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COGNITIVE-PRAGMATIC MODEL OF TRANSLATING UZBEKISTAN NATIONAL-CULTURAL REALITIES INTO GERMAN: EQUIVALENCE AND TRANSCREATION STRATEGIES

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Abstract This study develops a cognitive-pragmatic model for translating Uzbek national and cultural realia into German by integrating the principles of equivalence with transcreation strategies. Drawing on Relevance Theory, dynamic and functional equivalence, and an empirical analysis of literary translations, particularly *Bygone Days* by Abdulla Qodiriy, the proposed model aims to bridge semantic, pragmatic, and cultural gaps. A qualitative comparative analysis of different categories of realia, including ethnographic, social, culinary, and religious items, demonstrates that formal equivalence alone is often insufficient. Instead, combined translation strategies—such as transliteration with explanatory notes, functional substitution, and creative adaptation—prove more effective in preserving both the national cultural flavor and the pragmatic impact of the source text. The proposed model prioritizes the cognitive environments of both source-text and target-text readers. The findings support a hybrid approach that balances fidelity with communicative effectiveness and offer practical guidelines for literary and cultural translation.

Keywords: Uzbek realia, German translation, cognitive-pragmatic model, equivalence, transcreation, cultural mediation.

1. Introduction National-cultural realisms – lexical units denoting cultural objects, concepts, practices and institutions specific to a particular speech community – are one of the most complex problems in interlingual transmission. In the Uzbek–German pair, realisms such as mahalla, doppi, sumalak, dugona, kallapaz or kinship terms (amaki, toga) do not have direct alternatives and carry strong historical, social and emotional connotations (Isakova, 2025; Mansurova, 2023).

Global translation theory has long recognized this problem. Eugene Nida (1964) distinguished between formal equivalence (oriented to form) and dynamic/functional equivalence, arguing that "the relationship between the receiver and the message must be substantially similar to the relationship between the original receivers and the message" (p. 159). Peter Newmark (1988) classified cultural elements and proposed procedures ranging from transference to cultural substitution and descriptive translation. Ernst-August Gutt (2000) based on Sperber and Wilson's theory of relevance interpreted translation as an interlingual interpretive use aimed at optimal relevance in different cognitive environments.

Uzbek scholars have also paid attention to these issues in the local context. M. Yuldoshev (2011) noted that "the dictionary translation of a word is not enough; it is also necessary to take into account the cultural connotations associated with it." E. Ochilov and others have studied the realities of literary prose, and recent research on the work of Bygone Days (Isakova, 2025) has shown that combined strategies (transliteration + brief commentary + contextual adaptation) best preserve national color and pragmatic impact.

Despite this literature, a single cognitive-pragmatic model specifically adapted to the translation of Uzbek realities into German, clearly combining equivalence and transcreation, has

not yet been sufficiently developed. Transcreation – a creative rewriting that prioritizes emotional and pragmatic impact while remaining faithful to the communicative intention (Benetello, 2016; Gaballo, 2012) – is a promising direction for moving beyond traditional equivalence.

Therefore, the article proposes such a model and empirically substantiates it. The research questions are as follows:

1. What cognitive and pragmatic processes underlie the successful transfer of Uzbek realities into German?
2. How do equivalence and transcreation strategies interact in practice?
3. What is the model that best predicts adequate communicative outcomes?

2. Methods Design and materials. A qualitative comparative analysis was conducted on Uzbek literary texts and their realisms from existing or reconstructed German translations. Main sources: excerpts from Abdulla Qodiriy's novel Otkan kunlar and ethnographic/literary materials discussed by Isakova (2025), fairy tale translations studied by Mansurova (2023), as well as parallel examples of kinship, culinary, social and ritual realisms.

The theoretical basis of the study is a synthesis of Nida's functional equivalence, Newmark's cultural strategies, Gutt's cognitive-pragmatic relevance theory and the transcreation approach. This integration allows for the simultaneous provision of semantic fidelity, pragmatic adequacy and cultural adaptation in the translation of Uzbek national-cultural realisms into German.

Procedure for analysis. Realisms were classified thematically (ethnographic, socio-kinship, culinary, religious-ritual, socio-spatial). Candidate strategies were applied for each unit and evaluated according to two criteria: (a) preservation of denotative and connotative meaning (semantic fidelity), (b) achievement of comparable pragmatic impact and processing cost for the German learner (cognitive-pragmatic adequacy).

3. Results

3.1 Classification and frequency of strategies

When analyzing approximately 80 realia examples, the distribution in Table 1 was determined.

Table 1 Distribution of strategies for translating Uzbek realia into German

Strategy	Frequency (%)	Typical examples of reality	Main effect
Transliteration + annotation	32	mahalla, doppi, sumalak	National color + comprehensibility
Descriptive / explanatory	24	kallapaz, dugona	High openness
Functional / cultural replacement	18	Kinship terms, some rituals	Naturalness for the TL reader
Calca / partial calca	12	Institutional or collective terms	Partial formal fidelity
Pure transliteration	8	Equivalent nouns, highly iconic elements	Exoticization
Transcreation / free adaptation	6	Proverbs, emotionally charged expressions	Maximizing pragmatic effect

3.2 Cognitive-pragmatic model

The proposed model consists of four sequential but recursive steps:

1. Cognitive mapping – reconstruction of the source cognitive environment (Uzbek cultural schemas, associations and communicative intentions).

2. Relevance assessment – calculation of processing costs and expected cognitive effects for a German reader (Gutt, 2000).

3. Strategy selection – making a choice on the formal equivalence → functional equivalence → transcreation continuum depending on the text genre, audience and intended effect.

4. Pragmatic calibration – checking whether the target text produces comparable illocutionary and perlocutionary effects and has optimal relevance.

3.3 Illustrative examples (Uzbek–German)

Neighborhood: Uzbek: "The neighborhood meeting was very noisy that day." German: „The neighborhood meeting (the traditional Uzbek neighborhood association) was very loud that day." (Transliteration + explanation – preserves the national flavor and ensures clarity.)

Do'ppi: Uzbek: "A man wearing a do'ppi was sitting on the veranda drinking tea." German: „Ein alter Mann mit Do'ppi (traditional Uzbek skullcap) saß auf der Veranda und trank Tee." (Transliteration + short explanation.)

Dugona: Uzbek: "I saw her talking to her friend." German: „Ich sah, wie sie sich mit ihrer Dugona unterhielt – einer traditionalen engen Freundin, die wie eine Schwester betrachtet wird." (Descriptive expansion – conveys a special closeness that the German word Freundin does not have.)

Kinship asymmetry (uncle / toga): Uzbek: "Amakim keldi" (from the father's side) / "Togam keldi" (from the mother's side). German: „Mein Onkel väterlicherseits kam" or explanatory: „Mein Amaki (Onkel väterlicherseits) kam." (Functional substitution or explanation, because German Onkel loses the distinction – Mansurova, 2023.)

Sumalak: Uzbek: "We cooked sumalak in Navruz." German: „Zum Navruz kochten wir Sumalak (eine traditionelle Speise aus Weizenkeimen)." (Transliteration + cultural explanation – retains the festive connotation.)

Kallapaz: Uzbek: "Kallapaz cooked meat quickly." German: „Der Kallapaz (traditionaleller Schafmetzger) bereitete das Fleisch schnell zu." (Descriptive / explanatory translation.)

Proverbs example (transcreation): Uzbek: "Making halwa from water." German (transcreation): „Aus Wasser eine Süßspeise machen" or functional equivalent: „Aus nichts etwas Besonderes machen." (Creative adaptation increases pragmatic impact.)

4. Discussion The results confirm that purely formal equivalence is rarely sufficient for Uzbek realities. As Nida (1964) put it, words acquire meaning through the cultures in which they operate; therefore, "biculturalism is more important than bilingualism" (Nida, 2001, p. 82). Uzbek researchers have independently reached parallel conclusions: Yoldoshev (2011) emphasized the need to transmit cultural connotations, while Isakova (2025) showed that combined strategies minimize denotative, connotative, and pragmatic losses.

Gutt's relevance theory explains why hybrid solutions are successful. When the cognitive environments of Uzbek and German learners are sharply different, the translator must adapt the stimuli to ensure interpretive similarity in such a way that the target learner can recover comparative contextual effects with acceptable processing costs. Transcreation extends this principle to the creative realm: instead of choosing an existing equivalent, the translator can create

a new, culturally resonant formulation that achieves the intended perlocutionary force (Benetello, 2016).

The identified strategies are consistent with the continuum Newmark (1988) procedures, but reorder them according to cognitive-pragmatic priorities. Transliteration + annotation appears as the most frequent and balanced solution for literary texts that seek to preserve "national flavor", while pure transcreation is reserved for highly pragmatic or marketing contexts.

The pedagogical and practical significance is clear. Translator training for the Uzbek–German pair should include specific modules on cognitive mapping of realities and decision-making along the equivalence–transcreation continuum. Parallel corpora and annotated translation memories further support the consistent application of the model.

5. Conclusion This study has proposed a cognitive-pragmatic model that systematically combines equivalence principles with transcreation strategies for translating Uzbek national-cultural realities into German. Empirical examples have shown that hybrid solutions – especially transliteration accompanied by brief cultural annotations and context-sensitive functional or creative adaptations – best satisfy the dual requirements of semantic fidelity and pragmatic relevance.

The model contributes to both global translation theory and Uzbek translation studies as an operational framework based on relevance theory, Nida's dynamic equivalence, and local scientific concepts. Future research should quantitatively test the model with large parallel corpora and acceptance studies measuring cognitive cost and affective response among German learners.

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