ISSN:2828-6235
Impact factor:13.77

International Journal of Literature and Language Studies(IJLLS)

LINGUOCULTURAL RECONTEXTUALIZATION OF UZBEK ONOMASTIC UNITS IN ENGLISH TOURISM DISCOURSE

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doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23202747

Abstract: This article investigates the translation of culturally and historically layered Uzbek onomastic units in English tourism discourse. It focuses on cases in which formal correspondence between source and target names is insufficient to preserve their historical, semantic and cultural potential. Particular attention is paid to historical toponyms, endonym–exonym relations, anthroponymic variants and names whose meanings have undergone cultural recontextualization. The study argues that onomastic translation should be viewed as a process of functional and linguocultural mediation rather than mechanical name transfer.

Keywords: onomastic equivalence, linguocultural recontextualization, historical toponymy, endonym–exonym asymmetry, anthroponymic variation, cultural markedness, semantic stratification, translation mediation, tourism discourse.

Proper names occupy a distinctive position at the intersection of language, history and culture. Although their primary function is generally understood as the identification of unique referents, historically and culturally marked names frequently contain layers of information extending beyond simple reference. A geographical name may preserve traces of political transformations, ethnic interaction, historical memory or changes in territorial organization, while a personal name may become associated with a particular intellectual, religious or political tradition. Consequently, the translation of such names cannot be reduced to the substitution of one orthographic form for another.

This issue becomes particularly significant in tourism discourse. Tourism texts do not merely provide geographical information; they construct representations of cultural heritage for audiences who may possess limited knowledge of the source culture. Consequently, the translation of a culturally marked proper name may determine how a historical place, personality or cultural phenomenon is conceptualized by an international audience.

The Uzbek cultural and historical space presents an especially productive field for investigating this problem. The territory of present-day Uzbekistan has historically been represented through a succession of names belonging to different linguistic, political and historiographical traditions. Names such as Movarounnahr, Transoxiana, Xorazm, Khwarazm, Chig‘atoy, Chagatai, Kesh, Nasaf, Maracanda and Samarqand demonstrate that a single geographical or historical referent may be represented through multiple naming systems.

The same phenomenon can be observed in anthroponymy. Historical personalities may possess Uzbek, Persian, Arabic, Turkic, Latinized or Anglicized forms. For example, Ibn Sino is conventionally represented in English as Avicenna, while Muhammad ibn Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Tusi and other historical figures may occur in substantially different forms across scholarly traditions. Such variation raises questions concerning the relationship between nominal identity, historical identity and target-cultural recognition.

The present article therefore approaches onomastic translation from a broader perspective. Instead of asking merely which English equivalent corresponds to an Uzbek proper name, the study investigates how the historical and cultural meanings associated with the name are reorganized when transferred into English tourism discourse.

The aim of the research is to identify the principal mechanisms of linguocultural recontextualization involved in Uzbek-English onomastic translation and to demonstrate why formal equivalence alone cannot account for the communicative adequacy of historically marked names.

Onomastic Units as Linguocultural Signs. Within linguistic theory, proper names are traditionally distinguished from common nouns by their identifying function. However, this distinction becomes insufficient when proper names are examined within culturally marked discourse. A historical name may simultaneously identify an object, activate a body of historical knowledge and evoke a particular cultural interpretation of that object.

This multidimensionality can be described through the concept of semantic stratification. A historically established name may contain several chronological layers: an original linguistic form, later adaptations, political reinterpretations, foreign-language variants and contemporary standardized forms.

For example, the geographical entity associated with modern Samarkand has been represented historically through forms such as Maracanda, Samarqand and Samarkand. These forms cannot be treated as interchangeable purely on orthographic grounds. Each belongs to a particular linguistic and historical tradition. Maracanda, associated with Greco-Roman sources, belongs to a classical historiographical representation, whereas Samarkand represents the conventional modern English form.

The translator must therefore determine not only whether two forms designate the same geographical entity but also what historical perspective is activated by each form.

This observation leads to an important distinction between referential identity and discursive identity. Referential identity concerns the object to which the name points, whereas discursive identity concerns the historical, ideological and cultural framework within which the object is represented.

Onomastic translation is therefore concerned with both.

Endonyms, Exonyms and Translation Asymmetry. One of the most significant problems in Uzbek-English onomastic translation is the asymmetrical relationship between endonyms and exonyms.

An **endonym** is the name used within the community associated with the referent, whereas an **exonym** is a name used externally by another linguistic community. In historical discourse, a single geographical entity may possess several exonyms originating from different languages and periods.

The case of Movarounnahr / Transoxiana is particularly relevant. Movarounnahr derives from an Arabic expression meaning approximately “the land beyond the river,” while Transoxiana is the Latinized historiographical designation used extensively in Western scholarship. Although the two names broadly refer to the same historical-geographical region, they are not pragmatically identical.

When an Uzbek tourism text refers to Movarounnahr, replacing it automatically with Transoxiana may improve recognition among English-speaking readers familiar with Western historiography. At the same time, the substitution may erase the source text's connection with the Islamic and Central Asian historiographical tradition.

A more culturally sensitive translation may therefore preserve the source designation while introducing its established English counterpart:

Movarounnahr (Transoxiana), the historical region between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya

This formulation does not treat the two names as perfect synonyms. Instead, it establishes an interonomastic relationship between two historically situated naming systems. The same principle applies to Xorazm / Khwarazm / Chorasmia. These forms belong to different linguistic and

historiographical traditions. Khwarazm is widely used in contemporary English scholarship, whereas Chorasmia occurs particularly in classical and historical contexts. The choice between them therefore has discursive implications.

The translator must consequently distinguish between:

- the identity of the referent;
- the linguistic origin of the name;
- the historical period represented;
- the intended readership;
- the historiographical tradition activated by the target form.

This is why endonym–exonym relations constitute not merely a lexical problem but a problem of **historical perspective in translation**.

Historical Toponymy and Semantic Recontextualization. Historical toponyms present a particularly complex case because geographical names may undergo substantial semantic and political transformations.

Consider the relationship between **Kesh** and **Shahrisabz**. These names refer to the same historical geographical area but belong to different historical naming stages. Kesh is associated with the ancient and medieval historical representation of the region, while Shahrisabz is the modern name. In a tourism text discussing the historical world of Amir Timur, translating every occurrence of Kesh simply as Shahrisabz may establish geographical clarity but simultaneously remove an important historical distinction. A more appropriate translation may retain the historical name and establish its modern referent:

Kesh, present-day Shahrisabz. Here, translation functions as historical annotation. The target reader receives not only the geographical identification but also an indication of chronological change.

A similar problem occurs with **Nasaf** and **Karshi**. These names should not automatically be regarded as stylistic variants because they represent different historical stages of the city's nomenclature. In a historically oriented tourism text, the substitution of Nasaf with Karshi may obscure the historical terminology used in medieval sources.

The appropriate translation may therefore be:

Nasaf, the medieval city corresponding to present-day Karshi

This strategy is an example of **diachronic contextualization**, whereby the translator explicitly reconstructs the temporal relationship between two naming forms.

Anthroponymic Variation and Cultural Recognition. Anthroponyms provide another important area in which formal equivalence fails to explain translation choices.

Historical personalities from Central Asian intellectual and political history frequently appear under several forms in different languages. These variants may reflect transliteration, phonological adaptation, Latinization, Arabic naming conventions or established Western usage.

A prominent example is the historical scholar **Abu Ali ibn Sino**, whose conventional English form is **Avicenna**. The relationship between these two forms is not one of simple transliteration. Avicenna represents a historically established Western form that emerged through linguistic transformation and transmission across medieval scholarly traditions. Consequently, replacing Abu Ali ibn Sino with Avicenna is not merely a technical translation procedure. It constitutes a shift from a source-cultural anthroponym to a target-cultural historical exonym.

The same phenomenon can be observed in the case of Amir Temur / Timur / Tamerlane. These forms participate in different historical and linguistic traditions. Amir Temur retains the source-cultural form, Timur functions as a widely established international variant, whereas Tamerlane represents a historically developed Western form.

These alternatives are not semantically neutral. The selection of one form rather than another may position the historical personality within a particular historiographical tradition. Therefore, the translator must consider whether the communicative purpose is:

- cultural authenticity;
- historical recognition;
- target-reader accessibility;
- adherence to established English scholarship;
- or preservation of the source text's ideological and cultural perspective.

This demonstrates that anthroponymic translation may involve historiographical repositioning.

Tourism Discourse as a Site of Cultural Recontextualization. Tourism discourse differs from purely academic historical discourse because its communicative purpose involves both information and cultural mediation. An English-language tourism text must make culturally unfamiliar material accessible while maintaining the authenticity of the destination.

This creates a fundamental tension between foreignization and domestication.

Excessive domestication may replace culturally specific names with familiar target-language concepts and thereby weaken the authenticity of the source culture. Excessive foreignization, however, may preserve names without providing sufficient interpretative information.

For Uzbek tourism discourse, an intermediate model appears more productive:

preservation of the onym + historical contextualization + target-reader orientation

This model permits the original cultural identity to remain visible while simultaneously accommodating the cognitive needs of the international audience.

In this respect, the translator does not simply transfer names. The translator reconstructs the network of cultural associations surrounding them.

The analysis indicates that the principal difficulty in Uzbek-English onomastic translation lies in the non-isomorphic relationship between naming systems.

The same historical entity may be represented through different names depending on language, period, political context and historiographical tradition. Therefore, an English equivalent cannot always be selected solely on the basis of lexical similarity or contemporary usage.

Three levels of equivalence should consequently be distinguished:

The translation of Uzbek onomastic units into English represents a complex process of linguistic, historical and cultural mediation. Historically layered names cannot always be adequately translated through transliteration, transcription or direct substitution because their communicative value extends beyond nominal reference.

The analysis of historical toponyms such as Movarounnahr/Transoxiana, Xorazm/Khwarazm, Kesh/Shahrisabz and Nasaf/Karshi, as well as anthroponymic variants such as Abu Ali ibn Sino/Avicenna and Amir Temur/Timur/Tamerlane, demonstrates that onomastic variation frequently reflects different linguistic and historiographical traditions rather than simple formal differences.

Consequently, the translator must consider not only what a proper name denotes but also **which historical tradition, cultural perspective and communicative effect the selected form activates**.

The study proposes that culturally adequate Uzbek-English onomastic translation should be based on three interconnected principles: preservation of onomastic identity, reconstruction of historical context, and pragmatic orientation towards the target reader. Depending on the communicative situation, these principles can be implemented through dual naming, contextual explication, diachronic specification, established exonymic forms and controlled adaptation.

The central conclusion is that onomastic equivalence should not be interpreted as the existence of a single fixed target-language counterpart. Rather, it should be understood as a

dynamic relationship between naming systems in which linguistic form, historical reference, cultural memory and communicative purpose interact.

Thus, the translation of Uzbek onomastic units in tourism discourse is not merely a problem of transferring names between languages. It is a process of linguocultural recontextualization through which the historical identity of a place or personality is reconstructed for a new interpretative community.

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