

**CHALLENGES IN PRESERVING THE WRITER'S STYLE IN THE
TRANSLATION OF REALIA**

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Abstract: The preservation of a writer's individual style remains one of the most challenging tasks in literary translation, particularly when culture-specific elements known as realia are involved. Realia embody national, historical, and cultural meanings that extend beyond their lexical form, making them highly resistant to direct translation. This article investigates the principal challenges translators face in preserving authorial style while rendering realia into the target language. Drawing on stylistics and translation studies, the study analyzes how the loss, neutralization, or substitution of realia may distort narrative voice, aesthetic effect, and ideological nuance. The findings suggest that inadequate handling of realia often results in stylistic flattening and cultural misrepresentation. The article argues for a balanced approach that integrates semantic accuracy, stylistic sensitivity, and cultural mediation.

Keywords: authorial style, realia, literary translation, cultural meaning, stylistic preservation

Introduction

Literary translation is not merely the transfer of meaning from one language into another; it is a complex act of cultural and stylistic mediation. Among the numerous difficulties translators encounter, the translation of realia poses a particularly serious challenge to the preservation of a writer's style. Realia refer to words and expressions that denote objects, concepts, institutions, or phenomena unique to a particular culture. These elements are deeply embedded in the stylistic and ideological fabric of literary texts.

A writer's style is shaped not only by syntactic patterns or lexical choices but also by culturally loaded references that construct authenticity, atmosphere, and narrative voice. When such references are inadequately translated, the stylistic identity of the original text may be significantly altered. Therefore, the study of realia translation is essential for understanding how authorial style can be preserved or distorted in translated literature.

This article aims to explore the major challenges associated with preserving the writer's style in the translation of realia and to examine how different translation strategies affect stylistic integrity.

Theoretical Background

❖ Writer's Style as a Multidimensional Concept

Writer's style is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon encompassing lexical choice, syntactic structure, narrative rhythm, figurative language, and pragmatic intention. In literary texts, style functions as a marker of individuality and a carrier of aesthetic and ideological meaning. Any alteration in stylistic elements may lead to a shift in the reader's perception of characters, setting, and thematic depth.

From a stylistic perspective, realia play a crucial role in shaping the writer's unique voice. They anchor the text in a specific cultural and historical context and often contribute to characterization and narrative realism.

❖ Realia in Translation Studies

In translation theory, realia are commonly defined as culture-bound elements that lack direct equivalents in the target language. These include names of traditional objects, social institutions, food, clothing, administrative terms, and historical references. The difficulty in translating realia lies in their dual nature: they convey both denotative meaning and cultural connotation.

Scholars have emphasized that the translation of realia requires not only linguistic competence but also cultural awareness and interpretative sensitivity. Failure to recognize the stylistic function of realia can result in cultural loss and stylistic impoverishment.

Challenges in Preserving Writer's Style through Realia Translation

✚ Cultural Untranslatability

One of the primary challenges is cultural untranslatability. Many realia have no direct equivalents in the target culture, making literal translation ineffective or misleading. When translators replace such elements with neutral or generalized terms, the stylistic color of the original text is weakened. This often leads to the loss of local flavor and narrative authenticity.

✚ Stylistic Neutralization

Another significant challenge is stylistic neutralization. In an attempt to ensure readability, translators may simplify or explain realia excessively. While this strategy may improve comprehension, it can dilute the expressive power of the original style. The writer's distinctive voice may be replaced by a more standardized and less expressive narrative tone.

✚ Ideological and Pragmatic Shifts

Realia often carry ideological and pragmatic implications related to social hierarchy, historical memory, or national identity. When these elements are mistranslated or omitted, subtle ideological nuances embedded in the writer's style may be lost. Such shifts can alter character relationships and the author's implicit evaluative stance.

✚ Reader-Oriented Adaptation vs. Authorial Loyalty

Translators frequently face a dilemma between adapting realia for the target reader and remaining loyal to the author's stylistic intent. Excessive domestication may erase cultural distinctiveness, whereas extreme foreignization may disrupt narrative flow. Achieving stylistic balance remains one of the most complex aspects of literary translation.

Translation Strategies and Their Stylistic Impact

Common strategies for translating realia include transcription, calque, descriptive translation, functional substitution, and omission. Each strategy has distinct implications for style preservation. Transcription and calque tend to retain foreignness and stylistic originality but may challenge reader comprehension. Descriptive translation enhances clarity but risks stylistic verbosity. Functional substitution may maintain narrative coherence while sacrificing cultural specificity.

The choice of strategy should therefore be context-sensitive and guided by the stylistic role of realia within the text rather than by lexical considerations alone.

Discussion

The analysis demonstrates that the translation of realia is inseparable from the preservation of writer's style. Realia function not only as cultural references but also as stylistic devices that shape narrative voice and aesthetic impact. Translators who prioritize semantic equivalence at the expense of stylistic function risk producing translations that are accurate yet stylistically deficient.

A stylistically informed approach to realia translation requires an understanding of the author's creative intent and the symbolic value of cultural elements. This approach allows translators to make informed decisions that balance cultural representation and stylistic fidelity.

Conclusion

Preserving the writer's style in the translation of realia remains a central challenge in literary translation. Cultural untranslatability, stylistic neutralization, ideological shifts, and reader-oriented adaptation all contribute to the complexity of this task. The study concludes that effective translation of realia demands a holistic approach that integrates linguistic accuracy, cultural knowledge, and stylistic awareness.

Future research may focus on comparative analyses of multiple translations of the same literary work to further explore how different strategies influence the preservation of authorial style.

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