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METHODS AND PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATING ENGLISH ABBREVIATIONS INTO UZBEK

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilidan o‘zbek tiliga qisqartmalarni tarjima qilishning asosiy usullari va amaliy muammolari tizimli ravishda tahlil qilinadi. To‘g‘ridan-to‘g‘ri o‘zlashtirishdan tortib kalkalash, transkripsiya, tavsifiy tarjima va kombinatsiyalashgan usullargacha bo‘lgan beshta asosiy tarjima metodi ko‘rib chiqiladi. Tibbiyot, huquq, iqtisodiyot va axborot texnologiyalari sohalari bo‘yicha maxsus muammolar o‘rganiladi. Shuningdek, o‘zbek tilining agglyutinativ morfologiyasi, terminologik standartlashtirishning yetishmasligi va madaniy-institusional farqlar kabi asosiy to‘siqlar hamda ularni bartaraf etish yo‘llari ko‘rsatiladi.

Kalit so’zlar: tarjima usullari, qisqartma, o‘zlashtirib tarjima, kalkalash, terminologik standartlashtirish, o‘zbek tili, ingliz tili, ixtisoslashgan tarjima

Annotation: This article presents a systematic analysis of the principal methods and practical problems involved in translating abbreviations from English into Uzbek. Five major translation methods are examined, ranging from direct borrowing and calquing to transcription, descriptive translation, and combined rendering. Specific challenges in the domains of medicine, law, economics, and information technology are investigated, and the principal obstacles to effective abbreviation translation — including the agglutinative morphology of Uzbek, the absence of comprehensive terminological standardization, and cultural-institutional differences — are identified together with systematic approaches to their resolution.

Keywords: translation methods, abbreviation, direct borrowing, calquing, terminological standardization, Uzbek language, English language, specialized translation

Аннотация: В данной статье проводится систематический анализ основных методов и практических проблем перевода аббревиатур с английского на узбекский язык. Рассматриваются пять основных методов перевода, включая прямое заимствование, калькирование, транскрипцию, описательный перевод и комбинированный подход. Исследуются специфические трудности в областях медицины, юриспруденции, экономики и

информационных технологий, а также основные препятствия для эффективного перевода аббревиатур.

Ключевые слова: методы перевода, аббревиатура, прямое заимствование, калькирование, терминологическая стандартизация, узбекский язык, английский язык, специализированный перевод

Introduction

The translation of abbreviations from English into Uzbek constitutes one of the most technically demanding and theoretically complex tasks that a translator working in this language pair is likely to encounter in professional practice. Unlike the translation of ordinary lexical items, where the primary challenge consists in identifying the closest available semantic equivalent in the target language, the translation of abbreviations involves an additional layer of formal complexity arising from the reduced character of the source form. The translator must therefore operate simultaneously on multiple levels, combining terminological research, semantic analysis, structural adaptation, and stylistic judgment in ways that require both broad linguistic competence and deep familiarity with the specific domains in which the abbreviations are used.

The present study addresses the methodological and practical dimensions of translating English abbreviations into Uzbek across three interconnected lines of analysis. The first examines the principal translation methods available to practitioners working in this language pair, identifying the formal properties, applicability conditions, advantages, and limitations of each method. The second investigates the specific challenges that arise when these methods are applied to abbreviations in specialized professional domains including medicine, law, economics, and information technology. The third provides a systematic account of the principal categories of problems encountered in abbreviation translation, together with practical approaches to their resolution. Together, these lines of analysis aim to establish a comprehensive and practically oriented methodological framework for abbreviation translation in the English-Uzbek language pair that is grounded in both theoretical understanding and professional experience.

The significance of this investigation extends beyond the immediate concerns of professional translation practice to engage broader questions about the relationship between language structure, terminological development, and cross-linguistic communication. The English and Uzbek languages differ profoundly in their typological characteristics, their historical development, and their current positions within the global landscape of scientific and professional communication, and these differences create systematic asymmetries in their abbreviation systems that have direct consequences for the translator working between them. An understanding of these asymmetries, and of the methodological strategies through which they can be most effectively navigated, is therefore a prerequisite for the high-quality translation of abbreviated forms and for the progressive development of Uzbek as a language capable of meeting the terminological demands of contemporary professional and scientific communication. [Komissarov, V.N. Teoriya perevoda. Moscow: Vysshaya shkola, 1990. P. 172–178.]

1. Main Methods Used in Translating English Abbreviations into Uzbek

The first and in many contexts the most straightforward method of translating English abbreviations into Uzbek is direct borrowing, which involves the transfer of the abbreviated form from the source language into the target text without any formal modification beyond the orthographic adaptation required by the transition between alphabets. Direct borrowing is most commonly employed in cases where the English abbreviation has already achieved a degree of international currency and is used across multiple languages as a standardized designation for a concept or institution that lacks an established native equivalent in Uzbek. Abbreviations such as DNA, HIV, GPS, and UNESCO are widely used in Uzbek scientific, journalistic, and official discourse in their English abbreviated forms without adaptation or expansion. The justification for this approach rests on the principle of international terminological standardization, according to which the use of a universally recognized abbreviated form across multiple languages facilitates communication among specialists and reduces the risk of misunderstanding.

The practical application of direct borrowing is, however, subject to a significant complication arising from the agglutinative morphology of Uzbek, which requires that nouns appearing in grammatical contexts other than the nominative singular take suffixes encoding case, possession, and number. When a borrowed English abbreviation is used as a noun in a Uzbek sentence, it must in principle accept these suffixes, and the resulting combinations may be phonologically awkward or visually unfamiliar. The standard solution is the use of an apostrophe to mark the boundary between the borrowed form and the grammatical suffix, as in NATO'ga, BMT'ning, and AQSh'da. While this convention has become sufficiently established to be regarded as a norm of contemporary Uzbek written language, it remains a source of stylistic awkwardness that some authors prefer to avoid by choosing alternative translation strategies. [Mirzayev, T. O'zbekiston Milliy Universiteti. Toshkent: Fan, 1998. B. 134–139.]

The second major method is calquing or loan translation, which involves the translation of the source phrase underlying the English abbreviation into Uzbek and the formation of a new Uzbek abbreviated form from the translated phrase. This method has the advantage of producing a target-language abbreviated form that is formally integrated into the Uzbek lexical system and transparently motivated by a Uzbek-language source phrase. Examples of calqued abbreviations in contemporary Uzbek include O'ZMU from O'Zbekiston Milliy Universiteti, corresponding to NUUz, and BMT from Birlashgan Millatlar Tashkiloti, the Uzbek calque of UN. The application of this method requires the translator to determine whether a standard Uzbek equivalent for the source phrase already exists, since unnecessary terminological duplication would confuse readers familiar with established forms. [Newmark, P. A Textbook of Translation. New York: Prentice Hall, 1988. P. 89–95.]

Transcription and transliteration represent a third method through which English abbreviations may be rendered in Uzbek, particularly in cases where the abbreviated form has become widely known internationally and is recognized by Uzbek readers in a phonologically adapted form. Transcription involves the representation of the pronunciation of the English abbreviated form using Uzbek alphabet letters, while transliteration involves the letter-by-letter conversion of the English orthographic form. In practice, the distinction between these two processes is not always clearly maintained in Uzbek translation, and many adapted forms combine elements of both. This approach is most common in informal and journalistic registers, where the priority is communicative accessibility rather than terminological precision.

Descriptive translation constitutes a fourth method employed when the semantic content of an English abbreviation cannot be adequately conveyed by any of the preceding methods without significant loss of meaning. This method involves the replacement of the abbreviated source form with a full Uzbek phrase that describes the concept designated by the abbreviation, without attempting to reproduce the formal compactness of the source. It is particularly appropriate in contexts where the abbreviation designates a concept unfamiliar to the expected Uzbek readership, or in legal and official translation contexts where precision of meaning takes absolute priority over formal correspondence. [Alekseyeva, I.S. Introduction to Translation Studies. Saint Petersburg, 2004. P. 201–207.]

A fifth method, combined or hybrid rendering, involves the simultaneous use of two or more of the preceding methods within a single translation solution. The most common variant presents the Uzbek calqued or borrowed abbreviated form followed by a parenthetical expansion, or alternatively the full Uzbek phrase followed by the abbreviated form in parentheses, establishing it as the standard reference for subsequent uses in the same text. This approach is standard practice in academic, scientific, and legal translation and represents an optimal balance between the competing demands of terminological economy and communicative transparency. The selection among these methods in any given translation situation is governed by the domain of the source text, the degree of international currency of the abbreviated form, the availability of established Uzbek equivalents, the register of the target text, and the conventions of the relevant genre and institutional context. [Sager, J.C. A Practical Course in Terminology Processing. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1990. P. 98–104.]

2. Specific Features of Translating Specialized Abbreviations

The translation of abbreviations acquires particular complexity when the abbreviated forms under consideration belong to the specialized terminological systems of professional and scientific domains. Medical and pharmaceutical abbreviations represent one of the most extensive and consequential categories. The domain of medicine is characterized by an exceptionally high density of abbreviated forms, reflecting the longstanding tradition of Latin abbreviation in medical writing, the proliferation of complex multi-word designations for diseases and procedures, and the practical necessity of compact notation in clinical documentation. English medical abbreviations draw on multiple historical strata, including classical Latin abbreviations used for centuries, modern initialisms coined from English diagnostic terminology, and internationally standardized abbreviations established by bodies such as the World Health Organization. The translation of these forms into Uzbek requires familiarity with the Uzbek medical terminological system, which itself reflects a complex history of borrowing from Russian, partial replacement of Russian-derived terms with Uzbek alternatives, and ongoing adoption of internationally standardized English-origin terminology. [Vlakhov, S., Florin, S. Neperevodimoe v perevode. Moscow, 1980. P. 234–241.]

Pharmaceutical abbreviations present a somewhat different set of challenges, arising from the traditional use of Latin abbreviated instructions in prescription writing. Latin prescription abbreviations such as b.i.d., t.i.d., p.r.n., and q.h.s. have been used across languages for centuries and continue to appear in English-language medical texts. The rendering of these forms in Uzbek requires the translator to determine whether conventional Uzbek medical writing practice employs the Latin abbreviations directly, uses Uzbek-language equivalents, or has adopted Russian-derived

abbreviations as a legacy of the Soviet medical system. The lack of a fully standardized Uzbek medical writing guide means that practice varies across institutions and regions.

Legal and jurisprudential abbreviations constitute a second major category with distinctive features in the English-Uzbek context. English legal abbreviations draw heavily on Latin and include both classical forms such as ibid., op. cit., cf., and inter alia and a large inventory of English-origin initialisms designating legislation, regulatory bodies, and legal concepts specific to common law jurisdictions. The translation of these abbreviations into Uzbek is not merely a terminological exercise but involves genuine conceptual mediation between two legal systems that differ substantially in their fundamental principles and historical development. When the English abbreviation designates a concept specific to common law with no direct equivalent in Uzbek civil law, the translator faces a difficult choice between borrowing with an explanatory gloss, providing a descriptive Uzbek phrase, or using a Uzbek legal term that is functionally similar but not fully equivalent. [Sšarčević, S. New Approach to Legal Translation. The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997. P. 89–96.]

Economic and financial abbreviations reflect the growing integration of Uzbekistan into international economic and financial systems. Forms such as GDP, IMF, WTO, IPO, and ROI appear with high frequency in economic texts and represent concepts central to contemporary global economic discourse. The translation of these forms has been facilitated by Uzbekistan's increasingly active participation in international economic organizations and by the development of Uzbek-language economic terminology. Nevertheless, significant gaps remain in the Uzbek economic and financial terminological system, particularly in the areas of financial markets and investment instruments, where the rapid development of new products and concepts continuously outpaces national terminological systems. [Reformatsky, A.A. Introduction to Linguistics. Moscow: Aspekt Press, 2004. P. 187–193.]

Information technology represents perhaps the most dynamically evolving domain of specialized abbreviation in contemporary English. Technical IT abbreviations such as CPU, RAM, HTTP, API, and SQL designate concepts that are universal and are used by IT professionals worldwide in their English abbreviated forms. The translation strategy most commonly adopted for technical IT abbreviations in Uzbek professional and educational contexts reflects this universality by retaining the English abbreviated forms in the target text, treating them as internationally standardized technical designations. This approach is justified by the practical argument that Uzbek IT professionals are familiar with the English abbreviated forms through their training and use of English-language software. Nevertheless, the use of unexplained English IT abbreviations in texts directed at general audiences with limited technical background remains problematic, and the translator must calibrate the level of explanatory provision to the assumed knowledge of the specific readership. [Newmark, P. A Textbook of Translation. New York: Prentice Hall, 1988. P. 143–149.]

3. Problems Encountered in the Translation of Abbreviations and Ways to Overcome Them

The first and most fundamental category of problems concerns the identification and correct interpretation of the abbreviated source form. The difficulty arises primarily from abbreviation

polysemy, which is a pervasive feature of the English abbreviation system: any given sequence of capital letters may serve as the abbreviated designation for multiple distinct phrases across different specialized domains. The abbreviation PC, for example, may designate personal computer, political correctness, police constable, or privy council, and the correct interpretation in any given instance depends on contextual factors that must be carefully assessed. This problem is compounded in the English-Uzbek context by the fact that many English abbreviations that are highly transparent for English-speaking readers may be entirely opaque to a Uzbek translator lacking the specialized background knowledge necessary to place the abbreviated form in its proper conceptual context. The development of comprehensive bilingual terminological resources covering the major domains of English-Uzbek translation represents one of the most urgent practical needs in the field. [Komissarov, V.N. Teoriya perevoda. Moscow: Vysshaya shkola, 1990. P. 198–205.]

A second major category of problems arises from the structural incompatibility between English abbreviated forms and the morphological requirements of Uzbek. As an agglutinative language, Uzbek requires nouns to take grammatical suffixes to fulfill their syntactic functions in sentences, and the direct suffixation of borrowed English abbreviated forms produces combinations that may be phonologically awkward or stylistically inappropriate. The problem is particularly acute in the case of abbreviated forms ending in consonant clusters that violate the phonotactic constraints of Uzbek. Various practical solutions have been proposed, including the insertion of a connecting vowel between the abbreviated stem and the suffix and the restructuring of the sentence to avoid the grammatical context in which problematic suffixation would be required. None of these solutions is entirely satisfactory, and the absence of a universally adopted normative standard for the morphological integration of borrowed abbreviated forms remains a significant source of inconsistency. [Mirzayev, T. O'zbekiston Milliy Universiteti. Toshkent: Fan, 1998. B. 167–173.]

The problem of terminological standardization, or more precisely its absence, represents a third major category of difficulties. Uzbek lacks a comprehensive and universally recognized system of terminological norms covering the major domains of professional and scientific communication. The terminological resources currently available to Uzbek translators are fragmented across numerous specialized dictionaries of varying quality, many of which reflect Soviet-era conventions and have not been updated to reflect post-independence developments or the growing influence of English-language terminology. This fragmentation means that different translators working on texts in the same domain may arrive at different Uzbek renderings for the same English abbreviated forms, producing a proliferation of competing equivalents that undermines the consistency and precision of Uzbek specialized language. [Sšarčević, S. New Approach to Legal Translation. The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997. P. 134–141.]

A fourth significant category arises from the cultural and institutional differences between English-speaking source contexts and Uzbek-speaking target contexts. Many English abbreviations designate institutions, procedures, or cultural phenomena that are specific to particular English-speaking societies and that have no direct counterpart in contemporary Uzbekistan. The translation of such culturally specific abbreviated forms requires difficult decisions about the degree to which the cultural specificity of the source should be preserved or replaced by a more accessible Uzbek equivalent. The abbreviation NHS, for example, designating the National Health Service of the United Kingdom, refers to an institutional structure with no direct equivalent in Uzbekistan, and the translator must decide whether to retain the English abbreviation with an explanatory gloss, provide a functional description, or use the name of the closest Uzbek institutional equivalent.

The rapid evolution of English abbreviation, particularly in digital technology and social media, creates a fifth category of problems arising from the temporal gap between the production of English source texts and the availability of established Uzbek equivalents for newly coined forms. Translators regularly encounter abbreviated forms for which no established Uzbek equivalent exists and must therefore exercise considerable creative linguistic judgment in devising translation solutions that are both semantically accurate and linguistically natural. The documentation and sharing of such translator-generated solutions through professional networks, translation memory systems, and crowdsourced terminological platforms represents a valuable mechanism for the progressive development of Uzbek terminology in rapidly evolving domains. [Newmark, P. A Textbook of Translation. New York: Prentice Hall, 1988. P. 167–174.]

The practical approaches to overcoming these difficulties may be organized around four complementary strategies. The first is thorough pre-translation research, involving the systematic investigation of all unfamiliar abbreviated forms using all available terminological and documentary resources before the translation process begins. The second is the consistent application of the combined rendering method, which ensures that all abbreviated forms are explicitly glossed at their first occurrence, providing the reader with the information necessary to interpret subsequent uses without ambiguity. The third involves active engagement with professional networks, terminological databases, and subject-matter experts. The fourth is systematic advocacy for the development of comprehensive, authoritative, and regularly updated bilingual terminological resources in the major domains of English-Uzbek translation, addressing the institutional dimensions of the terminological standardization problem that individual translators working in isolation cannot resolve alone.

Conclusion

The present article has provided a systematic examination of the methodological and practical dimensions of translating English abbreviations into Uzbek across three interconnected lines of analysis. The identification of five principal translation methods — direct borrowing, calquing, transcription and transliteration, descriptive translation, and combined rendering — and the analysis of their respective properties, advantages, and limitations has established a comprehensive methodological framework applicable to the full range of abbreviation translation situations encountered in professional English-Uzbek translation practice.

The domain-specific analysis has demonstrated that the general methodological principles acquire specific forms and generate specific challenges when applied to the highly differentiated terminological systems of medicine, law, economics, and information technology. In each domain, the interaction between the structural properties of abbreviated forms, the terminological conventions of the field, and the historical and institutional context of Uzbek professional language creates a distinctive combination of translation difficulties that requires both general methodological competence and deep domain-specific knowledge. The investigation of translation problems has identified polysemy, morphological incompatibility, terminological inconsistency, cultural-institutional differences, and the temporal gap between English abbreviation generation and Uzbek terminological response as the principal systematic obstacles to effective abbreviation translation, and has proposed practical approaches to their resolution grounded in the methodological framework developed throughout the article.

The cumulative findings establish that effective abbreviation translation requires not only mastery of the formal properties of abbreviated forms but also deep engagement with the specialized knowledge systems, institutional contexts, and communicative conventions of the domains in which abbreviated forms are most extensively used. Many of the most significant challenges reflect systemic deficiencies in the terminological infrastructure available to practitioners, deficiencies that can only be addressed through collective action by the translation profession, academic institutions, and relevant government bodies. The development of authoritative bilingual terminological databases, the establishment of professional networks for the sharing of translator-generated terminological solutions, and the systematic updating of existing terminological resources to reflect post-independence developments in Uzbek professional language represent the most urgent practical priorities for the improvement of abbreviation translation quality in the English-Uzbek language pair.

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