

LINGUOCULTURAL PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH AND UZBEK FABLES

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Abstract. This article examines the linguocultural problems that arise in translating English and Uzbek fables. Fables are culturally rich literary texts in which moral lessons, symbolic imagery, national mentality, and social values are conveyed through concise narrative and allegorical structure. Because fables are deeply rooted in the cultural worldview of a people, their translation involves not only linguistic transfer but also the transmission of culturally embedded meanings. The study focuses on the main linguocultural difficulties encountered in the translation of fables between English and Uzbek, including the translation of animal symbolism, allegory, phraseological units, moral conclusions, culturally marked vocabulary, and national value systems. The article also discusses the strategies used by translators to preserve semantic content and cultural resonance in the target language. The findings show that many translation problems in fables emerge from differences in symbolic associations, ethical interpretation, linguistic economy, and stylistic tradition. The study concludes that successful translation of fables requires not only lexical and grammatical competence but also deep awareness of cultural codes, literary conventions, and moral discourse in both source and target languages.

Keywords: fable translation, linguocultural problems, English fables, Uzbek fables, allegory, symbolism, translation strategies, moral discourse, comparative linguistics, cultural adaptation

Introduction. Translation is not simply the replacement of words from one language with words from another. It is a complex act of intercultural communication in which meanings, values, associations, and worldviews are transferred across

linguistic and cultural boundaries. This complexity becomes especially visible in the translation of literary texts, and particularly in the translation of fables. Fables are short allegorical narratives that often use animals, objects, or natural elements as symbolic representatives of human behavior. Their purpose is not only to entertain but also to teach moral lessons, criticize social behavior, and preserve collective wisdom.

In both English and Uzbek literary traditions, fables occupy an important place as didactic and culturally meaningful texts. However, despite their universal educational function, fables are highly culture-bound. Their symbolic systems, ethical assumptions, narrative style, and linguistic forms often reflect the national mentality and value system of a particular people. As a result, translating fables between English and Uzbek presents a number of linguocultural challenges.

A translator working with fables must not only render the literal meaning of the source text but also preserve its symbolic resonance, stylistic simplicity, moral force, and cultural implications. This is often difficult because certain animal images, phraseological expressions, value judgments, and narrative conventions may not carry the same meaning in the target culture. What appears natural, humorous, or morally obvious in one linguistic tradition may sound strange, weak, or even misleading in another.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the main linguocultural problems that arise in translating English and Uzbek fables and to examine how these problems can be addressed through appropriate translation strategies.

Materials and Methods. This study is based on a comparative and descriptive analysis of selected English and Uzbek fables and their translations or translation equivalents. The research material includes well-known English fables associated with the Aesopian tradition as well as Uzbek fables and didactic narratives commonly found in literary and educational contexts. The selected texts represent moral themes such as greed, wisdom, arrogance, laziness, justice, and deception, which frequently appear in both traditions.

The methodological framework of the study combines several analytical approaches. Comparative textual analysis is used to identify similarities and differences in structure, symbolism, and moral orientation between English and Uzbek fables. Semantic analysis is applied to examine lexical and figurative meanings, especially in cases where the source and target texts use culturally specific imagery or evaluative vocabulary. Linguocultural analysis is employed to investigate how cultural codes, moral values, and symbolic associations shape the meaning of the fables and influence translation choices.

In addition, elements of translation analysis are used to evaluate how certain linguocultural units are rendered in translation and which strategies are employed to preserve or adapt them. The study draws on theoretical insights from translation studies, linguoculturology, folkloristics, and literary analysis.

Results and Discussion. The analysis demonstrates that one of the most significant linguocultural problems in translating English and Uzbek fables is the transfer of **animal symbolism**. In fables, animals are rarely used merely as narrative characters; they function as culturally loaded symbols representing human traits such as cunning, pride, laziness, greed, or wisdom. While some symbolic associations are relatively universal, many are culturally specific or differently emphasized.

For example, in many English fables, the fox is a standard symbol of cunning and deception, while the lion often represents authority or power. These symbolic roles are also familiar in Uzbek tradition, which facilitates translation to some extent. However, the emotional and moral nuances attached to these animals may still differ. In Uzbek fables, a fox may carry stronger associations with social manipulation and sly opportunism, while a donkey may represent not only foolishness but also roughness or lack of refinement. This creates a translation problem because the translator must decide whether to preserve the original animal image or replace it with a more culturally equivalent one. Literal preservation may retain formal accuracy but weaken symbolic impact, whereas adaptation may improve cultural relevance at the cost of textual fidelity.

Another major challenge lies in the translation of **allegory and implied meaning**. Fables are highly condensed texts in which meaning is often indirect. Their moral message is not always stated explicitly but emerges through symbolic conflict, narrative irony, or character contrast. English fables often rely on brevity and understated irony, allowing the reader to infer the lesson from the outcome. Uzbek fables, by contrast, often favor a more explicit and pedagogical mode of moral communication. As a result, when an English fable is translated into Uzbek, the original subtlety may appear too vague or incomplete unless the translator adds clarification. Conversely, translating Uzbek fables into English may require reduction or stylistic simplification to avoid sounding overly explanatory. This difference reflects broader cultural tendencies in narrative pedagogy and moral expression.

The translation of **phraseological units and culturally marked expressions** also presents serious difficulties. Many fables include idiomatic language, proverb-like moral formulas, or fixed expressions that carry culturally specific meanings. Such expressions often have no direct equivalent in the target language. If translated literally, they may sound unnatural or lose their didactic force. For example, an English moral phrased in a concise aphoristic style may require reformulation in Uzbek to preserve its rhetorical and educational effect. Similarly, Uzbek fables often contain culturally resonant expressions shaped by oral tradition and communal ethics, which may be difficult to reproduce in English without losing their national flavor. In such cases, translators must balance semantic precision with stylistic and cultural naturalness.

A further linguocultural issue concerns the translation of **moral conclusions**. In both English and Uzbek fables, the moral is a central element, but the form and tone of moral expression differ. English fables often present the moral in a short, universal, and logically framed statement. Uzbek fables, on the other hand, frequently express the moral in a more socially embedded and proverb-like way, often emphasizing collective ethics, modesty, patience, or respect. This means that even when two fables share a similar moral idea, such as “pride leads to failure” or “greed causes loss,” the way this idea is linguistically framed may differ significantly. The translator must therefore

decide whether to preserve the wording of the source moral or to reformulate it in a way that sounds culturally and stylistically appropriate in the target language.

Another important problem is the translation of **national value systems and worldview**. Fables are not only moral texts but also reflections of a society's understanding of desirable and undesirable behavior. English fables often foreground individual responsibility, rational decision-making, self-discipline, and practical wisdom. Uzbek fables, while also didactic, more frequently emphasize humility, social harmony, respect for others, patience, and communal responsibility. These differences affect not only the content of the moral but also the emotional tone and ethical orientation of the text. As a result, a translator must be sensitive to the possibility that a literal translation may preserve the words of a fable while failing to transmit its deeper cultural logic.

The issue of **stylistic economy** is equally important. Fables are traditionally concise texts, and much of their effectiveness depends on brevity, rhythm, and clarity. However, culturally loaded expressions often require explanation in translation, especially when symbolic or moral associations are not shared by the target audience. This creates a tension between fidelity and readability. A translation that explains too much may lose the elegance and sharpness of the original, while one that explains too little may become obscure or culturally inaccessible. Therefore, the translator must constantly negotiate between preserving textual compactness and ensuring interpretive clarity.

The findings of this study show that the most common strategies used to address linguocultural problems in fable translation include literal translation, cultural adaptation, descriptive translation, contextual substitution, and partial reformulation. Literal translation is most effective when symbolic associations and moral values are shared across cultures. Cultural adaptation is necessary when a source-language symbol or expression would not carry the same meaning in the target culture. Descriptive translation is useful when culturally specific imagery needs clarification, while contextual substitution helps preserve the pragmatic and moral effect of a

passage even when formal equivalence is not possible. Partial reformulation is especially important in translating moral conclusions and proverb-like expressions.

Conclusion. In conclusion, the translation of English and Uzbek fables involves a wide range of linguocultural problems that cannot be resolved through literal equivalence alone. Because fables are compact literary forms rich in symbolism, morality, and cultural meaning, their translation requires careful attention to both language and worldview. The study has shown that major difficulties arise in the translation of animal symbolism, allegory, phraseological units, moral conclusions, culturally embedded values, and stylistic economy.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that English and Uzbek fables often share similar ethical themes but differ in how these themes are symbolized, interpreted, and communicated. English fables tend to rely more on concise irony, individual consequence, and implicit moral logic, while Uzbek fables more often emphasize explicit instruction, communal ethics, and culturally resonant expressions. These differences create both challenges and opportunities for translation.

Therefore, the successful translation of fables requires more than linguistic accuracy. It demands linguocultural competence, literary sensitivity, and an understanding of how moral meaning is shaped by tradition, symbolism, and collective consciousness. Translators must approach fables not merely as texts to be converted but as cultural narratives to be carefully reinterpreted across languages.

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