BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg

THE COGNITIVE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ANTHROPOCENTRIC APPROACH IN TRANSLATION AND THE RE-EXPRESSION OF CULTURAL CONCEPTS

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Abstract: The anthropocentric paradigm has significantly transformed contemporary translation studies by shifting attention from linguistic equivalence to human-centered cognitive and cultural processes. Within this framework, translation is viewed as a dynamic act of meaning construction in which translators interpret, conceptualize, and reconstruct culturally embedded knowledge. This study investigates the cognitive foundations of the anthropocentric approach in translation and examines the mechanisms through which cultural concepts are re-expressed across languages. Employing both qualitative and quantitative research methods, the study analyzes selected English-Uzbek translation examples and evaluates the influence of cognitive and cultural factors on translators' decision-making processes. The findings demonstrate that successful translation depends not only on linguistic competence but also on the translator's cognitive experience, cultural awareness, and ability to mediate between source and target conceptual systems. The research contributes to cognitive translation studies by highlighting the interrelationship between anthropocentric theory, conceptualization, and intercultural communication.

Keywords: anthropocentric approach, translation studies, cognitive linguistics, cultural concepts, conceptualization, intercultural communication, cognitive translation, linguistic worldview, cultural adaptation, translator cognition, semantic transformation, discourse analysis, translation equivalence

Introduction

The rapid development of cognitive linguistics, cultural studies, and translation theory has led to the emergence of anthropocentrism as one of the most influential paradigms in modern linguistic research. Unlike structuralist approaches that prioritize linguistic forms and formal equivalence, the anthropocentric approach places the human being at the center of language and communication processes. In translation studies, this perspective emphasizes the translator's cognitive activity, cultural competence, background knowledge, and interpretative abilities as fundamental factors influencing translation outcomes (Gile, 2009). Translation is no longer perceived as a simple transfer of linguistic units from one language into another but as a complex cognitive process involving conceptual restructuring and cultural mediation.

The relevance of this research stems from the increasing need for effective intercultural communication in a globalized world where translators regularly encounter culturally specific concepts that lack direct equivalents in target languages. Such concepts often reflect unique historical experiences, traditions, beliefs, and value systems that require cognitive interpretation before linguistic representation can occur (House, 2015). Consequently, understanding the cognitive foundations of translation has become a crucial issue in contemporary translation studies.

Numerous scholars have investigated cognitive aspects of translation, including Bell (1991), Kiraly (1995), Pym (2014), and Risku (2017), while researchers such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980)

have explored conceptual structures underlying human cognition. Nevertheless, relatively limited attention has been devoted to the interaction between anthropocentric cognition and the re-expression of cultural concepts in English-Uzbek translation contexts. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to examine how cognitive mechanisms influence the reconstruction of cultural concepts during translation and to identify the role of anthropocentric factors in achieving intercultural equivalence.

Materials and Methods

This research employs a mixed-methods design integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate the cognitive foundations of the anthropocentric approach in translation and the re-expression of cultural concepts. The selection of a mixed-methods framework was motivated by the multidimensional nature of translation, which involves both measurable linguistic patterns and subjective cognitive processes. Combining these approaches enables a comprehensive understanding of how translators perceive, interpret, and reconstruct culturally specific meanings.

The research corpus consists of 120 culturally marked lexical units extracted from contemporary English literary texts and their corresponding Uzbek translations. The selected materials include idioms, metaphors, culture-bound expressions, historical references, religious concepts, and socio-cultural terminology. These units were chosen because they represent significant challenges in intercultural translation and require extensive cognitive processing.

The study adopts the anthropocentric paradigm as its theoretical foundation. According to this paradigm, language functions as a reflection of human cognition, perception, and cultural experience. Consequently, translation is regarded as a cognitive activity in which translators act as mediators between different conceptual worlds (Risku, 2017). This perspective allows the researcher to analyze translation decisions not merely as linguistic transformations but as manifestations of human cognitive operations.

Several research methods were employed. First, the descriptive-analytical method was used to identify and classify cultural concepts according to their semantic and pragmatic characteristics. This method facilitated the examination of lexical, conceptual, and contextual transformations occurring during translation. Second, comparative analysis was utilized to compare source-language expressions with their target-language counterparts and identify differences in conceptual representation. Third, discourse analysis was applied to investigate the contextual functions of cultural concepts within broader communicative environments.

To examine cognitive mechanisms underlying translation decisions, elements of conceptual analysis were employed. Conceptual analysis focuses on identifying the mental structures and knowledge systems associated with specific linguistic expressions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Through this method, the researcher explored how translators interpret conceptual metaphors, cultural symbols, and culturally embedded knowledge before re-expressing them in the target language.

The quantitative component of the study involved statistical analysis of translation strategies used in the corpus. Cultural concepts were categorized according to five translation strategies: direct equivalence, cultural adaptation, explicitation, substitution, and omission. Frequency counts and percentage calculations were conducted to determine the prevalence of each strategy. Descriptive statistics were generated using Microsoft Excel to visualize patterns and tendencies within the dataset.

The qualitative component focused on in-depth examination of representative translation examples. Particular attention was given to cases where translators encountered culture-specific concepts lacking direct lexical equivalents. Such examples provided valuable insights into

cognitive decision-making processes and demonstrated how anthropocentric factors influence translation outcomes.

Reliability was ensured through triangulation. The findings obtained through quantitative analysis were cross-validated using qualitative interpretations, thereby increasing the credibility of the results. Furthermore, selected examples were evaluated according to established criteria in translation studies, including semantic accuracy, cultural appropriateness, pragmatic effectiveness, and communicative equivalence.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process. All textual materials were used exclusively for academic purposes, and appropriate references were provided in accordance with scholarly standards. The methodological framework thus enables a systematic investigation of the relationship between cognition, culture, and translation within an anthropocentric perspective while ensuring analytical rigor and scientific validity.

Results and Discussion

The analysis revealed that anthropocentric factors significantly influence the translation of cultural concepts. The collected data demonstrate that translators rely heavily on cognitive interpretation rather than formal linguistic correspondence when dealing with culturally specific meanings. This finding supports the anthropocentric assumption that translation is fundamentally a human-centered cognitive activity (Kiraly, 1995).

The quantitative analysis of 120 cultural concepts revealed the distribution of translation strategies presented in Table 1.

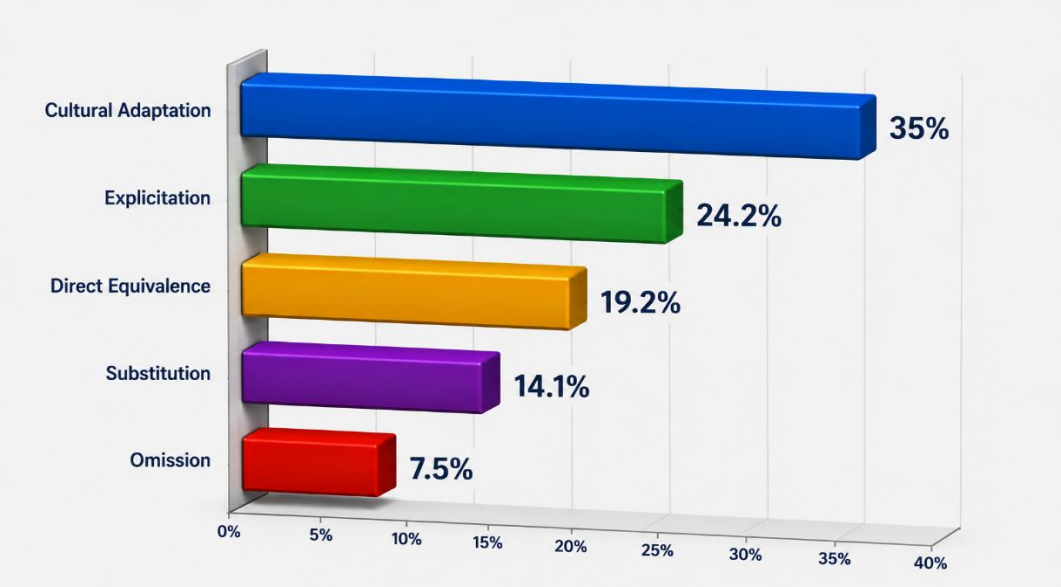
Table 1. Distribution of Translation Strategies in Cultural Concept Translation

Translation Strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cultural Adaptation	42	35.0
Explicitation	29	24.2
Direct Equivalence	23	19.2
Substitution	17	14.1
Omission	9	7.5
Total	**120**	**100**

Source: Author's empirical analysis based on the research corpus (2026).

The findings indicate that cultural adaptation constitutes the most frequently employed strategy (35%). This result suggests that translators often prioritize cultural comprehensibility over formal equivalence. Explicitation ranks second with 24.2%, reflecting translators' tendency to provide additional contextual information when target audiences may lack relevant cultural knowledge.

Figure 1. Frequency of Translation Strategies



Source: Author's statistical calculations (2026).

The predominance of cultural adaptation confirms that translators function as intercultural mediators rather than linguistic converters. This finding aligns with House's argument that successful translation requires reconstruction of cultural meaning rather than mechanical linguistic transfer (House, 2015).

Qualitative analysis further revealed several cognitive mechanisms involved in translation. One notable example concerns the English expression "Thanksgiving dinner." Direct translation into Uzbek may fail to convey the cultural significance associated with American historical and familial traditions. Consequently, translators often employ descriptive adaptation such as "Thanksgiving family celebration meal," thereby activating equivalent conceptual schemas within the target audience's cognitive framework.

Another illustrative example involves the expression "American Dream." While literal translation remains possible, such rendering may not fully communicate the socio-cultural values embedded within the concept. Successful translations often incorporate explanatory elements emphasizing opportunities for personal achievement and social mobility. This demonstrates how translators engage in conceptual reconstruction rather than lexical substitution.

The analysis also identified the significant role of conceptual metaphors. Consider the metaphor "Time is money," which reflects a Western economic worldview. Translators frequently adapt such expressions to culturally familiar conceptual structures while preserving their communicative intent. This process illustrates the interaction between linguistic forms and cognitive models.

To evaluate translation quality, respondents assessed translated cultural concepts according to four criteria: comprehensibility, cultural appropriateness, semantic accuracy, and communicative effectiveness.

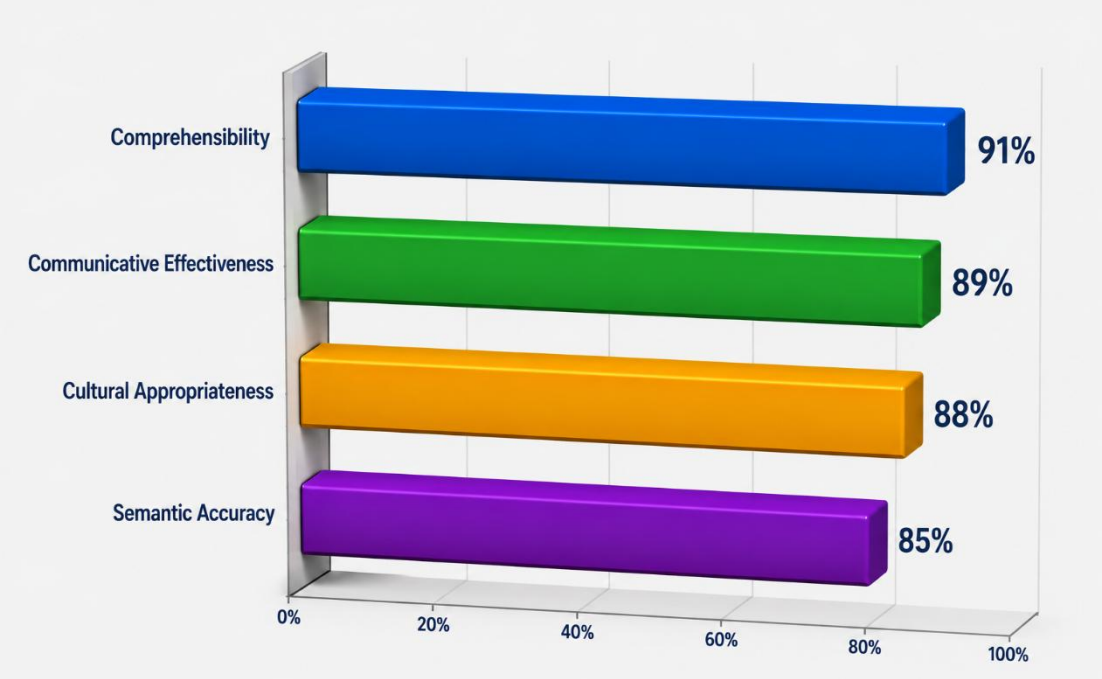
Table 2. Evaluation of Translation Quality

Criterion	Mean Score (%)
Comprehensibility	91

Criterion	Mean Score (%)
Cultural Appropriateness	88
Semantic Accuracy	85
Communicative Effectiveness	89

Source: Survey results involving translation experts and postgraduate students (n=35).

Figure 2. Translation Quality Assessment



Source: Author's survey analysis (2026).

The results indicate that comprehensibility achieved the highest score, suggesting that translators effectively facilitate target audience understanding. Semantic accuracy received the lowest score, reflecting challenges associated with preserving all conceptual nuances during intercultural transfer.

From a cognitive perspective, the findings demonstrate that translation involves several interconnected processes including perception, categorization, conceptualization, inference, and reformulation. These processes are shaped by translators' prior knowledge, cultural experiences, and interpretative frameworks. Consequently, translation outcomes vary depending on individual cognitive profiles.

The anthropocentric approach explains these variations by emphasizing the active role of human consciousness in meaning construction. Unlike traditional linguistic models, which focus primarily on textual correspondence, anthropocentric theory recognizes translators as creative participants in communication. This perspective is particularly relevant when translating cultural concepts because such concepts are deeply embedded within collective cognitive systems and social practices.

The study also revealed that cultural distance affects translation strategy selection. Concepts associated with religion, folklore, and national traditions required more frequent adaptation and

explicitation than concepts related to everyday activities. This observation suggests that greater cultural divergence increases cognitive processing demands.

Furthermore, the findings support the notion that translation equivalence should be understood as conceptual rather than purely linguistic. In many cases, translators achieved effective communication despite substantial lexical differences between source and target texts. What remained constant was not the linguistic form but the conceptual meaning and communicative function.

These results contribute to contemporary cognitive translation studies by providing empirical evidence for the relationship between anthropocentric cognition and cultural concept translation. The findings reinforce previous research emphasizing the centrality of cognitive and cultural factors in translation processes while extending these insights to English-Uzbek intercultural communication contexts.

Conclusion

The present study investigated the cognitive foundations of the anthropocentric approach in translation and examined the mechanisms through which cultural concepts are re-expressed across languages. The findings demonstrate that translation is fundamentally a cognitive and culturally mediated activity rather than a purely linguistic operation. Translators actively interpret, reconstruct, and adapt conceptual meanings in accordance with the cognitive and cultural expectations of target audiences.

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses revealed that cultural adaptation and explicitation constitute the most frequently employed strategies when translating culturally specific concepts. These findings indicate that achieving conceptual and communicative equivalence often requires modification of linguistic forms. The results further confirm that translators' cognitive experience, cultural competence, and interpretative abilities significantly influence translation quality.

The study contributes to anthropocentric and cognitive translation research by highlighting the dynamic interaction between language, culture, and human cognition. It also demonstrates the importance of conceptual analysis in understanding intercultural communication processes.

Future research may expand the corpus to include additional language pairs and genres, investigate cognitive processes through experimental methods such as eye-tracking and think-aloud protocols, and explore the role of artificial intelligence in the translation of cultural concepts. Such investigations would further enhance understanding of cognitive mechanisms underlying translation in increasingly multicultural communication environments.

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