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## HOUSEHOLD LEXICON IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE ALPOMISH EPIC<sup>28</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

This article explores the role of household lexicon in the English translations of the *Alpomish* epic and the strategies employed in its translation. The issues of identifying, classifying, and evaluating the methods used to render household lexical units of the epic into English have been examined. The article analyses the place of household lexicon as a cultural lacuna in translation theory. The problem of linguistic and cultural divergences between Uzbek and English – particularly the absence of direct equivalents for such words as *do‘ppi*, *kebanak*, *to‘n*, *ipakro‘mol*, and *bahmaluyin* in English – and the considerable difficulties this situation creates for translators have been highlighted. The comparative, contrastive, and descriptive methods of analysis employed in the study, as well as the criteria for dividing household lexicon into three semantic and cultural categories – clothing and adornments.

Based on the findings of the analysis, the principal strategies employed by translators – transliteration, descriptive translation, analogue translation, calque, and omission – have been discussed in detail. The distinctive advantages and limitations of each strategy, as well as the fact that none of them can fully ensure the preservation of cultural connotations, have been elaborated. In conclusion, the article emphasizes that household lexicon constitutes an important element reflecting the cultural distinctiveness of the *Alpomish* epic as a significant work of oral literature, and substantiates that the target audience, the communicative purpose of the text, and the degree of cultural divergence must serve as the primary criteria in selecting an appropriate translation strategy.

### KEYWORDS

Alpomish epic, household lexicon, cultural lacunae, translation strategies, transliteration, descriptive translation, analoguetranslation, equivalence, calque, Uzbek culture, lexical gaps.

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**“ALPOMISH” EPOSINING INGLIZCHA TARJIMASIDA MAISHIY  
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ANNOTATSIYA	KALIT SO‘ZLAR
<p>Ushbu maqolada “Alpomish” dostonining ingliz tilidagi tarjimasida maishiy leksikaning o‘rni va uni tarjima qilishda qo‘llaniladigan strategiyalar yoritilgan. Dostondagi maishiy leksik birliklarni aniqlash, tasniflash va ularning ingliz tiliga o‘g‘irishida qo‘llaniladigan usullarni baholash masalalari ko‘rib chiqilgan. Maqolada maishiy leksikaning madaniy lakuna sifatida tarjima nazariyasida alohida o‘rin tutishi tahlil qilingan. O‘zbek va ingliz tillari o‘rtasidagi lingvistik va madaniy tafovutlar – xususan, <i>do‘ppi</i>, <i>kebanak</i>, <i>to‘n</i>, <i>ipak ro‘mol</i> va <i>bahma luy</i> kabi so‘zlarning ingliz tilida to‘liq ekvivalentining yo‘qligi muammosi va uning tarjimonlar uchun keltirib chiqaradigan qiyinchiliklari yoritilgan. Tadqiqotda qo‘llaniladigan qiyosiy, kontrastiv va tavsifiy tahlil usullari hamda maishiy leksikani uchta semantik-madaniy toifaga – kiyim-kechak va bezaklar; oziq-ovqat va ichimliklar; turar joy va maishiy buyumlar – ajratish mezonlari asoslab berilgan. Maqolada tahlil natijalari asosida tarjimonlar tomonidan qo‘llaniladigan asosiy strategiyalar transliteratsiya, tavsifiy tarjima, analog tarjima, kalkalash va tushirib qoldirish kabilar batafsil muhokama qilingan. Har bir strategiyaning o‘ziga xos afzalliklari va kamchiliklari, shuningdek, hech birining madaniy konnotatsiyalarning to‘liq saqlanishini ta‘minlay olmasligi masalalari ochib berilgan. Xulosa sifatida maqolada maishiy leksikaning “Alpomish” dostonining madaniy o‘ziga xosligini aks ettiruvchi muhim epik asar ekanligi ta‘kidlangan hamda uni tarjima qilishda maqsadli auditoriya, matnning kommunikativ maqsadi va madaniy tafovut darajasi asosiy mezon bo‘lib xizmat qilishi lozimligi asoslab ko‘rsatilgan.</p>	<p>“Alpomish” eposi, maishiy leksika, madaniy lakunalar, tarjima strategiyalari, transliteratsiya, tasviriy tarjima, analog, ekvivalentlik, kalka, o‘zbek madaniyati, leksik bo‘shliqlar.</p>

**БЫТОВАЯ ЛЕКСИКА В АНГЛИЙСКИХ ПЕРЕВОДАХ  
ЭПОСА «АЛПАМЫШ»****Шомуратова Интизор Бекчан кизи***Докторант Ургенчского государственного  
университета имени Абу Райхана Беруни**Ургенч, Узбекистан**E-mail: [intizor.sh@urdu.uz](mailto:intizor.sh@urdu.uz)**ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5875-9528***АННОТАЦИЯ**

В данной статье рассматривается роль бытовой лексики в английских переводах эпоса «Алпамыш» и стратегии, применяемые при её передаче. Исследованы вопросы выявления, классификации и оценки методов, используемых при переводе бытовых лексических единиц эпоса на английский язык. В статье анализируется место бытовой лексики как культурной лакуны в теории перевода. Освещены проблема лингвистических и культурных расхождений между узбекским и английским языками, в частности, отсутствия полных эквивалентов таких слов, как *do'ppi*, *kebanak*, *to'n*, *ipakro'mol*, и *bahmal* и у в английском языке, а также серьёзные трудности, которые данное обстоятельство создаёт для переводчиков. Обоснованы сравнительный, контрастивный и описательный методы анализа, применяемые в исследовании, а также критерии разделения бытовой лексики на три семантико-культурные категории: одежда и украшения; еда и напитки; жилище и предметы быта.

По результатам анализа подробно рассмотрены основные стратегии, применяемые переводчиками: транслитерация, описательный перевод, аналоговый перевод, калькирование и опущение, раскрыты характерные преимущества и недостатки каждой стратегии, а также сделан вывод о том, что ни одна из них не способна обеспечить полного сохранения культурных коннотаций.

В заключение в статье подчёркивается, что бытовая лексика является важным элементом, отражающим культурную самобытность эпоса «Алпомиш» как значимого произведения устного народного творчества, и обосновывается, что основными критериями при выборе соответствующей стратегии перевода должны служить целевая аудитория, коммуникативная цель текста и степень культурного расхождения.

**КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА**

Эпос «Алпамыш», бытовая лексика, культурные лакуны, стратегии перевода, транслитерация, описательный перевод, аналог, эквивалентность, калька, узбекская культура, лексические лакуны.

## INTRODUCTION

The *Alpomish* epic is one of the most outstanding examples of Uzbek oral folk literature, representing an immense cultural legacy that has been passed down from generation to generation over centuries. This epic is not merely a heroic poem; it is also a great encyclopedia reflecting the history, customs, way of life, values, and spiritual world of the Uzbek people. The cultural significance of the epic is clearly manifested in its distinctive language – including the lexical units pertaining to everyday life, known as “household lexicon”.

Household lexicon brings the heroes’ world to life and serves to depict their social environment, customs, daily activities, and mutual relations in a realistic manner. The translation of the *Alpomish* epic into English plays an important role in introducing Uzbek culture to an international audience. However, such translations encounter considerable difficulties – particularly in conveying cultural lacunae.

Everyday language often carries deep cultural layers and encompasses concepts that are difficult to render directly from one language to another. For this reason, translating this type of lexicon effectively requires not only preserving the semantic accuracy of the text but also its pragmatic impact and cultural resonance. A translated text should be the site where a different culture emerges, where a reader gets a glimpse of a cultural other, and resistance, a translation strategy based on an aesthetic of discontinuity, can best preserve that difference, that otherness, by reminding the reader of the gains and losses in the translation process and the unbridgeable gaps between cultures (Venuti L., 1995, 306). This study aims to examine the place of household lexicon in the English translations of *Alpomish*, the methodology for identifying and analyzing it, and the strategies employed during the translation process. The article demonstrates the importance of household lexicon in conveying the cultural essence of the epic to foreign readers and discusses the main challenges translators face, together with ways of overcoming them.

The primary objective of this article is to identify and classify household lexicon in *Alpomish* and to analyze the strategies applied in its translation into English. The following tasks have been set to achieve this goal:

- 1) to identify household lexical units in the English translations of the epic and compile a list of them;
- 2) to classify the identified lexical units from semantic and cultural perspectives;
- 3) to determine the strategies applied in translation and evaluate their effectiveness;
- 4) to examine the degree to which cultural connotations are transferred.

The problem of translating household lexicon is intrinsically connected in translation theory with the question of cultural lacunae. The concept of lacunae

denotes objects, customs, and cultural aspects peculiar to a given language or geographical region (Pym A., 2014, 7-9). The process of translating these elements – especially in conditions where the linguistic and cultural gaps between English and Uzbek have widened – gives rise to distinctive difficulties.

Translation is a process that involves looking for similarities between languages and cultures – particularly similar messages and formal techniques – but it does this only because it is constantly confronting dissimilarities (Venuti L., 1995, 306). Cultural differences frequently lead to the absence of direct lexical equivalents. It is therefore important in the translation process to take various factors systematically into account: it is necessary to provide translations that are semantically precise as well as deeply appropriate to the cultural context of the target language. This common procedure, applied to cultural words, requires the use of a culture-free word, sometimes with a new specific term; it therefore neutralises or generalises the SL word (Newmark P., 1988, 100).

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Although lexical gaps have consistently been at the centre of academic attention, systematic empirical research on translation strategies aimed at addressing them in their full complexity remains insufficient. As noted above, while scholars have developed translation strategies covering specific manifestations of gaps – such as cultural references (e.g., Božović, 2021; Needergerd-Larsen, 1993; Pearson, 2003; Pedersen, 2011; Sentov, 2017), realia (e.g., Kniazkova, 2019), and allusions (e.g., Leppihalme, 1997; Rahimkhani and Salmani, 2013) – this has led to knowledge about handling untranslatable cases in translation remaining fragmented.

Studies that have directly examined the question of how to handle lexical gaps in translation (e.g., Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995, and Barkhudarov, 1975) are today outdated and largely descriptive in character. These works rely on the authors' personal observations and judgements, and are characterised by varied data collected often without sufficient consistency.

Several approaches to conveying cultural lacunae exist within translation theory. Newmark proposed the use of cultural equivalents, neologisms, descriptive approaches, and contextual glosses in translating lacunae. Vinay and Darbelnet's taxonomy distinguishes between direct translation and oblique translation methods. Lawrence Venuti (1995) distinguished between “domestication” (adaptation to the target culture) and “foreignization” (preservation of the source culture) strategies, discussing the consequences of each approach for retaining cultural specificity and rendering the text comprehensible to the receiving reader. In the context of epics such as *Alpomish*, this choice is especially significant, since the epic reflects the distinctive culture of the Uzbek people (Nord, 1997, 12).

By household lexicon is meant the words and expressions used in everyday life that relate to household objects, clothing, food, customs, social relations, and natural phenomena. Lexicon of this type frequently embodies unique elements of the source culture, which makes finding an accurate equivalent in the target language particularly difficult. The source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food. Such concepts are often referred to as “culture-specific” (Baker M., 2011, 21). Words such as *do‘ppi*, *chapan*, *o‘choq*, *qimiz*, *palov*, *mehmonxona* (as part of the home), *oqsoqol* and *kelin-salom* are deeply embedded in Uzbek culture and have no single-word equivalents in English. Although previous studies have analysed anthroponyms, linguopoetic aspects, phraseology, and proverbs in the *Alpomish* epic, a thorough and systematic analysis specifically of household lexicon has not yet been sufficiently undertaken.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs three complementary research methods: comparative, contrastive, and descriptive analysis. The comparative method was applied to compare the source text of the *Alpomish* epic with its English translations, thereby identifying how household lexical units are rendered across different versions and what differences exist between the translators’ choices. This method made it possible to establish which translation strategies are predominant and how consistently they are applied. The contrastive method was used to contrast Uzbek household lexicon with corresponding English expressions, highlighting structural and semantic divergences between the two languages. Through this approach, cases of full, partial, and zero equivalence were identified, and the cultural and linguistic factors that give rise to translation difficulties were examined. The descriptive method was employed to systematically describe and categorize the household lexical units identified in the translations. On the basis of semantic and cultural features, the identified units were grouped into the following categories: (1) clothing and adornments (*do‘ppi*, *chapan*, *sarpo*); (2) food and drink (*palov*, *qimiz*, *qovurdoq*); (3) dwellings and household objects (*o‘choq*, *mehmonxona*, *dasturxon*). This classification makes it possible to compare the strategies applied by the translators across each category.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of household lexicon in the *Alpomish* epic revealed that translators employ five principal strategies. The analysis of the selected examples from *Alpomish* demonstrates the application of several translation strategies used to render culture-specific items into English. These include transliteration, descriptive translation, analogue translation, cultural equivalence, and omission. Each strategy

reflects the translator's attempt to balance semantic accuracy, cultural representation, and target audience accessibility. Example:

*Do'ppi, ro'mololayik, deb.*

*Shunday bo'lib odam ketdi (Alpomish, 1998, 188)*

Let's get **duppi** and **rumol**, said she,

Thus, people had gone by crowds (Ma'murov K., Alpomish, 2023, 110)

At its most fundamental level, transliteration resists what Lawrence Venuti terms “domestication” – the tendency to naturalise foreign elements into familiar equivalents that erase cultural difference. By carrying the Uzbek word **do'ppi** into the English text as *duppi*, and *ro'mol* into *rumol* the translator signals that no adequate English equivalent exists, and that inventing one (say, “skullcap” alone) would flatten a culturally loaded object into a generic descriptor. The **do'ppi** is not merely a head covering; it is an artifact of Central Asian identity, tied to region, ethnicity, social occasion, and religious practice. Transliteration preserves this semantic density, even if the target reader cannot immediately decode it. This strategy is especially significant in postcolonial and minority literary contexts, where the source language has historically been subordinated or marginalized. In Uzbek literature translated into English, the choice to retain Uzbek phonetic forms asserts the cultural legitimacy of the source and refuses to dissolve Uzbek particularity into a dominant Western literary framework. Secondly, descriptive translation is widely used to convey the meaning of culturally bound items through explanatory phrases. For instance:

Davlatimdan **sholi-sholdam** o'rayman (*Alpomish, 1998, 34*)

*From my wealth I was wearing silk* (Ma'murov K., Alpomish, 2023, 32)

Although this translation partially communicates the material aspect (silk), it generalizes the meaning and omits the specific cultural function of the item. Similarly, *ovsar*, a specialized camel headgear, is translated as “one and half thousand tanga shawl”, which reflects an attempt at description but results in semantic inaccuracy. For example:

Ming besh yuz tillalik **ovsar** boshida,

Ko'rdim to'qson alpning toy-taloshida (*Alpomish, 1998, 104*)

Yes, she's alive, but is she yours or theirs?

One-and-half-thousand-tanga **shawl** she wears! (Ma'murov K., Alpomish, 2023, 32)

These examples indicate that descriptive translation, while informative, may lead to partial loss of cultural specificity.

The analogy that is functional correspondence is also prominent is the translation of epic *Alpomish*. For example:

*Boshida bor edi zardan jig'asi.* (*Alpomish, 1998, 31*)

*On his head there was a golden crown.* (Ma'murov K., Alpomish, 2023, 30)

In the case of *zardan jig'asi*, translated as *golden crown*, the translator replaces a culturally specific turban ornament with a more universally recognizable symbol of status. Likewise, *jelak* is rendered as *shawl*, emphasizing functional similarity rather than formal equivalence. This approach enhances readability and comprehension but often at the expense of ethnographic precision. The translation of *ipakro'mol* as *silken shawl* exemplifies what Eugene Nida termed dynamic equivalence – a principle that prioritises the reproduction of effect over the reproduction of form. Rather than asking “what does this word mean?”, the translator operating under this principle asks “what does this word **do** to its reader, and how can I replicate that function in the target language?” In this sense, the translator's selection of *shawl* is not an error of knowledge but a deliberate interpretive act: an attempt to locate within the target culture an object that performs a comparable aesthetic and social role. From Lawrence Venuti's perspective, this strategy exemplifies domestication – the practice of assimilating foreign cultural material into the target reader's familiar conceptual world, thereby rendering the translation “fluent” and the translator “invisible”. The strangeness of the source culture is smoothed over in the interest of readerly comfort and narrative flow.

A significant observation in the translation of the *Alpomish* epic is the use of the analogue strategy, where culturally specific Uzbek garments are replaced with broadly similar English terms that approximate their physical or functional qualities but fail to preserve their cultural identity:

*Kebanakka yig'ib ani ko'tarib,*

*Xotinlar man birga-birga boradi.* (Alpomish, 1998, 335)

*On Qultoy's back they would load on,*

*Taking the wool robe and carrying one.* (Ma'murov K., Alpomish, 2023, 281)

A prominent example is the rendering of *kebanak* as “wool robe.” The *kebanak* is not merely a woollen garment – it is a culturally embedded item of clothing associated with the nomadic pastoral life of Central Asian shepherds, carrying deep ethnographic significance tied to region, livelihood, and tradition. By substituting it with the generic English term *wool robe*, the translator prioritises target-reader accessibility over cultural precision.

This approach mirrors what Lawrence Venuti terms domestication – the assimilation of foreign cultural material into the target reader's familiar conceptual world. While *wool robe* successfully conveys the material quality (wool) and general form (a long garment) of the *kebanak*, it strips away its cultural markers entirely. The target reader encounters a familiar, unremarkable object rather than an artifact of Central Asian nomadic culture. The ethnographic richness of the source term – its

association with shepherds, open steppes, and a distinct way of life – is effectively erased in translation.

A notable feature of the translation of the *Alpomish* epic is the application of the calque strategy, whereby compound or multi-element Uzbek expressions are translated into English by rendering each component word literally, thereby preserving the structural form of the original. A striking example of this is the translation of *bahmaluy* as *velvet yurt*:

*Bevaqt borib, bahmal uyga kiradi,*

*Shul zamonda Barchinoyni ko‘radi. (Alpomish, 1998, 335)*

*Into die gloom of the velvet yurt so,*

*There Barchin sits alone, all in the dark. (Ma‘murov K., Alpomish, 2023, 64)*

In Uzbek, *bahmal* means *velvet* – a rich, luxurious fabric associated with wealth and prestige – while *uy* refers to a dwelling, most commonly understood in the nomadic Central Asian context as a yurt. The English rendering *velvet yurt* mirrors this structure precisely, translating each element word-for-word.

This strategy is closely associated with what Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1995, 31) describe as a direct translation method – one that operates at the level of linguistic structure rather than cultural interpretation. Unlike functional equivalence, which replaces the source term with a culturally familiar target-language concept, or domestication, which prioritizes reader comfort, the calque preserves the original compositional logic of the source expression, allowing the target reader to perceive the underlying structure of the Uzbek term.

Another significant observation is the use of omission, where certain culturally marked elements are entirely excluded from the translation. Examples include *to‘n*:

*Uzunli-qisqali to‘ning mo‘l bo‘lsin, (Alpomish, 1998, 211) and Qirq qari bo‘z ko‘ylak bo‘lmas, all of which are absent in the target text. While omission may contribute to textual fluency and brevity, it leads to a considerable loss of cultural and descriptive richness, particularly in references to traditional clothing.*

Additionally, some cases reflect a combination of strategies, such as functional equivalence with partial adaptation, *ipakro‘mol* as *silken shawl*:

*Barchin kep, otni ko‘ribdi, ko‘zlarini ipakro‘mollar bilan surti, changi, terini ushatdi. (Alpomish, 1998, 154)*

*With her beautiful silken shawl,*

*Then with her teeth, she tugged one and all...”, (Ma‘murov K., Alpomish, 2023, 81)*

Here, the translator preserves the material aspect (“silken”) while adapting the item to a more familiar cultural equivalent. Similarly, descriptive expansion is evident in phrases like “*With her beautiful silken shawl*” where the original action

is stylistically elaborated, enhancing the poetic quality but altering the semantic density of the source text. According to the research findings, translators generally prefer transliteration and descriptive translation, since these strategies allow the cultural specificity to be preserved more fully. “A translator must also master the delicate balance of maintaining the message’s integrity while being sensitive to cultural differences. It is about finding equivalence in meaning, not just between words, but also between the cultural contexts that shape those words. This balancing act requires a deep understanding of both the source and target cultures, as well as the discernment to know when to preserve the original message and when to adapt it to fit the cultural framework of the audience” (Asadova A. ,2024). Nevertheless, it is inevitable that all strategies lead to some degree of loss of cultural connotations. The context in which clothing lexicon is used exerts a particularly significant influence on its translation: the same word may require different translation methods in different contexts. For this reason, the communicative purpose of the text, the target audience, and the degree of cultural divergence should be considered the primary criteria in selecting the strategy to be applied during the translation process (Nord, 1997, 47).

### CONCLUSION

Analysis of household lexicon in the English translations of the *Alpomish* epic demonstrates that this type of lexicon not only ensures the semantic richness of the text but also constitutes an important element reflecting the cultural distinctiveness and way of life of the Uzbek people. The study clearly illustrated the complexity of translating cultural lacunae and everyday language – particularly the cultural divergences between English and Uzbek. According to the findings of the analysis, translators employ strategies such as transliteration, descriptive translation, analogue translation, cultural equivalents, and occasionally omission in conveying household lexicon. Each strategy has its own advantages and limitations. Transliteration preserves the original form of a word but may require an explanatory gloss. Descriptive translation ensures comprehensibility but may diminish the poetic tone. Functional equivalents in an analogue translation, meanwhile, can sometimes lead to the loss of cultural connotations.

This study has significant practical and theoretical implications for the cultural representation of the *Alpomish* epic and for the way Uzbek culture is perceived by English-speaking readers. Future research may be directed towards a comparative analysis of household lexicon in translations of the *Alpomish* epic into other languages, as well as towards evaluating translators’ strategies in various cultural contexts.

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