

CULTURAL WORLDVIEW IN TRANSLATION: COGNITIVE AND LINGUISTIC CHALLENGES

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Abstract: This article investigates the role of cultural worldview in translation and examines the cognitive and linguistic challenges that arise when transferring meaning across different cultural systems. Cultural worldview refers to the shared cognitive framework, beliefs, values, and conceptual structures through which a speech community interprets reality. Since language is deeply embedded in culture, translation inevitably involves not only linguistic decoding but also cognitive reconstruction of meaning. The study adopts a qualitative analytical approach based on theoretical review and illustrative examples from literary and cultural texts. The findings reveal that translators face significant difficulties in handling culturally specific concepts, metaphors, idiomatic expressions, and conceptual metaphors that are rooted in distinct worldviews. The article highlights that translation is a cognitive act of interpretation rather than a mechanical linguistic transfer. It also discusses key strategies such as domestication, foreignization, cultural substitution, and explication. The study concludes that successful translation depends on the translator's intercultural competence and cognitive flexibility in reconstructing meaning across cultural boundaries.

Keywords: cultural worldview, translation, cognitive linguistics, intercultural communication, equivalence, cultural adaptation, linguistic challenges

Аннотация. В данной статье исследуется роль культурной картины мира в переводе, а также анализируются когнитивные и лингвистические трудности, возникающие при переносе смыслов между различными культурными системами. Культурная картина мира понимается как общая когнитивная база, убеждения, ценности и концептуальные структуры, посредством которых языковое сообщество интерпретирует окружающую действительность. Поскольку язык глубоко укоренен в культуре, перевод неизбежно включает в себя не только лингвистическое декодирование, но и когнитивную реконструкцию смысла. В исследовании применяется качественный аналитический подход, основанный на теоретическом обзоре и иллюстративных примерах из художественных и культурологических текстов. Результаты исследования показывают, что переводчики сталкиваются со значительными трудностями при работе с культурно-специфическими концептами, метафорами, идиоматическими выражениями и концептуальными метафорами, укорененными в различных картинах мира. В статье подчеркивается, что перевод является когнитивным актом интерпретации, а не механическим лингвистическим переносом. Также рассматриваются такие ключевые стратегии, как доместикация (одомашнивание), форенизация (очуждение), культурная субституция (замена) и экспликация (разъяснение). В исследовании делается вывод о том, что успешность перевода зависит от межкультурной компетенции и когнитивной гибкости переводчика при реконструкции смысла на стыке культурных границ.

Ключевые слова: культурная картина мира, перевод, когнитивная лингвистика, межкультурная коммуникация, эквивалентность, культурная адаптация, лингвистические трудности.

Translation is increasingly understood not as a simple linguistic substitution but as a complex intercultural and cognitive activity. In traditional views, translation was defined as the transfer of meaning from a source language into a target language. However, contemporary translation studies emphasize that meaning is not only encoded in linguistic structures but is also deeply rooted in cultural cognition. One of the most important concepts in this regard is cultural worldview, which refers to the shared system of beliefs, values, metaphors, and cognitive models through which a community interprets reality. Cultural worldview determines how speakers perceive time, space, emotion, social relationships, and abstract concepts, and therefore plays a crucial role in shaping language use.

Because language and culture are inseparable, translation always involves interaction between different cultural worldviews. When two languages belong to significantly different cultural systems, the translator must go beyond linguistic decoding and engage in cognitive reconstruction of meaning. This means that translation is not merely about replacing words with their equivalents but about interpreting the underlying conceptual system of the source text and re-expressing it within the cognitive framework of the target audience. As a result, translation becomes an act of cultural mediation in which the translator acts as an interpreter of meaning between two worldviews.

One of the major challenges in this process is the existence of lexical gaps, also known as cultural lacunae. These are concepts that exist in one culture but have no direct equivalent in another. Such gaps are especially common in culturally specific domains such as traditions, rituals, social practices, and emotional expressions. When translators encounter such elements, they must decide whether to explain, adapt, or replace the concept. Each choice affects the degree of cultural preservation and readability of the translation.

Another significant difficulty is the translation of idiomatic and metaphorical expressions. Idioms and metaphors are deeply embedded in cultural experience and often reflect specific ways of thinking. For example, metaphors related to nature, family, or social hierarchy may carry different meanings across cultures. A literal translation of such expressions often leads to misunderstanding or loss of meaning, since the conceptual basis behind the expression may not exist in the target culture.

Therefore, translators must identify the underlying conceptual metaphor and find an equivalent expression that conveys the same pragmatic effect.

Pragmatic meaning also presents a major challenge in translation. Pragmatics involves aspects such as politeness, tone, implied meaning, and communicative intent. These elements are highly culture-dependent and may not be directly transferable into another language. For instance, forms of address, levels of formality, and indirectness vary significantly across cultures. A failure to correctly interpret pragmatic meaning may result in distortion of interpersonal relations or communicative intent in the translated text.

From a cognitive perspective, translation involves complex mental processes including interpretation, inference, and re-conceptualization. The translator must construct a mental model of the source text and then reconstruct it within the conceptual system of the target language. This requires not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural awareness and cognitive flexibility. The translator must constantly negotiate between two different worldviews, resolving ambiguities and interpreting implicit meanings based on contextual and cultural knowledge.

In order to deal with these challenges, translators use various strategies. Domestication involves adapting the text to the cultural norms of the target audience, making it more accessible but sometimes reducing its cultural authenticity. Foreignization, on the other hand, preserves elements of the source culture, maintaining cultural uniqueness but potentially reducing readability. Cultural substitution is another strategy in which a culturally specific element is replaced with a functionally similar element from the target culture. Explication is also commonly used, where additional information is added to clarify culturally embedded meanings.

The discussion of these strategies shows that translation is not a neutral or mechanical process but an interpretive act shaped by cognitive and cultural factors. The translator plays an active role in reconstructing meaning and mediating between cultural worldviews. This role becomes even more significant in literary and folkloric translation, where meaning is often implicit and deeply symbolic. In such texts, the translator must capture not only the semantic content but also the cultural atmosphere and worldview encoded in the text.

Modern developments in translation technology, particularly machine translation, have further highlighted the importance of cultural worldview. While artificial intelligence systems are highly effective at processing lexical and syntactic structures, they often struggle with culturally embedded meanings, metaphors, and pragmatic nuances. This limitation demonstrates that human translators remain essential in ensuring accurate cultural representation in translation.

In conclusion, cultural worldview is a fundamental factor in translation that significantly influences meaning construction and interpretation. Translation is not merely a linguistic operation but a cognitive and intercultural process that requires deep understanding of both source and target cultures. The main challenges include lexical gaps, idiomatic expressions, pragmatic differences, and conceptual mismatches between cultural systems. Successful translation depends on the translator's ability to navigate these challenges through appropriate strategies such as domestication, foreignization, substitution, and explication. Ultimately, the translator functions as a cultural mediator who reconstructs meaning across different worldviews, ensuring that communication remains meaningful and culturally sensitive across linguistic boundaries.

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