation of the epic.

KEYWORDS: *Occupation, Lacuna, Linguoculturology, Translation Strategies, Semantic Shift, Transliteration, Epic Text.*

INTRODUCTION

The epic *Alpomish* stands as one of the most significant examples of Turkic epic thought, giving vivid artistic expression to heroism, tribal structure, ceremonial practice, and social relations. Conveying the text of this epic to speakers of another language presents not merely a problem of lexical adaptation, but also the challenge of transmitting cultural codes. Certain units present in the text – titles, ceremonial elements, social roles, occupational designations, and values – have no complete equivalents in other languages and cultures. As a result, they may be omitted, generalized, misinterpreted, or undergo functional and semantic alterations in translation. This phenomenon is referred to in translation studies as a "lacuna" (Sorokin and Markovina, 1989).

The primary aim of this article is to identify and analyze all lacunar units related to occupations in the epic *Alpomish.* The term "occupation" encompasses: pastoral professions (*cho'pon, yilqichi, tuyachi, savdogar*), socio-political titles (*biy, vazir, arbob, oqsoqol*), service hierarchies (*kaniz, choyrakor, mahram*), and religious-spiritual roles (*pir, murid*). The article provides a detailed analysis of occupation-related lacunar units in Alpomish based on translation strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theory of lacunae in translation studies was established on the basis of the works of Sorokin and Markovina (1989). Vlahov and Florin (1980) expanded this theory through the concept of realia. Newmark (1988) proposed eight methods for rendering cultural words in translation, designating them "cultural words", and recommended a combination of transliteration and functional equivalence.

Nida (1964) identified the tension between "formal" and "dynamic" equivalence, anticipating the risk that national color diminishes under dynamic equivalence. Baker (2018) critiques the tendency to render culturally specific words through superordinate concepts, emphasizing the loss of pragmatic nuance. Chesterman (2016) systematically classifies translation strategies and demonstrates how lost components can be compensated through "explicitness change".

The present study adopts the strategy classifications of Newmark (1988) and Chesterman (2016) as its theoretical foundation, analyzing the following principal strategies – transliteration, descriptive translation, functional equivalence or analogy, calquing, and omission – through examples drawn from English version of the epic *Alpomish*.

METHODOLOGY

The methods employed in this study were selected and systematically applied with the aim of identifying occupation-related lacunae in the text of *Alpomish*, revealing their linguocultural characteristics, and analyzing the strategies used to represent them in the English translation.

First, a comparative-analytical method was applied to examine the original Uzbek text of *Alpomish* alongside its English translation variants. Through this method, the semantic structure of nationally and culturally specific units related to occupations was studied, along with the extent to which these units are preserved or transformed in translation. In particular, it was analyzed whether direct English equivalents exist for occupational designations associated with pastoralism, craftsmanship, military life, and court life, and lacunae were identified accordingly. The resulting semantic shifts and content losses in translation were then explained on a scholarly basis.

Secondly, a contextual analysis method was applied to examine the functional-pragmatic load of each occupation-related unit within the epic text. This method served not only to clarify the nominative meaning of these units but also to identify their functions in the epic: image construction, indication of social status, and expression of national mentality. On this basis, the degree to which this pragmatic function is reflected in translation, and the means through which it is conveyed, were assessed.

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Furthermore, a typological classification method was used to systematize the identified lacunae and the translation strategies employed to resolve them. Strategies such as description (descriptive translation), adaptation, generalization, transcription, and transliteration were grouped separately, and their frequency of use and effectiveness were analyzed. This enabled the identification of the most appropriate strategies for translating occupation-related lacunae and the development of their theoretical foundations.

The combined and coordinated application of these methods served to illuminate occupation-related lacunae in the material of *Alpomish* from all perspectives, to reveal their linguocultural essence, and to conduct an in-depth analysis of the problems of adequate representation in translation.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Transliteration consists of reproducing a source-language unit in the target language's script based on the phonetic form of the word. Newmark (1988) recommends this strategy as a primary option for "cultural words", while emphasizing that it must always be accompanied by explanatory notes. In the following example, the translator has employed transliteration to preserve national color:

Source text: "*Biylar* ham to'yga keldi". (Alpomish, 1998, p. 27)

Translation: "There came *biys* too". (Ma'murov K., Alpomish, 2023, p. 26)

Biy is a socio-political title denoting a person of authority at the tribal or clan level, a figure who participates in governance and negotiations. The translator has transliterated biylar as *biys*. At first glance, the cultural unit appears to be preserved; however, because no explanatory note is provided, English readers may fail to comprehend the socio-political status of a biy. The significance of the wedding ceremony as an important event attended by community leaders is also absent from the translation – giving rise to what may be termed a "lacuna of transliteration without annotation.

There are several instances in the translated text where the transliteration strategy has been employed. The word *pir* denotes a master and spiritual guide on the Sufi path. Transliteration is likewise employed in translation as *pir* . However, the addition of *godly* does not fully convey the unit's spiritually hierarchical status.

Source text: "Otangning *pir*lari bo'lsin madadkor!" (Alpomish, 1998, p. 364)

Translation: "May your fathers *pir*s be your support godly!" (Ma'murov K., Alpomish, 2023, p. 314)

A pir is not merely "religious" – he is a spiritual guide who stands in a specific hierarchical relationship with a murid (disciple).

Transliteration has been applied to units such as *biy* and *pir*, yet in both cases no explanation has been provided. The optimal solution would be a minimally annotated variant such as *biys* (tribal judges/elders) or *pir* (Sufi is a spiritual master). Such a combination ensures both cultural color and comprehensibility (Newmark, 1988).

Another common technique in dealing with lexical lacunae is descriptive translation which involves inclusion of a gloss to the target language. Descriptive translation can be particularly efficient provided that the gloss is succinct and does not overload the target text with excessive details. (Alymova E. 2022,p.239) Descriptive translation involves expressing the meaning, function, or context of a source-language unit in the target language through description – employing an expression that explains "what the unit is" rather than naming it. (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995) This strategy has not been fully applied in the existing translation; the following discussion compares recommended variants with those used. *Choyrakor* is an agrarian social role:

Source text: "*Choyrakorlar* chiqmoqchin bo'p turadi". (Alpomish, 1998, p. 34)

Translation: "The *hired man* was about to leave". (Ma'murov K., Alpomish, 2023, p. 31)

Choyrakor refers to a person who works on a lease basis, receiving one-quarter of the harvest – this is not merely a hired hand, but a participant in a specific agrarian contractual system. The translation employs *hired man*, meaning a simple analogue is used in place of a descriptive translation. A descriptive rendering such as sharecroppers working for a quarter of the harvest or tenant laborers would be more precise. Additionally, the shift from the plural as choyrakorlar to the singular *hired man* disrupts the dynamics of collective action.

In the epic *Alpomish*, there is also an occupation-related lexical unit referring to a close associate and advisor of the biy. *Mahram* denotes a trusted attendant or close confidant within the inner circle of the court or household. A descriptive translation such as "his fourteen trusted inner-circle attendants" or "his close personal aides" would be more accurate. The omission of the number "fourteen" also constitutes a significant loss – this figure may carry meaning within the ritual-hierarchical structure of the epic. *Mahram* as court hierarchy.

Source text: "...deb o'n to'rt *mahram*ni buyurdi". (Alpomish, 1998, p. 31)

Translation: "He called his *officials*". (Ma'murov K., Alpomish, 2023, p. 19)

Descriptive translation is effective for pastoral and agrarian occupations; however, for social titles and ceremonial institutions, description alone is insufficient – a combination with transliteration is necessary to preserve cultural color. A hybrid solution such as *choyrakor* (sharecropper) represents the optimal approach. A functional equivalent does not render the precise meaning of a source unit, but rather its social or ceremonial function through the closest available unit in the target language (Nida, 1964). This strategy has been applied in certain instances in the existing translation, but in many cases inappropriate functional equivalents have been selected.

In the epic text, *vazir* also carries the meaning of counselor, trusted confidant, partner in important decisions. The word *minister* evokes a government official in the mind of an English reader. The metaphorical question in context – whether a wife is her husband's most important counselor – shifts into a formal office model. The correct functional equivalent would be *closest advisor* or *trusted confidant.*

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Source text: “Xotin bo‘lmasmikan erning *vaziri*?” (Alpomish, 1998, p. 27).
Translation: “Won’t a wife be a minister of *husband*?” (Ma’murov K., Alpomish, 2023, p. 26)

Kaniz refers to a woman in a condition of social subordination and servitude. *Maiden servants* contains the elements *maiden* (young girl) and *servants*, but the status of bondage or social subservience is lost. This is a partial functional equivalent: the service function is retained, but social standing is forfeited. A more complete equivalent, such as *bondswomen* or *slave-girls*, would have preserved the historical connotation.
Source text: “Necha *kaniz* qizlarni o‘ziga hamroh qilib”. (Alpomish, 1998, p. 29)
Translation: “She had several *maiden servants* to accompany her”. (Ma’murov K., Alpomish, 2023, p. 28)

Murid – functional narrowing. Murid derives from the Arabic “irada” (will) and denotes a person who has entered the Sufi path and pledged allegiance to a pir or murshid (Knysh, 2000). *Apprentic*e calls to mind a learner of a trade. While a functional similarity exists (the master-disciple model), the component of a murid as “one who follows a spiritual and ethical path” is lost. A more accurate rendering would be “spiritual disciple” or “murid (Sufi initiate)”.
Source text: “*Xo‘ja* kelsa chiqar *murid* naziri”. (Alpomish, 1998, p. 27)
Translation: “When *Khuja* comes the *apprentices* will be out”. (Ma’murov K., Alpomish, 2023, p. 26)

The functional equivalence strategy has been partially applied in cases such as *kaniz* to *servants* and murid to *apprentice*, yet full equivalence has not been achieved in any instance. As Chesterman (2016) recommends, explicitness change – compensating for the lost component through annotation or expanded expression – is required.

In the analogy or cultural adaptation strategy, a source-culture unit is replaced by a similar institution or role in the target culture. (Newmark, 1988: “cultural equivalent”) This strategy is the most frequently employed in the Alpomish translation, yet in many cases an incorrect analogue has been selected.
Source text: “...deb o‘n to‘rt *mahram*ni buyurdi”. (Alpomish, 1998, p. 31)
Translation: “He called his *officials*...” (Ma’murov K., Alpomish, 2023, p. 19).

Mahram refers to trusted individuals within the inner circle of the court or household protocol. *Officials*, by contrast, evokes state or organizational functionaries. A functional mismatch exists between these two cultural institutions: the text shifts from a social-domestic inner structure to an “institutionalized administration” model. Rather than the “explicitness change” described by Chesterman (2016), what occurs here is “distortion” – a semantic misrepresentation:
Source text: “Bu so‘zni o‘ylab, *oqsoqol, arboblar* qaytib keldi”. (Alpomish, 1998, p. 33)
Translation: “There came all *farmers and laborers*”. (Ma’murov K., Alpomish, 2023, p. 32)

Oqsoqol and *arbob* denote respected leaders and administrators of a neighborhood, village, or tribe. “Farmers and laborers”, on the other hand, represent an entirely different social stratum – ordinary peasants and workers. The translation leaps from community leaders to common laborers. This constitutes a “hierarchical inversion”: whereas the text describes the most authoritative social stratum, the translation presents the lowest. The correct analogue would be “village elders and community leaders”. There are some occupation words that are connected with trading. *Savdogar* is translated as *ruler, governor* there semantic distortion happned in translation.
Source text: “Daxmarda, *savdogar* molini haydar”. (Alpomish, 1998, p. 31)
Translation: “Each who was going was *a ruler, a governor*”. (Ma’murov K., Alpomish, 2023, p. 30)

This is a serious semantic distortion in the translation. The source text depicts *herdsman* and *merchant* activity. In the translation, this is replaced entirely by *ruler, a governor*. The text jumps from a socio-economic context to one of political power. This represents an extreme form of what Newmark (1988) calls “cultural substitution” – there is no functional connection whatsoever between the institutions of the source and target cultures.

Murid – apprentice can be partially correct analogue. There is a partial similarity between *apprentice* and *murid* in terms of the master-disciple model. However, *apprentice* in English culture denotes a learner of a trade, whereas *murid* is a spiritual follower positioned within a religious-spiritual hierarchy. This is a partially correct analogue: functional similarity exists, but the connotational difference is substantial.

The functional equivalence, i.e., the analogy strategy is the most frequently employed in the existing translation, yet in most cases an incorrect analogue has been selected. In instances such as *mahram – officials* and *arbob – laborers*, this strategy has distorted rather than preserved cultural color. Before selecting an analogue, the functional correspondence between the source and target institutions must be verified.

Calquing involves creating a new unit in the target language by literally translating the component parts of a source-language word or phrase (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995). Calquing is not directly employed in the existing translation, but it is potentially the most effective strategy in the domain of pastoral occupations. The pastoral occupations found in the epic text – *yilqichi* (horse-herder), *tuyachi* (camel-herder), *cho‘pon* (shepherd) – can all be conveyed in English through calquing. For *cho‘pon*, a ready English equivalent, *shepherd*, already exists, which is a superior solution to calquing. For *tuyachi*, the calque variant *camel-driver* is logical. For *yilqichi*, *horseman* is too broad – “horse-herder” would be more precise.

The word *oqsoqol* could be rendered through calquing as *white-beard* or *white-elder*, but this would appear strange to an English reader and lead to cultural inappropriateness. *Biy*, meanwhile, cannot be calqued at all – it is an indivisible unit with no component parts to translate. The calque strategy is effective for pastoral occupations but has limited applicability for socio-political titles and spiritual roles. Its use in the existing

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translation is very sparse – ready English equivalents such as *shepherd* and *camel-driver* are primarily employed instead.

Omission refers to the complete exclusion of a source-language unit or piece of information from the target-language translation. Baker (2018) describes this as "the most radical translation decision". Complete omissions are rare in the Alpomish translation; however, partial omissions – the loss of numerical, stylistic, and connotational components – are frequently observed:
Source text: "...deb *o'n to'rt* mahramni buyurdi." (Alpomish, 1998, p. 31)
Translation: "He called his officials..." (Ma'murov K., Alpomish, 2023, p. 19)

The number "fourteen" has been entirely dropped from the translation. This figure may carry significance within the ritual and hierarchical structure of the epic (Morrow, 2009). Furthermore, the name mahram has also disappeared, leaving only "officials" – a two-level omission.
From plural to singular — loss of collective action:
Source text: "*Choyrakorlar* chiqmoqchin bo'p turadi." (Alpomish, 1998, p. 34)
Translation: "The *hired man* was about to leave." (Ma'murov K., Alpomish, 2023, p. 31)

The plural form choyrakorlar has been converted to the singular "the hired man." This is a numerical omission that replaces an image of collective action with one of individual action. The expression of collective movement in epic texts is significant for narrative dynamics. The omission strategy is the most damaging of all strategies for linguocultural adequacy. In the Alpomish translation, this strategy is observed primarily in the domain of numerical and plural components. All numerical information (fourteen mahrams) and plural-singular distinctions should be preserved.

The analysis above demonstrates that no single strategy in isolation can guarantee the complete preservation of cultural connotations. This is also manifested in the tension Nida (1964) identifies between "formal" and "dynamic" equivalence: dynamic equivalence diminishes national color, while formal equivalence increases the reader's comprehension difficulties.

The optimal solution is a combinatorial strategy: "transliteration + minimal annotation." This approach simultaneously ensures cultural color (through transliteration) and comprehensibility (through annotation). Chesterman (2016) refers to this as "explicitness change" – the lost component is compensated through an explanatory note.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of occupation-related lacunar units in the epic Alpomish through translation strategies has yielded the following conclusions:

The analogy (functional equivalence) strategy is the most frequently employed in the existing English translation, yet in many cases an incorrect analogue has been selected. In instances such as mahram to "officials" and arbob to "laborers", this strategy has produced cultural inversion rather than preserving cultural color.

While transliteration ("biys", "pirs") preserves cultural color, it becomes an empty form for the reader when left without annotation. The omission strategy – the loss of numerical components ("fourteen") and plurals – is the most damaging of all strategies for linguocultural adequacy. Calquing is effective for pastoral occupations ("horse-herder", "camel-driver") but has limited applicability for social titles.
While descriptive translation fully conveys meaning, it sacrifices epic rhythm and cultural color. No single strategy in isolation can ensure the complete preservation of cultural connotations. The optimal solution is a combination of "transliteration + minimal annotation". This hybrid strategy simultaneously ensures cultural color (through transliteration) and comprehensibility (through annotation). Furthermore, glossary standards and annotation templates should be developed for translators.

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