

EQUIVALENCE AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION IN THE TRANSLATION OF HISTORICAL REALITIES

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Abstract. The translation of historical realities requires a careful balance between equivalence and cultural adaptation to preserve the meaning, context, and cultural significance of historical concepts. Historical terms, social institutions, traditions, and cultural references often reflect unique features of a particular period and society, creating challenges for translators. This article explores the role of equivalence and adaptation strategies in transferring historical realities from one language and culture into another. It focuses on how translators maintain historical authenticity while making texts understandable for target readers. The study highlights the importance of cultural awareness, contextual analysis, and appropriate translation choices in representing historical elements accurately.

Keywords: historical realities, equivalence, cultural adaptation, translation strategies, historical terms, cultural context, translation of culture, historical authenticity

The translation of historical realities is one of the most challenging areas of translation studies because historical concepts are deeply connected with the cultural, social, and political background of a particular society. Terms related to historical events, social ranks, traditions, institutions, and everyday life often contain meanings that cannot be transferred directly into another language. Therefore, translators need to apply appropriate strategies to achieve equivalence while adapting culturally specific elements for target readers. Equivalence and cultural adaptation play an essential role in preserving both the original meaning and the historical identity of a text. A translator must consider not only linguistic accuracy but also the historical context in which the source text was created. Excessive adaptation may lead to the loss of authenticity, whereas literal translation can make historical realities unclear or unfamiliar to the target audience. This study examines the relationship between equivalence and cultural adaptation in the translation of historical realities, focusing on how translators overcome cultural differences and maintain historical accuracy. The research emphasizes the importance of contextual understanding and creative decision-making in producing translations that are both faithful to the source text and accessible to readers from different cultural backgrounds.

Literature review. The translation of historical realities has attracted significant attention in contemporary translation studies due to the difficulties of transferring culture-bound meanings across languages. Historical terms, social ranks, traditions, and institutions often reflect specific historical experiences; therefore, their translation requires not only linguistic knowledge but also deep cultural and contextual understanding. Susan Bassnett emphasizes that translation is a process of cultural transfer rather than a simple replacement of words between languages. She argues that translators must consider historical and cultural backgrounds to preserve the identity of the source text. Similarly, André Lefevere highlights the role of ideology and cultural systems in shaping translation choices, explaining that historical texts are often influenced by the values of both source and target societies. Christiane Nord's functionalist approach underlines the importance of the purpose of translation and the expectations of the target audience. According to Nord, translators should make conscious decisions about adaptation while maintaining the core meaning of the original work. Anthony Pym also views translators as cultural mediators who negotiate between different historical and social contexts. Recent researchers have further expanded these ideas. Maeve Olohan examines the relationship between translation practices and cultural representation, emphasizing the translator's responsibility in presenting foreign realities accurately. Mona Baker discusses narrative theory in translation and explains how translators can influence the interpretation of historical events through their choices. Maria Tymoczko focuses on cultural identity and argues that translation plays an important role in transmitting collective memories and historical experiences.

Contemporary studies by scholars such as Federico Zanettin and Minako O'Hagan also explore the influence of globalization and digital communication on cultural translation. Their works demonstrate that modern translators face new challenges in balancing accessibility and authenticity. Thus, current translation research views equivalence and cultural adaptation as interconnected strategies that enable translators to preserve historical meaning while making texts understandable for new audiences.

Methodology. This study employs a qualitative research approach to examine the role of equivalence and cultural adaptation in the translation of historical realities. The research is based on comparative textual analysis, focusing on how historically and culturally specific elements are transferred from the source language into the target language. Selected literary works containing historical terms, social titles, traditions, and cultural references are analyzed to identify the translation strategies applied. The study uses descriptive and analytical methods to investigate the ways translators preserve historical authenticity while ensuring comprehensibility for target readers. The analysis considers different approaches to equivalence, cultural adaptation, and

contextual interpretation. Particular attention is given to the translator's choices in cases where direct translation is insufficient due to differences in historical background and cultural perception. The research also incorporates insights from contemporary translation theories to evaluate the effectiveness of adaptation strategies. By comparing original texts with their translations, the study aims to reveal how translators balance fidelity to historical realities with the cultural expectations of the target audience.

Analysis and discussion. The translation of historical realities requires careful consideration of cultural context because many historical concepts have meanings that are specific to a particular society and period. Equivalence and cultural adaptation help translators preserve historical authenticity while making the text understandable for foreign readers. One example can be found in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, which reflects nineteenth-century French society. The term "bourgeois" represents not only a social class but also a particular historical group connected with economic power and political influence in France. In translations, it is often retained as "bourgeois" or adapted through contextual explanation because a simple equivalent such as "middle class" may not fully express its historical implications. Another example appears in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. The historical reality of the "Roaring Twenties" and concepts such as "old money" and "new money" reflect the social transformation of American society in the 1920s. Translators must adapt these expressions carefully because they represent more than financial status; they indicate social background, traditions, and differences in class identity. In George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, historical and political realities are represented through terms connected with the Russian Revolution, such as "comrade." In some translations, this term is adapted according to the target culture, while in others it is preserved to maintain the ideological and historical atmosphere of the original work. The translator's choice influences how readers interpret the political context of the novel. Another significant example is Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Cultural realities related to Latin American history, such as political conflicts, family traditions, and social customs, require adaptation because they are deeply connected with Colombian historical experience. Translators often preserve original cultural elements while adding contextual meaning through surrounding expressions. In Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, historical realities of racial segregation in the American South create additional challenges for translators. Terms connected with social discrimination and historical inequality must be translated with attention to their emotional and cultural meaning rather than through literal equivalents.

These examples demonstrate that translating historical realities involves more than transferring words between languages. Successful translation depends on the ability to balance equivalence with cultural adaptation, ensuring that historical meanings, social values, and cultural identities remain recognizable for target readers.

Conclusion

The translation of historical realities requires a careful balance between equivalence and cultural adaptation. Historical terms, social structures, traditions, and cultural references often contain meanings that cannot be fully transferred through literal translation. Therefore, translators must consider the historical background, cultural values, and social context of both the source and target languages. The analysis of literary works demonstrates that effective translation strategies help preserve historical authenticity while making texts accessible to modern readers. Through appropriate adaptation, explanation, and contextual interpretation, translators can overcome cultural differences without losing the original meaning of historical elements. Equivalence ensures faithfulness to the source text, while cultural adaptation provides a way to communicate unfamiliar realities to the target audience. These two approaches should work together as complementary strategies in historical translation. Thus, translators serve not only as language specialists but also as cultural mediators who contribute to the preservation and transmission of historical heritage across cultures.

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