Bridging Cultural Boundaries: Translating Untranslatable Vocabulary in Kazakh-English Literary Texts

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Abstract Untranslatable vocabulary is a repository rich in the national-cultural semantics of a language, capturing specific information about the historical development, traditions, and life of a given linguistic cultural space. Translating the untranslatable vocabulary from one language into another has always posed significant challenges for translators. These difficulties are compounded when the language in question belongs to different linguistic groups and reflects distinct cultural backgrounds. The article discussed the ways of translating non-equivalent lexical units in translated literary texts from Kazakh into English on the materials of I. Yesenberlin's trilogy "The Nomads". The discussion was based on the classification of the translation methods of the non-equivalent vocabulary in recent years: transliteration, transcription, calque (loan translation), descriptive translation, and adaptation. An analysis of these methods showed that translators, in the vast majority of cases, use adaptation and transliteration. The research employed various methods, including description, comparison, contrast, empirical, ethnolinguistic, and conceptual approaches.

Keywords: *Non-equivalent vocabulary, Translation, Untranslatability, Culture, Connotation*

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, linguistic science has seen a rapid increase in interest in research conducted at the intersection of linguistics and cultural studies. The extralinguistic aspect of the study of linguistic phenomena involves the consideration of issues devoted to ethnocultural information, which contributes to the formation of a national linguistic worldview. The problem of the relationship and mutual influence of two categories – language and culture – has long attracted the attention of scholars. This is explained by the fact that language is a mirror image of culture due to its cumulative function, which allows the accumulation and transmission of experience and knowledge. Research in the field of translation studies is closely related to comparative linguistics.

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Recently, in modern linguistics, more and more attention has been paid to issues in the field of scientific and cultural properties of languages and the national uniqueness of the linguistic and cultural community. According to experts in the fields of intercultural communication, language contacts, and linguoculturology, language seems to be a specific system that reflects the mental, cultural, and psycholinguistic space of an ethnos; therefore, in each language, there are *untranslatable* concepts, as well as unique phenomena caused by the peculiarities of the consciousness of that or other people, including Kazakh and English (Koptleuova et al., 2022; Koptleuova et al., 2023). Following the classics of translation studies, the concept of untranslatable in this work is understood as the absence of an equivalent (corresponding) lexical unit when translating from one language to another. A difficulty in perceiving literature of another language is represented by non-equivalent vocabulary, which is a reflection of national culture, traditions, customs, and the history of the people; that is, it has a national flavor.

The above determined the relevance of our research, the theoretical and practical significance of which consists in a) description and analysis of the features of the Kazakh untranslatable vocabulary based on the material of Yesenberlin's trilogy *The Nomads* (2014); b) the needs of translation practice, since consideration of the possibilities of transmitting the untranslatable vocabulary of the Kazakh language into English contributes to the search for optimal options for teaching foreign languages, in which the linguocultural principle of presenting language material to ensure communicative competence is becoming increasingly active. A high degree of relevance of this work is ensured by the modern situation, which is characterized by increased attention to the study of the processes of interlingual and intercultural communication. In the current situation, the question of providing high-quality and adequate translation becomes acute.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Non-Equivalent Vocabulary in Translation

In linguistic and cultural studies of a comparative feature, the concept of *untranslatable vocabulary* appeared in the second half of the twentieth century. The phenomenon of non-equivalence in the lexical composition of a language has received various names: exoticisms, ethnographisms, localisms, ethnocultural vocabulary, cultural names, ethnolexemes, and so on. The most common designation for this phenomenon is untranslatable vocabulary. All of the listed designations for the phenomenon under study are united by the fact that they have a national-cultural connotation that is absent in the target language. Untranslatable vocabulary has become the object of the study of the theory and practice of translation, linguoculturology, comparative linguistics, linguistics, regional studies, methods of teaching foreign languages, ethnolinguistics, etc.

The notion of untranslatability has been a topic widely discussed in the field of translation studies. There are two reasons for untranslatability: linguistic and cultural differences (Catford, 1965). This highlights the complexity involved in translation, indicating that difficulties can arise not only from language variations but also from cultural distinctions. Kristo and Anastasi (2023) elaborate on this idea by emphasizing the role of elements. They explain that certain cultural terms cannot be directly translated, including objects and materials, to a particular culture.

The macrocategory of cultural factors includes cultural terms, words, and expressions that indicate specific cultural objects or material items that belong only to a certain culture and that, as such, do not have an equivalent in other languages (perhaps more the knowledge and the most widespread are those that indicate the names of different foods or dishes: gastronomy is full of such). But, these terms do not necessarily refer to food (Kristo & Anastasi, 2023).

Cowart (1980) further explores the complexities of translatability by advocating for an integrated approach that considers both linguistic and cultural factors (Ardakani et al., 2015). This perspective aligns with the view that untranslatability goes beyond language barriers and involves contexts. Kashgary (2011) emphasizes the link between language, meaning, and translation by suggesting that dealing with untranslatability is deeply tied to understanding language. This underscores the implications inherent in the translation process.

Cowart (1980) also attempted to define untranslatability without separating linguistic and cultural factors (Ardakani et al., 2015). The problem of untranslatability is related to the nature of language and to man's understanding of the nature of language, meaning, and translation (Kashgary, 2011). The fascinating interaction between language and culture is highlighted in Lomas' work, where he sees untranslatability as a gateway to gaining perspectives. The words that cannot be translated provide windows into living and thinking within their society. This viewpoint underscores the enriching value of encountering terms that push translators to navigate the line between equivalence and faithfulness (Lomas, 2018).

Essentially, the literature demonstrates a nuanced understanding, recognizing its culture and philosophical aspects. Scholars in translation grapple with the challenges of connecting cultural gaps, acknowledging the subtle nuances in communication across different languages and cultures. Consequently, the discussion on untranslatability is constantly evolving, offering insights into the dynamics of language and translation.

All languages are the product of the culture as well as of the nation. They all have a long historical background and various cultural connotations. History, social systems, natural environments, religions, and customs are all shown vividly in their culturally loaded words, proverbs, idioms, and so on. In traditional practice, there are often no such words in the target language, and the translators have to find similar codes or make some new codes to replace them, so when these culturally loaded words are translated into another language, the cultural connotations are lost.

An untranslatable word provides a glimpse, however partial or obscured, into ways of being, doing, and thinking in the culture from which it springs (Lomas, 2018). Of great importance for the theory of translation and the study of non-equivalent vocabulary is the work of Barkhudarov (1975), "Language and Translation", where the author gives a complete definition of non-equivalent vocabulary: lexemes (set phrases and words) of one of the languages that have neither complete nor partial equivalence between lexical units of another language.

We emphasize that the term non-equivalent vocabulary is used only when there is no equivalence of a particular lexical unit in another language. It would be incorrect to understand this term as the *impossibility of translation of non-equivalent vocabulary*. In any language, there is a verbal opportunity to express some concept. The absence of a specific designation for any concept in the form of one word or set phrase in the vocabulary of a language does not mean that it is impossible to express it by other different means of the given language (Ivanova, 2004).

Having studied various approaches of the scientists regarding the interpretation of the concept of non-equivalent vocabulary, we came to the following conclusion: this term denotes words that name concepts, objects, and phenomena that are unique to speakers of a particular language and have no analogs in another language. Non-equivalent vocabulary determines the national and cultural content of the original text, the preservation and transmission of which is necessary to achieve unity of content and form in the translation in order to achieve the adequacy of the translation (Sadofeva, 2009). To conduct modern research in the field of translation studies, it is important to take into account the latest views of researchers regarding background knowledge. So, the characteristics of non-equivalent vocabulary include 1) unique coloring, giving the work an original, national color; 2) original names of objects, concepts, and phenomena that have no analogs in other cultures; 3) designation of the names of objects, concepts, phenomena characteristic only of a given people; 4) concreteness of concepts, objects, phenomena denoted by words-realities; 5) non-equivalence, identified through a comparative analysis of lexical units in two or more languages.

2.2. Methods of Conveying Non-Equivalent Vocabulary in Translation

Translation serves as the sole means of bridging language barriers, aiming to facilitate communication between speakers of different languages. Translators strive to use equivalents or various translation techniques to achieve this. When translating cultural-specific terms (realia), the translator must be mindful of the translation's purpose: to maintain the cultural essence of the source text while preserving the original meaning (Mukhtarova et al., 2019). From the point of view of the American

scholar Venuti (1998), in order to convey cultural information, a translator has to choose between the strategy of foreignization, which gives the reader the opportunity to get acquainted with another culture without adapting to his culture and immerse himself in the original text, and the strategy of domestication, erasing the differences between two cultures. Using the second strategy deprives the text of national color, which leads to the reader's rapprochement with the culture of other people (Alpysbayeva & Ashymkhanova, 2021).

Translation is a process that goes beyond language skills to include cultural awareness and creative interpretation. The translation is a performance in which the translator takes on the role of actor to infuse the text with flair and meaning (Kristo & Anastasi, 2023). This perspective highlights how translators play a role in bridging the gap between the text and its readers, showcasing the subjective aspect of translation. A foreign language text is like a wonderful fabric where you can weave your linguistic knowledge; if you then have to "translate" this text into your native language, then the proof of knowledge in a foreign language is the occasion to add the reflection on interlingual compatibility or incompatibility. The translator can also be called an actor who, putting a text on stage, undoubtedly throws something of himself into it. Translation, like theatrical interpretation, is the transmission of a text from the author to the audience through mediation, represented in the first case by the translator and in the second by the actor (Kristo & Anastasi, 2023). Viceanu (2024) delves deeper into the aspect of translation, presenting it as a means of communication that overcomes language and cultural barriers. Viceanu stresses the significance of considering both cultural contexts of the text to facilitate effective cross-cultural communication through translation. This viewpoint underscores how translation fosters exchange and mutual understanding.

Translating is an act (borrowing this concept with its pragmatic force) of communicating across cultures, involving both languages and cultures; before embarking upon translation, the original needs to be analyzed with reference to both its context of the situation and its context of culture (Vilceanu, 2016).

While Catford (1965) defines translation as transferring the content of one language to another, Cui (2012) sheds light on the complexities posed by untranslatability. Untranslatability deals with situations where certain linguistic or cultural elements cannot be directly translated, requiring solutions or alternative approaches. Crui's research demonstrates how intricate translation is, stressing the importance of translators effectively navigating both linguistic subtleties. Catford (1965) defines translation as the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language. Translation is a very important medium for cultural exchange between people using different languages. It is one of the most important tasks for translators and translation researchers to view problems of translation from the angle of cultural exchange in order to increase the degree of cultural exchange achieved by translation as much as possible (Cui, 2012).

The concept of untranslatability emphasizes its significance in solving problems during the translation process. They argue that translation goes beyond being a task requiring engagement with critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Mohammadi & Keshavarzi, 2016). Nida's (2021) idea of loss in translation further sheds light on the struggles translators face when encountering terms or concepts without equivalents in the target language. Accordingly, throughout history, translation has played an important role in conveying thoughts and knowledge from one nation to another nation. Apart from this importance, the act of translating is not simply changing a message from the source language into the target one; translation is an act of problem-solving. Sometimes, it is difficult to solve problems existing in translation, and so the notion of untranslatability emerges (Mohammadi & Keshavarzi, 2016). Nida (2021) uses the term loss in translation when the translator is facing terms or concepts in the source language that do not exist in the target language.

The presence of non-equivalent units does not mean that it is impossible to translate their meanings or convey them with less accuracy during translation than units that have direct matches (Alishina & Imametdinova, 2009). Translation equivalents may only partially correspond to the unit to be translated, and translation often uses contextual substitutions even when there are regular matches.

Bolatova (2002), in her scientific research, highlighting the methods of transmitting non-equivalent vocabulary, provides the necessary accompanying clarifications and practical recommendations related to the use of graphic means when transcribing non-equivalent vocabulary with the addition of affixes of the target language, the result of which is a new word that did not previously exist earlier in the calques; with the use of a word close in semantics (synonym or explanatory phrase) in loose translation. Let's take a look at some translation techniques that are used with different language combinations in translation.

Explication, or descriptive (explanatory) translation, is one of the most universal techniques that can help the translator in different situations. It is necessary in those cases when the corresponding unit is not found in the target language for various extralinguistic reasons. Descriptive translation is a way of translating non-equivalent vocabulary, which consists of revealing the original function by means of a detailed description (Latyshev, 1981). The source language lexeme is replaced by a combination of words describing its semantics, thus presenting a more or less complete interpretation in the target language.

In the theory and practice of translation studies, the most common and productive techniques are transcription and transliteration. Transcription is a literal (phonemic) reproduction of the word of the original language in the target language, which is used in most cases to translate proper names, terms, and realities. The use of this method requires a mandatory explanation of the unfamiliar word in brackets in the text itself, in footnotes at the bottom of the page, or in glossaries at the end of the book. Translation is a letter-by-letter reproduction of the source word by graphic signs of the translating language. Some scholars (e.g., Vereshagin, Kostomarov, and Tomakhin) consider this technique to be insufficiently effective due to the appearance of words that are poorly understood and unfamiliar to native speakers. To eliminate this communication hindrance, it is necessary to provide the author with a note.

As a result of using the translation technique of concretization, lexical units of the source language with a broad meaning are replaced by units of the target language with a narrow meaning. In the process of the described transformations, linguistic units of the source language and the target language enter into hyponymic (generic) relations; the word of the source language denotes a generic concept, and the word of the target language denotes a species concept. The context tells us which description will be more accurate in translation. Concretization causes difficulties if the context does not explain the concept of species. The opposite method of concretization is the generalization of concepts. It consists of replacing a word from the source language with a narrow meaning and a word from the target language that has a broad meaning. As a rule, such subtleties are not reflected in the translation. The generalization technique (in some sources it is called loosely or free techniques of translation) serves the translator in a situation where the meaning of a species concept is not understood in the target language. This occurs in interpreting in a situation where the target language is searching for a consistent unit of the source language that does not have an exact match in the target language.

Along with the above-mentioned methods of translation for the transfer of non-equivalent vocabulary is used calquing, the essence of which is to reproduce the combinational composition of linguistic units – translation of morphemes or lexemes by suitable equivalents of the target language.

Translation is one of the means of realization of intercultural contacts. The interaction of cultures in translation provides readers with translations of facts characteristic of other cultures in order to broaden their horizons and cultivate respect for the customs of other peoples. It can be argued that in the process of translating literary texts into other languages, interlingual interaction and intercultural contact take place, and the role of the translator is to translate the culture of other people through the native language. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the peculiarities of translating a foreign cultural text into another language.

Cui (2012) notes that an *adaptation, also referred to as free translation, is a translational technique* wherein the translator substitutes a social or cultural context from the source language with a comparable context from the target language, one that is more familiar to the target audience. This

approach prioritizes preserving the elegance and comprehensibility of the target language, even at the expense of the form of the source language, while ensuring that the primary cultural message of the original remains intact. Cui (2012) believes that a calque is a translation technique wherein a translator renders an expression (or occasionally a word) literally into the target language, adhering closely to the structure of the original. Newmark (2009) categorizes this as semantic translation. This method prioritizes retaining the cultural essence of the source text, often at the expense of the formal aspects of the target language and occasionally even compromising the intelligibility of the resulting text.

In essence, literature on translation highlights its multifaceted nature, showcasing the translator's role as an interpreter and bridge between languages and cultures. Acknowledging the intricacies of translation, including challenges related to untranslatability and loss, is crucial for scholars and professionals aiming to improve cultural communication through translation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Materials

The research material was selected from the texts of Yesenberlin's novel trilogy, The Nomads, and their translations into English (Chorakaev). The choice of this work and its translation as sources of research material is due to the fact that it represents different periods of the life of the Kazakh people and different social strata of society. The novels reflect the characteristics of a certain section of Kazakh culture. In this regard, the translator is required to reflect the ethnocultural details as accurately as possible, which helps one understand the life and way of life of the people. Correct or incorrect translation affects the perception of the national flavor and content of the work as a whole. The total volume of research material was 3173 sentences of the original and translations containing the lexical units of interest to us. A total of 173 lexical units were analyzed. We picked up all the non-equivalent vocabularies from the novels, and the total number was 173.

3.2. Procedure

The main approach used in this research involved comparing the text written in the Kazakh language with its translation. Both similarities and differences were analyzed in terms of cultural elements. Apart from the method, a descriptive approach was employed. This technique focused on studying, interpreting, and categorizing translation to gain an understanding of the linguistic and cultural subtleties present in the text. To further explore how translations evolve a layered analysis method was utilized. This enabled an in-depth examination of figurative and axiological aspects across translations while taking into account the historical and social characteristics of both Kazakh and English societies. Recognizing the significance of reflecting Kazakh culture in translations while being mindful of English nuances, a linguacultural analysis method was put into practice. This method ensured that cultural elements were faithfully conveyed across languages. The study integrated analysis to acknowledge how language evolves over time. By observing language development across periods, valuable insights into translation phenomena and linguistic changes were gained. The descriptive statistical method was employed for analysis to quantify equivalent lexical units transmitted through various translation techniques. This statistical approach facilitated an exploration of translation patterns and strategies.

Through the use of these approaches, the study gained a grasp of how translation works, uncovering insights into the patterns, characteristics, and obstacles involved in translating Kazakh literature into the English language.

4. Results

To truly master a language, it's crucial to understand the context that comes with it. This deep understanding helps grasp the subtle nuances of meaning within the language. One interesting and complex aspect is the concept of untranslatable words, which pose a challenge when trying to express them in another language. These words, though not entirely impossible to convey in another language,

often defy direct translation and instead require elaborate explanations. They serve as distinct markers of a language's identity, reflecting its cultural essence in a profound and captivating manner.

As a result of our analysis of the trilogy "The Nomads" by I. Yesenberlin and its translation into English using the comparative method, 173 units of background knowledge containing ethnocultural words were registered in the work. Table 1 provides a detailed descending distribution of these units according to the typology of our study.

Table 1
Number of Background Elements According to the Classification

Types of background elements	**Number**
Colloquial (everyday) vocabulary	65
Spiritual and cultural vocabulary	49
Kinship terms	17
Socio-political vocabulary	42

Various taxonomies have been proposed by linguists to better represent culture in translation, aiming to bring it closer to the target culture and language. Zhabayeva (2023) suggests that explicitation involves making implicit aspects from the source language clearer, often through descriptive methods. However, excessive explicitation can lead to misunderstandings, especially with terms related to cultural implications. Calquing and preserving morphological and syntactic structures enriches the target language and is seen as an accessible translation method. Borrowing techniques can make the target text feel foreign to readers. Generalization and specification methods are used to achieve communication goals, particularly when there are no equivalent semantic counterparts. Modulation, or logical development, is employed to better represent culture-specific concepts, depending on context, and to reduce cultural elements from the source text.

Table 2
The Kazakh and English Translation of Non-Equivalent Vocabulary Шапан (Shapan)

Source language	*Target language*
Бір күні әмірші үстіне жаман ***шапан*** киіп, түсін өзгертіп, әскер шебін аралады (Bir kuni amirshi ustine ***shapan*** kiip, tusin ozgertip, asker shebin aralady) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	One morning, having donned a simple ***cloak***, the emir took a walk through the horsemen's camp (Yesenberlin, B2, 2015).
Белінде қанжарлы қалың қайыс белбеу. Үстінде ықшам, жағасын қара барқытпен көмкерген қызғылт ***шапан*** (Belinde kanzharly kalyng kaiys belbeu. Ustinde yksham, zhagasyn kara barkytpen komkergen kyzgylt ***shapan***) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	A simple belt of camel skin ran across his ***coat of fine wool***, with a black velvet collar a dagger on his side (Yesenberlin, B2, 2015).
Ордаға кірген дәруіштердің бірі үстіндегі ***шапанын*** шешіп, басындағы ***сәлдесін*** тартқанда, Абылайдың денесі мұздап кеткен (Ordaga kirgen daruishterding biri ustindegi ***shapanyn*** sheship, basyndagy ***saldesin*** tartkanda, Abylaidyng denesi musdap ketken) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	One of the dervishes with watering eyes had silently taken off his ***robe*** and ***turban*** (Yesenberlin, B2, 2015).
Ол ***шапанын*** жамыла салып, тысқа шықты (Ol ***shapanyn*** zhamyla salyp, tyska shykty) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	Just you wait! – she hissed as she put on a ***wraparound*** and left the yurta (Yesenberlin, B3, 2015).

As we can see from the examples (Table 2), the vestial vocabulary of *Шапан (Shapan)* was translated using the adaptation translation. Translator O. Chorakaev suggested several translation variations such as *cloak, coat, robe, wraparound*. The translator has preserved the function and basic meaning of the original word. In the explanatory dictionary of the Kazakh language, the specified word denotes outerwear that is worn to maintain warmth: *шапан (shapan)* – астарына жүн не мақта салып тігілген сырт киім (asstaryna zhun ne makta salyp tigilgen syrt kiim) (outerwear quilted with cotton wool or wool) (Zhanuzakov, 2008).

I would like to draw your attention to the definitions of lexical units in the English translation: *cloak* – a loose outer piece of clothing without sleeves that fastens at the neck and is worn instead of a coat ("Cambridge Dictionary," 2024), *Coat* – an outer piece of clothing with sleeves that is worn over other clothes, usually for warmth ("Cambridge Dictionary," 2024), *robe* - A long loose outer garment reaching to the feet or ankles; a gown. ("Cambridge Dictionary," 2024), and *wraparound* - (of clothing) made so that it can be tied around the body ("Cambridge Dictionary," 2024).

The translator uses the technique of generalization: the Kazakh lexeme *шапан (shapan)* was translated generally as *coat, cloak* and *robe*. However, adapting non-equivalent vocabulary into English will create difficulties for the reader in understanding the meaning. The English translation of the word *шапан (shapan)* indicates only its main function – outerwear. In this case, a common feature of this vestial vocabulary appears: both words are names of outerwear worn to preserve heat. Using the technique of generalization, the translator decides to render the lexical unit *шапан (shapan)* as *coat, cloak,* and *robe*, thereby providing the reader with the opportunity to understand its main function. In the case of the suggested *wraparound*, one can observe only external similarities with the national clothing *шапан (shapan)*, but the translation does not fully give the reader an insight into the essence of vestial vocabulary.

As we can see from the above examples, the translator adapted the national vocabulary to the culture of the English-speaking reader. However, in our opinion, in this case, it was appropriate to preserve the national-cultural component of this word and translate it by transliteration. The completed translation does not convey the national characteristics of the Kazakh language unit. Adaptation translation allows the basic function of the non-equivalent unit to be preserved, but the background meaning is lost. Consequently, what appears in the reader's imagination is not national clothing but clothing for the cold season in general. By presenting an explanatory comment in the footnotes in the form of transliteration, the national flavor of the work would be preserved.

Table 3

The Kazakh and English Translation of Non-Equivalent Vocabulary Сәукеле (Saukele)

Source language	*Target language*
Кәмшат бөрік, күміс тізген үкілі ***сәукеле*** (Kamshat ***borik***, kumis tizilgen ukili ***saukele***) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	Those were the same ***saukele hats***: ***high, cone-formed hats*** decorated with coins and the fluffy feathers of the eagle-owl on top (Yesenberlin, B3, 2015).
Үстінде шытырма ақ жібек көйлек, көгілдір торқа оқалы қамзол, оның сыртынан шетін құндызбен әдіптеген дүрия қызыл шапан, басында ақ меруерт өрген, алтын теңгелері көзіне түсе салбыраған қызыл барқыт ***сәукеле*** (Ustinde shytyrma ak zhibek koilek, kogildir torka okaly kamzol, onyng syrtunan shetin kyndyzben adiptegen duriya kyzyl shapan, basynda ak meruert orgen, altyn tengeleri kozine tuse salbyragan kyzyl barkyt ***saukele***) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	A bright, wine-colored ***chapan*** made of the best duriya fabric and edged with sable fur was as if loosely thrown over her pale blue plush ***sleeveless jacket*** with gilding. White pearl beads heaped on her red-velvet cone-shaped ***saukele, noble women's headdress in the steppe*** (Yesenberlin, B3, 2015).
Бірінің басында ***сәукеле***, сонысына қарағанда, жас түскен келіншек секілді (Biring basynda ***saukele***, sonysyna Karaganda, zhas tusken kelinshek sekildi) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	There was ***saukele*** on the head of one of them, which meant her recent marriage (Yesenberlin, B3, 2015).

The vestial word *сәукеле (saukele)* is translated into English by transcription to convey the name, but the translators also used intratextual modulation to describe this headdress (Table 3). *Сәукеле (saukele)* is an original women's headdress that Kazakh girls wear to weddings. For Kazakhs, *сәукеле (saukele)* has a special sacred meaning. We can highlight the unusualness and beauty of this headdress since the name already contains a sacred solar meaning, which is confirmed by some petroglyphs (solar signs) discovered on the territory of the Great Steppe (Akhmetova, 2019).

From the example, we see that transliteration involves preserving the form of words in the source language. Thus, the special national identity of the word was preserved. As we can see, the translator not only conveyed the national shell of this headdress but also defined, using a descriptive translation,

which headdress it belonged to. Since the method of transliteration does not provide complete immersion in the work, and every time a footnote is viewed, the reader loses his thoughts and is distracted from the content of the literary text. In this regard, we assume that this technique is quite acceptable. Our study also provides an analysis of the lexeme *шымылдық (shymyldyk)* (Table 4):

Table 4

The Kazakh and English Translation of Non-Equivalent Vocabulary Шымылдық (Shymyldyk)

Source language	*Target language*
Күйеу жігіттер кіріп келгенде, ханның мысы жеңіп, ***шымылдықты*** жабуды ұмытып кеткен қыздың бір жеңгесі асыға қимылдап, ***шымылдықты*** түсіре қойды (Kuieu zhigitter kirip kelgende, khannyng mysy zhenip, ***shymyldykty*** zhabudy umytyp ketken kyzdyng bir zhengesi asyga kimyldap, ***shymyldykty*** tusire koidy) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	Oh, we forgot to pull the ***curtains***! – A young and beautiful aunt of the bride jumped up and, with a graceful movement of her white hand, concealed the girl from male eyes (Yesenberlin, B2, 2015).
Сегізінші шамды күндегісінен кеш сөндіріп, Зейнеп ***шымылдығының*** ішіне кіріп шешіне бастады (Segizinshi shamdy kundegisinen kesh sondirip, Zeinep ***shymyldygynyng*** ishine kirip sheshine bastady) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	Switched off a big kerosene lamp of eight wicks and came up to her ***own bed*** to undress (Yesenberlin, B3, 2015).
Зейнеп сып беріп ***шымылдық*** ішіне кіріп кетті (Zeinep syp berip ***shymyldyk*** ishine kirip ketti) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	Zeinep dived into her ***bed*** (Yesenberlin, B3, 2015).

When converting the text, the translator applied substantiation (specification). From time immemorial, *шымылдық (shymyldyk)* was used by the Kazakhs to divide the premises into one large yurt, and in the English version, it is interpreted as *bed*. The author of the translation replaced the word *шымылдық (shymyldyk)*, which has a broad lexical meaning, with a word with a narrower meaning – *bed*, thereby losing the semantic meaning of the lexeme in the original language. Also, when translating the word *шымылдық (shymyldyk)*, the situational equivalent *curtain* was given, which, in our opinion, is adequate since it forms a general idea of the tradition and successfully determines the semantic load of this word in the given fragment. Along the way, let's turn to the historical and cultural explanation of the meaning of the lexeme *шымылдық (shymyldyk)*, which since ancient times served to divide the premises in a yurt. The young bride was brought into the house and seated behind the *шымылдық (shymyldyk)*. In modern conditions, national traditions and customs revered from time immemorial are losing their originality. The translator does not provide such explanations to make the text and plot easier to understand.

Table 5

The Kazakh and English Translation of Non-Equivalent Vocabulary Қобыз (Kobyz)

Source language	*Target language*
Қобызын асықпай қолына алды (***Kobyzyn*** asykpai kolyna aldy) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	Took his ***kobyz*** once more (Yesenberlin, B1, 2015).
Өмір-бақи жанында жүретін кәрі қара ***қобызын*** қолына алып, қарлыққан қарт даусын аңырата жөнелді (Omir-baki zhanynda zhuretin kari kara ***kobyzyn*** kolyna alyp, karlykkan kart dausyn angyrata zhoneldi) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	The old man picked up his constant way-companion, the ***kobyz***, and lightly touched its strings (Yesenberlin, B1, 2015).

For a complete immersion in the text, let's turn to the lexicographic description of the meaning (Table 5): *қобыз (kobyz)* – a national musical instrument with a bucket-shaped body; the outline of an arc-shaped instrument" (Zhanuzakov, 2008). To translate the word *қобыз (kobyz)*, the translator used transcription. We can assume that the translator counted on the instrument being generally known among English readers, but, in our opinion, a translation commentary would have given a complete description of the national instrument. However, we consider the translation of these words by transcription to be equivalent. It seems to us that transliteration, in this case, is the only adequate method of translating the names of musical instruments, although, for a complete understanding of

them, it is possible to give a definition and description of a particular instrument in the footnotes at the first mention and transliterate for subsequent use.

Wealthy Kazakhs in the past had several wives (see Table 6). The first of them was called *бәйбіше (baibishe)*, and the rest (younger wives) were designated by the term *тоқал (tokal)*. The latter, like *бәйбіше (baibishe)*, is found quite often in the works of I. Yesenberlin “The Nomads”. The "Explanatory Dictionary of the Kazakh Language" gives the following definition: *Тоқал (tokal)* – "Second wife with a living older wife" (Zhanuzakov, 2008).

Table 6

The Kazakh and English Translation of Non-Equivalent Vocabulary Тоқал (Tokal)

Source language	*Target language*
– Байлығым өз басыма жетеді. Алтын құсты басыма қоямын ба, маған алтын құсыңдай қымбат ұл тауып берген ***тоқалыңның*** өзін бер, – деді Бұрындық өзінің қиқар мінезіне салып (Bailygym oz basyma zhetedi. Altyn kusty basyma koyamyn ba, magan altyn kusyngdai kymbat ul tauyp Bergen ***tokalyngnyng*** ozin ber. – dedi Buryndyk ozining kikar minezibe salyp) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	– I'd rather you gave me your ***last wife***, who has borne you a really golden child! – he said, true to spicy steppe jokes and hinting at the gossip disgracing the merchant (Yesenberlin, B1, 2015).
Жанбике ***тоқал*** өзгеміздеn гөрі төсекті жұмсақ төсей біледі дейді ғой (Zhanbike ***tokal*** ozgemizden gori tosekti zhumsak tosei biledi deidi goi) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	They say Zkanbikeh-***Tokal*** is good at making the bed (Yesenberlin, B1, 2015).
Жиырма тоғыз әйелінің қағанағын қарық ете алмаған саудагер, отызыншысына келгенде ұрық берер қуатты қайдан тапқанын кім білсін, әйтеуір қайқы төс, саулық құйрық жас ***тоқалынан*** аппақ сазандай ұл көрген (Zhiyrma togyz aielining kaganagyn karyk ete almagan saudager, otyzynshysyna kelgende uryk berer kuatty kaidan tapkanyn kim bilsin, auteuir kaiky tos, saulyk kuiryk zhas ***tokalynan*** appak sazandai ul korgen) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	And now, after so many years, his full-breasted ***tokal, the junior wife***, gave birth to an heir (Yesenberlin, B1, 2015).
Ерке ***тоқалының*** айтқанын екі етіп көрмеген Әбілқайыр (Yerke ***tokalynyng*** aitkatyn eki etip kormegen Abilkaiyr) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	Sultan Barak gave a scornful shrug of the shoulders as if surprised at the khan's submission to his ***junior wife*** (Yesenberlin, B2, 2015).
Ерінің жас ***тоқалынан*** суымайтынына көздері жете бастаған ханның өзге әйелдері, Нұрбикені қаралай, өсек те айтып көрді. Бірақ хан сонда да ***тоқалының*** өзіне деген махаббатына шек келтірмеді (Yerining zhas ***tokalynan*** suymaitynyna kozderi zhete bastagan khannyng ozge aielderi, Nurbike karalai, osek te aityp kordi. Birak khan sonda da ***tokalynyng*** ozine degen makhabbatyna shek keltirmedi) (Yesenberlin, 2014).	His other wives more than once whispered to him about Nurbike's flirtations with young warriors. Gradually, he came to believe that his ***young wife's*** love for him was as pure as morning dew in the steppe (Yesenberlin, B2, 2015).

The lexeme *тоқал (tokal)* is also found in some other Turkic languages and has the same meaning. Along with this, researchers also record other lexical-semantic meanings: kaz. *тоқал (tokal)* 1) blunt, with the top broken off, 2) polled, without horns, 3) the younger wife, since she is defenseless against the older wife; Kyrgyz *токол (tokol)* 1) hornless, polled, 2) fig. (about a person) helpless, defenseless, 3) fig. (about a tree) without branches, 4) ethn. younger wife, with the older wife alive; kk. *токол (tokol)* 1) hornless, 2) obs. second wife, younger wife, and subsequent wives, 3) chopped off about a tree (Zhanuzakov, 2008).

Tolybekov (1971), considering polygamy as a phenomenon that took place in the past, describes in detail the social status of wives and justifies their names. In particular, he associates *тоқал (tokal)* – younger wife with the meaning *clumped, hornless* due to the absence of a special wedding headdress on her head – *сәукеле (saukele)*: The literal translation of the word *тохал (tokhal)* is *short-haired*. For example, a hornless goat is called *тохал ешкі (tohal goat)*. We believe that the younger wives of the

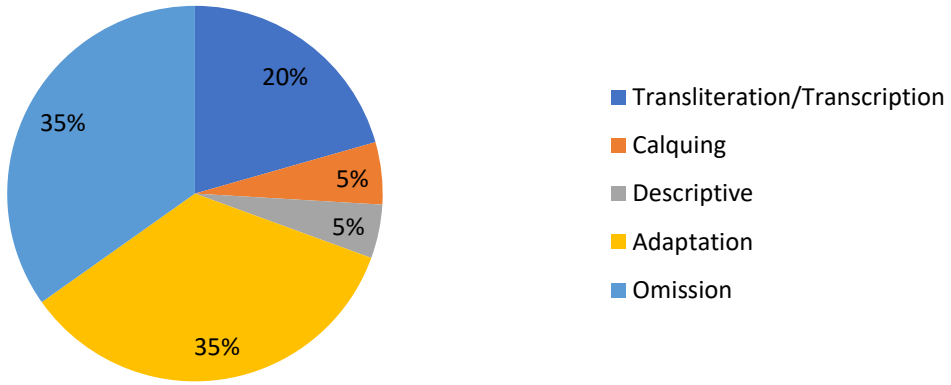
Kazakh feudal lords were captured girls (*zhesir* or *yasyr* (literally *spoils of war*) – this is the same as a slave), or girls from poor families since they did not have a dowry (Mukhtarova, 2017).

The mixing of two techniques is due to the fact that each of them separately is not able to adequately reveal the meaning of the word, and descriptive translation leads to the loss of national identity. We can believe that the specificity of the cultural and everyday details of the original is transferred, and its function is preserved.

As we can see from the examples (Table 6), the lexical unit *моқал (tokal)* was translated in several variations: *tokal, last wife, tokal, the junior wife, young wife*. However, the main method of translation is transliteration, which uses a descriptive method. In this situation, the translator, due to the absence of the target language of this word denoting such relationships in the family, tried to neutralize expressive details, replacing them with commonly used units.

As a result of our study of the English translation of the trilogy "The Nomads" regarding the use of strategies for transferring background knowledge, the following results were obtained:

Figure 1
The Use of Strategies for Transferring Background Knowledge



The analysis of linguistic material is clear evidence that the implementation of the task of full translation is invariably associated with a number of difficulties caused by the uniqueness of the lexical system of each language and the peculiarities of the worldview of the people. However, the difficulties that arise in the work of a translator are completely surmountable, and an equivalent translation of a novel is possible.

It can be summarized that it is necessary to take into account and know the cultural heritage and traditions of a given country in order to accurately convey the meaning of the non-equivalent vocabularies of a certain language. In this study, starting points were outlined to solve the problem of conveying the characteristics of the cultural background and identity of Kazakh culture when translating a work of art into English.

The results of the scientific research show that the features of non-equivalence in the Kazakh and English languages are determined by the reflection in the content of such lexical units of specific elements of the culture of a given language community. The most important function of literary translation is to overcome the language barrier. This happens due to the transfer of information beyond the part of society that speaks the same language. Thus, the translated text contributes to successful mutual understanding and close cooperation between different language communities. Thus, it is possible to unite them in the face of the global problems of our time, on the solution of which the effectiveness of interethnic and intercultural contacts depends.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the definition of the way of transmitting the linguistic and cultural features of the non-equivalence of the Kazakh language when translated into English. It was expected that our research would allow us to judge how translatable the non-equivalent vocabulary of a work of art is and how its translation would affect the understanding of the national identity of the Kazakh people and the perception of the work as a whole. When analyzing non-equivalent vocabulary, we attempted to determine how much the content, function, and background meaning of the details of the original text of the work were preserved in translation.

Based on the study of methods for translating non-equivalent vocabulary, we found that, despite the fact that translation scholars give different numbers of them, most of the methods for conveying non-equivalent concepts are the same since the algorithms for finding translation solutions when faced with the problem of non-equivalence essentially remain the same (Ivanova, 2004). In relation to the translation of non-equivalent vocabulary from the novel "The Nomads" into English, techniques such as transliteration, transcription, calquing, descriptive, and adaptation translations were used. There may be different combinations of them depending on the characteristics of the object or phenomenon denoted by the given word. In addition, for the translator, when choosing strategies, the decisive factor is the total invariant of the text of the source language, which is subject to mandatory transmission in the translation text. Experts in the field of translation studies have noted that almost every existing and actively used method of translating non-equivalent vocabulary has disadvantages. It is rightly stated that none of them can be recommended as the only possible one (Zhabayeva, 2023). Translators, in general, including those involved in translations of I. Yesenberlin's trilogy face a difficult task – in each case, choose the appropriate non-equivalent vocabulary transmission method for this specific episode of translation in order to achieve the most accurate translation to adequately display the content of the work. It is not possible to unambiguously answer the question about the factors influencing the choice of one or another method of translating non-equivalent vocabulary based solely on the data obtained from the study. Over a fairly long period of discussion of the problem, translators offered many options for solving it. The choice of method for transmitting non-equivalent vocabulary depends on the nature of the (con)text and the translated non-equivalent, on its significance and significance in the artistic fabric of the work, and on the linguistic capabilities and traditions of the source language and the target language, and on the reader of the translation for whom the text is oriented (Mohammadi & Keshavarzi, 2016). An important role when choosing between translation methods is played by the colorfulness of non-equivalent vocabulary and its significance in a specific context. In other words, its role in the text is taken into account – it is an insignificant detail in the artistic fabric of the narrative or the writer's bright emphasis on something. Translating non-equivalents through transcription/transliteration is easier than transcribing *your* words. As we have seen in the process of analyzing textual material, the transmission of non-equivalent vocabulary using linguistic means other than transcription/ transliteration naturally leads to the loss of national-historical flavor. Transcription and transliteration techniques allow for conveying non-equivalent vocabulary without the need to transform the context.

The translation of non-equivalent vocabulary revealed in a literary text is creative. In order to find an accurate and competent translation of a non-equivalent, it is important not only to be a professional translator (Kashgary, 2011). The linguistic and theoretical competence of the specialist plays an important role. The experience of translating similar texts rich in background knowledge is also invaluable. We are convinced that most translation solutions require a special translation sense.

As a result of the analysis of non-equivalent vocabularies, selected from the text of the original work – the trilogy of Yesenberlin *The Nomads*, and the methods of its transmission in translated versions of the novel into English, we came to the following conclusions: the main method of translating non-equivalent vocabulary into English is adapted; the second method, often encountered in translation, is transliteration and transcription; one of the additionally used methods is calquing; due to the fact that the transliterated non-equivalent vocabularies of the Kazakh language are incomprehensible to speakers of English culture, translators use a descriptive method of translation in order to convey the features of the original; the use of the method of adaptation translation leads to inaccurate

transmission or loss of national and ethnocultural characteristics of the non-equivalent vocabularies; a comparison of methods for translating non-equivalent vocabularies into English illustrates that different methods are used to translate the same lexical units.

These results are important for translators who translate ethnocultural vocabulary. This study will allow to better understand what type of technique is the most effective when working with the literature of a particular culture. The results are also important for linguists, allowing them to better understand the structure and function of the Kazakh and English languages, as well as for language teachers, enriching the material for studying and understanding the features of the English and Kazakh languages. This study has important implications for the development of linguistic knowledge and language teaching. The results obtained from the analysis of non-equivalent vocabulary not only help linguists and translators to better understand the structure and functions of these elements in languages but also constitute an important resource for teaching and learning English and Kazakh languages. Future researchers may wish to include an analysis of phraseological units as a suggestion for further consideration. Such studies have the potential to provide additional information about the translation of ethnocultural vocabulary and phrases, as well as the difficulties translators face in addressing these aspects. All these aspects stimulate a significantly deeper study of non-equivalent vocabulary, taking into account the factors of its influence on many linguistic aspects and applicability in different languages.

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