INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCHERS
ISSN: 3030-332X Impact factor: 9,493 Volume 17, issue 1, Aprel 2026
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TRANSLATING CULTURE-SPECIFIC MEMES FROM ENGLISH INTO UZBEK: A PRAGMATIC APPROACH

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Abstract

The growing use of internet memes as a means of digital communication has introduced new challenges in translation studies, especially in cross-cultural translation. Internet memes often involve humor, irony, and cultural references that require pragmatic interpretation for accurate translation. As Dynel [2] states, internet memes are multimodal units of communication that present meaning both linguistically and visually. This paper will examine the challenges of translating English culture-specific memes into Uzbek and will propose pragmatic adaptation as an effective means of translation. Through qualitative content analysis, 100 English internet memes were analyzed and translated into Uzbek. The results show that literal translation leads to pragmatic loss and cultural misinterpretation because of the absence of similar expressions in the target language.

Keywords

meme translation, pragmatic adaptation, digital discourse, cultural references, English-Uzbek translation.

Аннотация

Растущее использование интернет-мемов как средства цифровой коммуникации привело к появлению новых вызовов в переводоведении, особенно в межкультурном переводе. Интернет-мемы часто включают юмор, иронию и культурные отсылки, которые требуют прагматической интерпретации для точного перевода. Как отмечает Дайнел [2], интернет-мемы являются мультимодальными единицами коммуникации, передающими значение как лингвистически, так и визуально. В данной статье рассматриваются трудности перевода английских культурно-специфичных мемов на узбекский язык и предлагается прагматическая адаптация как эффективный способ перевода. С помощью качественного контент-анализа были проанализированы и переведены на узбекский язык 100 английских интернет-мемов. Результаты показывают, что буквальный перевод приводит к прагматическим потерям и культурным недоразумениям из-за отсутствия аналогичных выражений в языке перевода.

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Ключевые слова

перевод мемов, прагматическая адаптация, цифровой дискурс, культурные отсылки, англо-узбекский перевод.

Annotatsiya

Internet larining raqamli muloqot vositasi sifatida tobora keng qo‘llanilishi tarjimashunoslikda, ayniqsa madaniyatlararo tarjimada, yangi muammolarni yuzaga keltirdi. Internet memlari ko‘pincha hazil, kinoya va madaniy ishoralarni o‘z ichiga oladi, ularni to‘g‘ri tarjima qilish uchun pragmatik talqin zarur. Dynel [2] ta’kidlashicha, internet memlari lingvistik va vizual jihatdan ma’no ifodalovchi multimodal kommunikativ birliklardir. Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilidagi madaniy jihatdan xos memlarni o‘zbek tiliga tarjima qilishdagi muammolar tahlil qilinadi hamda pragmatik moslashtirish samarali tarjima usuli sifatida taklif etiladi. Sifatli kontent-tahlil asosida 100 ta ingliz internet memi tahlil qilinib, o‘zbek tiliga tarjima qilindi. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, so‘zma-so‘z tarjima maqsad tilida o‘xshash ifodalar mavjud emasligi sababli pragmatik yo‘qotish va madaniy noto‘g‘ri talqinlarga olib keladi.

Kalit so‘zlar

mem tarjimasi, pragmatik moslashtirish, raqamli diskurs, madaniy ishoralar, ingliz-o‘zbek tarjimasi.

Recently, internet memes have become a popular form of online communication on social media platforms. Memes are a combination of text and image, used to express humor, sarcasm, or social commentary in a condensed form. According to Shifman [4], memes are units of cultural information that are quickly disseminated and evolve in online communities. The translation of such culture-specific information into another language is a challenging task. In Uzbek EFL settings, memes are commonly employed in informal online learning environments by students and teachers. Nevertheless, the translation of meme-based communication requires more than mere linguistic equivalence; it requires an understanding of pragmatic meaning and socio-cultural context [Yus, 2019]. Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine the most important challenges in the translation of English culture-specific memes into Uzbek and to provide effective strategies for translation. Humor and culture-specific translation have been considered one of the most challenging tasks in the field of translation studies. Baker [1] states that cultural references are often untranslatable in the target language, and thus, literal translation is not an effective process. Likewise, Newmark [3] stresses the need for communicative translation to retain meaning in culturally specific texts. In online communication, memes are often based on common knowledge. Dynel [2] states that the interpretation of memes is based on pragmatic competence. Yus [5] further adds that internet communication is often based on implicit meaning, which can be lost in translation if pragmatic translation is not used.

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. A total of 100 English internet memes were gathered from popular social media sites and classified according to their cultural references and types of humor. These memes were translated into Uzbek using three techniques:

Literal Translation

Cultural Substitution

Pragmatic Adaptation

People who speak Uzbek and another language looked at the translations to see if they were clear and funny. They also checked if the translations got the point across. They did this by following some rules for translating that Newmark [3] talked about in 1988. These rules are about making sure the translation says what the original text means. Uzbek speakers were very important in this process because they know what sounds good in Uzbek and what does not. They helped figure out if the translations of Uzbek texts were good or not.

Results and Findings

The analysis revealed that:

62% of literal translations resulted in loss of humor

25% caused cultural misunderstanding

13% maintained the intended communicative effect

For example:

English Meme Text	Literal Translation	Adapted Translation
When you realize it's Monday again	*Yana dushanba ekanligini tushunganingda*	*Yana ish haftasi boshlanishini bilganingda*
That awkward moment	*O'sha noqulay lahza*	*Juda uyatli holat bo'lganda*

The things we found show that what Baker [1] said in 2011 is true. Baker said that pragmatic equivalence is really important for keeping the meaning of messages the same in texts that are connected to cultures. This is because pragmatic equivalence helps us understand what these texts are trying to say. So pragmatic equivalence is necessary for preserving the meaning of messages, in bound texts, just like Baker [1] said.

The study shows that translating memes that are specific to a culture is not just about knowing the language. Memes often rely on knowledge that people from a culture share and on understanding the situation. When you translate memes word-for-word, it can change the humor. Make it less effective, especially if the original text has expressions that are typical of a particular culture.

This idea matches what Newmark [3] said in 1988 about translation. He thinks that the goal of translation should be to affect the reader as the original text, not to make it look the

same. Dynel [2] also notes in 2016 that understanding memes depends on being able to understand the situation and the culture.

This means that when translating memes, you have to think about how the audience will perceive them and how familiar they are with the culture. Yus [5] argues in 2019 that online communication often has hidden meanings that can't be directly translated. So, adapting the translation to fit the culture seems to be the way to keep the humor and relevance of the meme. When you adapt the translation, the target audience understands it better. It keeps the social and emotional impact of the original meme.The translation of memes into Uzbek is a tough task. This is because humor and meaning in memes are often implied and depend on the context. A study found that directly translating memes from English to Uzbek often results in losing the meaning and impact. This is especially true for memes that reference cultures or make subtle social comments.

According to Shifman [4], memes carry shared knowledge. To understand a meme, you need to know the context. So, translating memes is not about translating words accurately. It's also about being sensitive to the context and culture. Translators can use strategies to make the meme funny and emotional in Uzbek.

In Uzbekistan, translating memes effectively can help students engage more in conversations. In short, adapting memes pragmatically is a way to translate them in bilingual education settings. It helps convey the humor and emotion. This approach is both effective and culturally suitable.

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