

OVERCOMING CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS: TRANSLATING TABOOS “IT ENDS WITH US” FROM ENGLISH INTO UZBEK

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ABSTRACT

Translation is not only a linguistic activity but is considered to be a part of culture. Culture and Language as two parts of one whole, deliver the peculiarities of one nation to others. This article highlights those cultural constraints, namely taboo which is considered to be a delicate and sometimes disturbing subject to deal with, even for specialist translators. This article deals with the social and cultural aspects of language. The study aims to analyze strategies used to translate taboos in the American best-seller book “It Ends with Us” by Colleen Hoover into Uzbek.

Keywords: *Literary translation, English-Uzbek, taboo, “It Ends with Us”, target audience, culture, source language.*

INTRODUCTION

There are different cultures and languages in the world, through which communication occurs. Therefore, translation has become an integral and important task in our daily lives. That is why, different works of different cultures have always been translated. One important genre that has always been taken into account for decades is literary translation. It carries all the stories from history, cultures, and social lives of many nations throughout the world. Knowing and understanding their translation just like you are reading their original version is considered to be the best compliment and challenging mission for all translators. As all nations have their cultural constraints, other non-native people cannot relate. Newmark stated that translation is the rendering of meaning into another language the way it is intended by the author. Therefore, the first goal of the translator is to understand the message expressed in the source language (SL) and then convey it to the target language (TL). Understanding the message involves analyzing the meaning of every word and unit of context in the sentence and figuring out how to convey a meaningful functional equivalent in the target language.

Translating taboos is regarded as one of the most complicated issues that a translator can face because taboos have different cultural functions differing in every language.

Taboo as an inseparable part of the natural language, can be met in everyone's daily life in one way or another. Many types of taboos exist in every culture, such as words and expressions related to religion, the human body, gender, and other related topics.

The Encyclopedia of Social Sciences (1937) defines taboo as “a negative sanction whose infringement results in an automatic penalty without human”. Steiner explains it as “any prohibitions which carry no penalties beyond the anxiety and embarrassment arising from a breach of strongly entrenched custom”.

Taboos differ from one society to another relying on mentality, religion, beliefs, culture, and many other aspects. The term taboo is derived from Polynesian and introduced by Captain James Cook whose concept is that "Prohibition" is fixed and unchanging. The ones who break it will be hit by "Tulah", Laksana (2009).

The word taboo is culturally, socially, and religiously forbidden and more frequently is used in everyday speech in one way or another. Taboo words and notions are mostly universal, used differently by people depending on their culture, race, religion, gender, age and etc.

Native Uzbek translators usually show great concern and cautiousness while rendering certain Western works for Uzbek readers. It is very crucial for Uzbek society to protect their mentality, religious, and social background which at the same time, frames the incoming information, and materials, especially existing disturbing notions for them. This article also examines taboos, which can be defined as immoral or explicit content that is found unacceptable by the target audience. According to Allan “tabooed words are those considered offensive, shocking, or indecent when used in certain contexts”.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Different scholars have carried out several researches on translation studies (Al-Harashseh & Al-Omari, 2019; Hijjo & Kaur, 2017; Yuan, 2018, etc.) while some others paid attention to translating cultural constraint expressions such as tabo

(Debbas & Haider, 2020; Abdelaal & Al Sarhani, 2021; Erkinov, 2022; Kadyrova, 2023;). This study takes a cultural approach to translation, which represents a theoretical and methodological shift in translation studies.

There are huge differences between Central Asian and Western ideologies. This explains that translators should take into consideration everything accordingly and yet accomplish a very challenging mission of producing equivalent translations in the target language. Here translators can use the best tools for them which is translation strategies to overcome cultural barriers when faced with taboos in the process. A translation strategy can be defined as "a potentially conscious procedure for solving a problem faced in translating a text, or any segment of it".

METHODOLOGY

Dealing with taboos in translation has been thoroughly investigated by different scholars. However, Uzbek translation studies lack enough information and detailed manuals for translators in this matter. For this purpose, the current study explores the strategies and quality checks the strategies used in the process of translating the famous American best-seller novel "It Ends with Us" by Colleen Hoover. The aim for choosing the current novel is mostly because of its rising fame not only in the USA but also throughout the world since it was published. Uzbek auditory has easy access to this book both in original and translated versions. The question arises about its language and its suitability.

It Ends with Us is a contemporary fiction novel written by Colleen Hoover, and published in 2016. The book has gained significant popularity for its exploration of complex social issues within a romantic narrative. The novel delves into themes of domestic violence, trauma, and personal resilience.

While *It Ends with Us* falls under the romance genre, it goes beyond the traditional romance novel by tackling complex and often taboo topics. The central narrative revolves around Lily Bloom, a young woman who finds herself embroiled in a turbulent relationship while facing the realities of abuse. In this storyline, Hoover tackles topics that are often stigmatized in society, such as domestic violence, intimacy, and swearing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural aspects cannot be easily translated from one language into another. The study focuses on main categories of taboo, such as religious remarks and taboos itself, which seem to pose challenges for translators when they try to convey their meaning appropriately for an Uzbek audience.

Table 1. Chapter 2.

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Uzbek translation</i>	<i>Back translation</i>
Lucy: - Lucky b*tch.	Omading bor ekan.	You are lucky.

In this scene, Lucy, Lily’s roommate mentions how lucky she is that she does not have to work on Monday. Here, the swearing word “b*tch” is used to add exaggeration to the meaning. Uzbek culture strictly avoids such words in daily conversation and it is considered as offensive. Translator took this into consideration and used the *omission strategy* in this case.

Table 2. Chapter 2.

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Uzbek translation</i>	<i>Back translation</i>
Lily: - I always wonder what you’re like at your home when it’s just you and Portia and the cameras aren’t around.	Porsha bilan kameralar bo’lmagan payt uyingizda qay olatda bo’lishingiz haqida xayol suraman.	I wonder what you’re like when you and Portia are at home without cameras.

The main hero, Lily always writes letters to her favorite celebrity Ellen DeGeneres, and never sends them to her. In this case, she mentions her significant other Portia. Ellen DeGeneres is a famous homosexual celebrity and married to a woman called Portia. Here, the translator used the strategy called *direct translation*. In direct translation, translators render ST lexical items literally. That would be an issue for the reader of a conservative and religious society to read about homosexual people. However, mentioning a foreign name would not expose this notion to the target audience, and probably readers would just ignore it.

Table 3. Chapter 2.

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Uzbek translation</i>	<i>Back translation</i>
Lily: - Has a boy's voice ever done that to you? Oh, wait. Sorry. Has a girl's voice ever done that to you?	Senda biror marta erkak kishining ovozini eshitgandan keyin shunday holat kuzatilganmi hech?	Have you ever felt this way when you heard the voice of a man?

In this scene, Lily again writes letters to Ellen, explaining how she felt when she heard the voice of Atlas. Then she asks her if she ever felt this way when she heard the voice of a man and corrects herself remembering that she is homosexual. Here, the translator just omits the second correction by Lily, knowing that it would be a direct exposition of homosexuality to the audience whose beliefs and culture are different than West.

Table 4. Chapter 3.

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Uzbek translation</i>	<i>Back translation</i>
Allysa: - I don't really need a job, I just saw the sign and thought, 'What the heck?'	Menga ish kerak emas, shunchaki e'lonni ko'rib "Nega endi bo'lmas ekan?" deb o'ylab qoldim.	I don't need a job, I just saw the sign and thought "Why not?"

Here, Allysa comes to the new store of Lily and offers her help mentioning she can be helpful, even though she does not really need a job, as her husband is rich. Here, the expression "What the heck?" is widely used not only in literary books but also in spoken English for the purpose of showing surprise or anger. However, existing offensive words in this expression makes it impossible to translate directly. That is why, the translator used a strategy of *euphemism*, reshaping the information but delivering the meaning.

Moreover, the novel has many inappropriate scenes related to the main heroes engaging in intimate relations, which were deleted wholly from the translation or replaced with one sentence hinting at that.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to identify cultural constraints, especially taboo in the American best-seller novel “It Ends with Us”, and the ways and strategies used by the translator. Deletion, Omission, and Euphemism were the most used strategies by the translator.

The omission was used due to cultural restrictions, as the translator noted that the restrictions of the target culture sometimes make it difficult to translate some curse words and taboo words into Uzbek, especially those that are perceived as very derogatory and unacceptable.

The second most common strategy is euphemistic translation, which is expected. Uzbek society is conservative, and therefore some curse words and taboo words are very offensive. To avoid such subtle offensiveness and rudeness, the translator decided to render many curse words and taboo words euphemistically.

The quality of literary works is a crucial matter that needs to be addressed by the specialists. It is recommended for translators to pay enough attention to the target culture so as not to subject the target audience to inappropriate content.

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