

Beyond the Old Words: Students' Challenges in Archaic Translation (AT)

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify the primary challenges encountered in translating archaic words and to delineate effective teaching strategies for addressing these challenges. A group of 160 undergraduate students specializing in English linguistics and translation studies at the National University of Uzbekistan participated in the study. The experiment involved translating a text containing 30 archaic words from 19th-century Uzbek into English. Results were analyzed through self-report questionnaires, revealing the main difficulties faced by students. According to results, cultural features pose difficulties in expressing national traditions and values within an alternative form in translation, demanding sensitivity to cultural nuances. Adaptations in pronunciation reveal the complex interplay between historical language influences, particularly from Russian, creating challenges in accurately rendering "Uzbekized" adaptations. Homonymy introduces potential misunderstandings as archaic words may resemble modern counterparts.

Keywords: Archaic translation, language proficiency, cultural awareness, historical lessons, pedagogical strategies, self-report measures, linguistic nuances, interdisciplinary learning, practical application, homonymy

INTRODUCTION

Teaching translation in higher education holds significant importance, as it exposes students to a variety of cultures,

literature, and historical contexts, helping helps them understand different perspectives and gain a deeper appreciation for the multifaceted nature of human expression. While translation process requires a deep understanding of both the source and target languages, fostering linguistic precision and fluency, at the same time, translating demands more than just linguistic proficiency; a translator needs critical thinking and analytical skills to decipher meaning, consider cultural nuances, and make informed choices. Because, a translator is responsible for that important texts, traditions, and knowledge are passed on to future generations in a proper way, opening the doors to a wide range of opportunities and contributes to the enrichment of individuals and societies.

The translation of modern texts, while a feasible undertaking, becomes notably challenging when confronted with the task of translating archaic texts. The complexity inherent in rendering archaic language poses a distinctive set of difficulties that demand specialized skills and contextual understanding. Moreover, the pedagogical aspect of teaching translation, particularly within the higher education system, is a task fraught with its own complexities and intricacies. The nuances involved in imparting the art of translation, compounded by the inherent challenges of handling archaic linguistic elements, underscore the formidable nature of this educational endeavor.

1.1. *Aim of the study*

The study aims at determining the main difficulties of translating archaic texts for the students in the field of English linguistics and translation.

1.2. *Hypothesis*

This study hypothesizes the following:

1. Students face challenges in translating archaic texts during the translation lessons;
2. Cultural awareness is the main instrument to improve the students' skills and abilities to translate archaic texts.

1.3. *Significance of the study*

This study is of significance to both students and teachers of translation, linguists and researchers. It is valuable for students engaged in translation as it pertains to the translation process of archaic texts, offering insights into the content suitable for inclusion in translation courses. For teachers, it provides guidance on the effective instruction of archaic translation within linguistics and translation programs, aiding in course planning and design. Additionally, applied linguists can find importance in the study's results, as they contribute to diachronic language studies by addressing various aspects of archaic words.

1.4. *Scope of the study*

This study is limited to responses taken from 160 undergraduate students (75 males and 85 females) from the direction of the English linguistics and translation, from the National university of Uzbekistan.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

Archaic vocabulary as a problem of translation

Languages, intricate and continually transforming systems, manifest in diverse forms (Fasold & Connor 2014; Labov 2001). The process of language change undergoes evolutionary dynamics, exhibiting considerable variations across distinct components of the linguistic system such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon (Chambers & Trudgill 1998; Trudgill 2000). Linguistic transformations may stem from intrinsic linguistic factors, societal influences, migration patterns, geographic considerations, technological advancements, and broader societal changes (Bloomfield 1933; Milroy & Milroy 1985). In the context of these changes some words disappear and become out of use. These words are called outdated vocabulary.

The concept of obsolete vocabulary is associated with a whole range of current scientific problems: criteria for the selection of obsolete vocabulary, the definition of the concept of archaism, the distinction between artificial and natural

archaizations, the problem of mixing obsolete vocabulary with words of poetic and book styles.

In linguistics, outdated vocabulary is divided into historicisms and archaisms (Lesnykh 2014; Emel'yanova 2017). While historicism is understood as a word denoting a bygone historical reality (Maslov 2006), archaism is a word that denotes an existing reality, but has been forced out of use by other lexical units (Emel'yanova 2017). Generalizing the definitions, we can say that an archaism is an old word or phrase encountered in diverse literary forms such as poetry, nursery rhymes, historical novels, proverbs, and geographical designations. A historical illustration of this phenomenon is the transformation of the archaic term "agone" into the contemporary "ago," or the substitution of "aright" for "right," with the historical use of "aye" to convey affirmation. Distinct from archaisms, historicisms pertain to obsolete words whose referents have become outdated. Specifically, when these words fall out of use concurrently with the objects or concepts they denote, they acquire the status of historicisms. This category is extensive and encompasses names for antiquated social relations, institutions, and material culture artifacts. Examples include obsolete terms for ancient weapons, boat types, carriage varieties, and instruments. For instance, in historical contexts, blacksmiths utilized an "anvil" as a heavy iron block for shaping metal, a term that has become archaic along with the object it describes. Similarly, the "prairie schooner," referring to a canvas-covered ship used by pioneers on the North American prairies, and the term "crossbow" as a type of weapon, exemplify historicisms due to their obsolescence both in language and practical usage (Madiyorova 2021).

In the Western linguistics, the archaism category is totally different from the concept we are studying. C. Bally understands archaism as an element of language that exists only as part of a stable combination (Bally 1921). J. Marouzeau defines archaism as a form, linguistic construction related to time (Marouzeau 1961). According to Baldick, archaism refers to the use of words or constructions that have passed out of the language before the time of writing; or a particular example of such an obsolete word

or expression (Baldick 2001). L. Zwart defines it as a time element that is rooted in history (Zwart 1989).

We will not further discuss the concept of archaism, as our main focus is directed towards how to teach to translate them. For achieving the main aim, the following tasks needed to be completed:

1. What are the difficulties of translating archaic words for the students?
2. What kind of strategies, methods or approaches are effective in teaching AT?

Teaching translation

Regrettably, while extensive discussions exist on translation theories, techniques, processes, and procedures, there remains a noticeable gap in addressing how to effectively teach translation and which classroom techniques can assist in adequately preparing students to become proficient translators (Davies, 2004). Despite the longstanding global history of translation, which has significantly contributed to societal development, teaching translation (TT) only commenced in the 20th century (Clavijo & Marín 2013). The main reason is that there is related to accepting the translation as a teachable subject (Azizinezhad 2010; Batrina 2005). It is believed that translation is learned by experience and personal intuition and can by no means be taught in the classroom, however, we do not agree with this idea. According to Claramonte, effective teaching of translation should encompass three key aspects. Firstly, the translator should possess a comprehensive command of both the source language (SL) and target language (TL). Secondly, mastery of the social and cultural nuances – encompassing literature, arts, history, politics, etc. – of both the SL and TL cultures is imperative. Thirdly, the translator must balance qualities of modesty and sincerity to refrain from altering the author's intent, while also maintaining a healthy skepticism by thoroughly scrutinizing and verifying any ambiguous terms (Claramonte 1994). Literature review showed that there is a limited amount of works dedicated

to teaching AT, in particular in the condition of translations from Uzbek into English languages.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to find the main difficulties of translating archaic words and the effective teaching strategies of translating these words, we conducted a research.

Participants: A total of 160 undergraduate students (75 males, 85 females) with ages ranging from 18 to 22 were involved in the experiment. All the students were studying in the direction of English linguistics and translation studies, in the National University of Uzbekistan. Inclusion criteria included being a student in the direction of translation studies, and having no prior experience with translating archaic texts.

Procedure: Participants were screened for eligibility based on the inclusion criteria. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. In the first section, the students were tasked to translate a text in the Uzbek language, with the content of 30 archaic words, belonging to the XIX century into English. In the second section, the obtained results were analyzed and sorted, the main difficulties in translating archaic words into English were determined through self-report questionnaires.

Limitations: Limitations of this study include the reliance on self-report measures, the potential for participant dropout, and the specific demographic characteristics of the sample, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.

RESULTS

According to the analysis of the obtained results, the students were able to express 18 archaic words in the translation. When the questionnaire was conducted about challenges, it was determined that the main difficulties in translating archaic texts are as follows (Figure 1).

1. Cultural features and realias – 48%
2. Adaptations in pronunciation –21%

3. Homonymic relations of archaic forms with the modern forms 17-%
4. Others – 14%

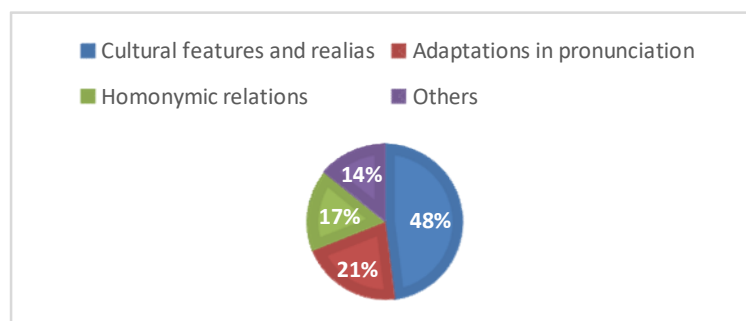


Figure 1. *Challenges in Translating Archaic Texts for Students*

As can be seen from the diagram that, for 48 % of the students, the main difficulty in translating Uzbek archaisms into English was cultural features and realias. Furthermore, the second challenge in translation is the difficulties in the adaptations in pronunciation (21%). Students admit that, in most cases they could not find the modern variant of mispronounced archaisms and mistranslated them into English. The other challenges are homonymic relations of archaic forms (17%) and others (14%).

DISCUSSION

Cultural features and realias as a problem of archaic translation

During the experiment, the students had difficulty in translating the lexeme “sevinchilamoq” characteristic of Uzbek national culture. In the works of art, the tradition of “sevinchilamoq” can be found in many situations, in the culture of Central Asia, it is used to tell the father, the family members or other close people about a long-expected news, such as a person who has returned safely after a long trip or military service, or about the birth of a child in the family. There is a custom of being the first to deliver the expected news to the head of the family and receiving a gift in the form of money, clothes, or property. This custom also has

a legal form. In particular, mothers who have children are given “suyunchipuli” (money) by the Centers of State Services or the Unified Interactive State Services Portal of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In the experiment, students had to translate this tradition of being the first to bring good news about a happy event and hoping for a gift in return in Uzbek national culture. The lexeme “sevinchilamoq” presented in the work is an archaic unit, which in modern Uzbek language means to ask for a reward for delivering good news, to ask for encouragement, to ask for money. In modern Uzbek, it is possible to quote the verb “suyunchilamaq” made from the noun “suyunchi.” Although this form has preserved its activity to a certain extent in some dialects, it has already acquired the color of antiquity for the Uzbek literary language. As a proof of our opinion, we can cite the fact that in the explanatory dictionaries of the Uzbek language published in later periods, we do not find words in the form of suyuchinilamoq or sevnichilamoq. Only the lexemes “sevinchi” and “suyunchi,” which are the noun forms of these words, are explained. It is known that one of the problems that arise in translation is to express such traditions, customs and values with national color and cultural identity in an alternative form in the translation, in a form that is understandable to the reader.

Adaptations in pronunciation as a problem of archaic translation

It is known from history that in the 18th and 19th centuries, the number of words that entered the Uzbek language from the Russian language increased dramatically. It was a tradition that a person who spoke Russian was considered to belong to the upper class, as a result of which some Russian words supplanted purely Uzbek words. But sometimes, Russian adaptations were pronounced “Uzbekized” and “adapted” by local residents, such “Uzbekized adaptations” along with their adapted form in pronunciation took place in the speech of heroes and became part of artistic works. As an example, we can cite lexemes such as qo'monda (команда), chas (честь), o'rus (рус), rel (рельс), boshput (паспорт), bo'lus (волость) amirkon (american). Unfortunately, many confusions and mistakes are made when

expressing such units in translation. A translator who knows that it has been adapted can omit it or translate it with a different word.

Homonymy as a problem of archaic translation

Words that exist at different stages of development of the same language can become homonymous with lexemes of later stages of language development. In such a case, a translator who is translating an archaism may sometimes misunderstand it as a modern word and translate it inconsistently. In particular, the students mistranslated the words such as “rasm” (in the meaning of both picture and habit) into English in archaic texts. They were tend to translate this word in the modern variant in most cases. Another example is the lexeme “martaba,” which has the meaning “career, title, position” outside the context. But at the same time, this lexeme is an archaic form of the lexeme “marotaba” in current Uzbek literary language and is considered a graphic archaism, meaning “time.” Therefore, its correct and alternative translation requires a special skill.

Other problems of archaic translation

In the course of the study, it was determined that the students tend to make mistakes in the translation of archaic grammatical forms that a deep knowledge is required to translate. In particular, the translation of archaic grammatical constructions - isophatic compounds is complicated. For example, in the translation of the compound words, such as “kamolihayron,” “asolibirmaslak,” “ishqimajoziy,” “ishqihqiqiy,” “usulijadida,” “tolibiilm,” “xayri duo” inconsistencies were observed.

As the main mistranslation cases occur in the words related to cultural words, terms and realias, we consider that increasing cultural awareness of the students in TAT is the key to successful teaching.

Cultural awareness in TAT

Translations from Uzbek into English is not a straightforward task, it demands both linguistic and cultural skills. Therefore, incorporating historical and cultural lessons into TAT yields

several positive outcomes, enhancing the overall educational experience for students:

- **Enriched interpretation:** Historical and cultural lessons provide students with a deeper understanding of the context in which the archaic texts were written, enabling them to interpret the material more accurately.
- **Improved language comprehension:** Exposure to historical and cultural contexts aids in the comprehension of linguistic nuances, idioms, and expressions embedded in archaic texts, contributing to improved language proficiency.
- **Avoidance of anachronistic misinterpretations:** Integrating cultural lessons helps students avoid anachronistic interpretations, ensuring that translations remain faithful to the original cultural and historical contexts.
- **Broadened cultural awareness:** Students gain a broader cultural perspective, not only enhancing their translation skills but also fostering cultural competence that can be valuable in diverse linguistic and cultural settings.
- **Integration of multiple disciplines:** The inclusion of historical and cultural elements promotes interdisciplinary learning, allowing students to draw connections between language, history, and culture, fostering a holistic educational experience.
- **Analytical skills:** Exploring historical and cultural dimensions encourages critical thinking as students evaluate the impact of societal changes on language use, fostering analytical skills that go beyond linguistic aspects.
- **Practical application:** By incorporating practical exercises and case studies, students can directly apply their historical and cultural knowledge to the translation process, bridging theory with real-world scenarios.

Conclusion

The study showed that the challenges students encounter in translating archaic words are words with cultural features,

pronunciation adaptations, and homonymic relations emerging as significant hurdles. Cultural features pose difficulties in expressing national traditions and values within an alternative form in translation, demanding sensitivity to cultural nuances. Adaptations in pronunciation reveal the complex interplay between historical language influences, particularly from Russian, creating challenges in accurately rendering “Uzbekized” adaptations. Homonymy introduces potential misunderstandings as archaic words may resemble modern counterparts. Additionally, students grapple with archaic grammatical forms, highlighting the need for in-depth linguistic knowledge. The incorporation of historical and cultural lessons proves invaluable, enhancing students' interpretation skills, language comprehension, and analytical thinking. Practical applications through exercises and case studies offer a bridge between theoretical knowledge and real-world translation scenarios, fostering a holistic educational experience.

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