

TRANSLATION PROBLEMS OF RAILWAY TERMS: CAUSES, TYPES AND WAYS OF SOLVING THEM

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Annotatsiya. Maqolada temir yo'l transporti terminlarini ingliz tilidan o'zbek tiliga tarjima qilishdagi asosiy muammolar tahlil qilinadi. Ekvivalentsizlik, ko'p ma'nolilik, sinonimiya, soxta do'st tarjimon so'zlari, madaniyatga xos terminlar, qisqartmalar va rus tilining vositachilik ta'siri ko'rib chiqiladi. O'zlashtirish, kalkalash, tavsifiy tarjima, transliteratsiya va neologizm yaratish usullari temir yo'l terminlari misolida yoritiladi. Natijalar terminlarni tarjima qilishda kontekst, sohaviy bilim va terminologik standartlarga tayanish zarurligini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: termin, tarjima, temir yo'l terminlari, ekvivalentsizlik, kalka, o'zlashtirish, o'zbek tili, ingliz tili.

Abstract. This article examines the main problems of translating railway transport terms from English into Uzbek. It analyses non-equivalence, polysemy, synonymy, false friends, culture-bound terms, abbreviations and the mediating influence of Russian. Strategies such as borrowing, calque, descriptive translation, transliteration and neologism creation are illustrated with railway terms. The findings show that translators need to rely on context, subject-field knowledge and terminological standards.

Keywords: term, translation, railway terms, non-equivalence, calque, borrowing, Uzbek language, English language.

1. Introduction

The exchange of scientific, technical and legal information depends largely on translation, and terms, the words that name concepts of a specific field, stand at the centre of this process. A term is expected to be precise, stable and unambiguous within its field [8], so translating terms seems simple: it appears enough to find a dictionary equivalent. In practice it is one of the most demanding parts of translation.

The problem is especially relevant for railway transport. The modernisation of the network in Uzbekistan, the launch of high-speed trains such as *Afrosiyob* and cooperation on international transit routes require constant work with

English-language standards, contracts and technical documentation. Translators must choose between borrowing a foreign term, using an established Russian-based form, creating an Uzbek term or explaining the concept descriptively. The aim of this article is to identify the main problems in translating railway terms and to describe strategies for solving them.

2. The Nature of a Term

A term belongs to a specific terminological system, is defined by a concept rather than by everyday usage, and has a fixed meaning within its field [6]. It cannot be understood outside the system of related concepts to which it belongs [2]. Each language organises knowledge in its own way, so a translator has to translate not a word but a concept, and must first understand that concept in the source field [7]. Most errors come from treating the term as an isolated word. Mirsagatova describes the thematic groups of English railway transport terms [4], which supports the view that the terminology of a field should be treated as an organised system.

3. Main Problems in Translating Railway Terms

3.1 Absence of an equivalent. New technologies often name concepts before the target language has terms for them. English *high-speed rail* and *maglev* (magnetic levitation train) are examples: translators had to decide whether to borrow, coin or explain. Non-equivalence arises whenever the target culture has not lexicalised a concept in the same way [5].

3.2 Polysemy. Many English terms have several meanings, even within railway English. *Switch* means points on a track (*strelka*), an electrical device (*o'chirgich*) or a network device (*kommutator*). *Platform* means the station platform (*perron*), a flat freight wagon (*platforma*) or a computing environment. *Sleeper* means a track component (*shpala*) or a sleeping car (*yotoqli vagon*). Only the context shows the right equivalent.

3.3 Synonymy and variation. British and American railway English name the same concepts differently: *railway* and *railroad*, *sleeper* and *tie*, *points* and *switch*, *goods train* and *freight train*. Uzbek also has variants: *teplovoz*, *dizel lokomotiv* and *dizelli lokomotiv* for the diesel locomotive. Such variation makes documents inconsistent, while consistency is a basic quality requirement in specialised translation [8].

3.4 False friends and pseudo-equivalents. The English *conductor* means the crew member responsible for the train and passengers on many railways, while the Uzbek *konduktor*, like the Russian *кондуктор*, is usually a ticket collector on buses and trams. The English *station* covers both *stansiya* (an operating point)

and *vokzal* (the passenger building). The influence of an intermediary language, often Russian, makes such errors more likely [3].

3.5 Culture-bound terms. The carriage types *platskart* (open-plan sleeping car) and *kupe* (four-berth compartment car) have no single English equivalent. Gauge terms also need care: the 1520 mm gauge used in Uzbekistan differs from the 1435 mm standard gauge, and an inaccurate translation may cause a technical error. Such items are usually treated as realia and require transliteration with an explanation [7].

3.6 Abbreviations. Railway texts contain abbreviations such as *UIC*, *ETCS*, *ATP* and *TEU*. The same abbreviation may stand for different terms in different fields (*ATP* also means adenosine triphosphate), and it may be kept in Latin script or replaced by a local form.

3.7 The role of Russian. Railways in Uzbekistan developed within the Russian and Soviet system, so many terms entered Uzbek in Russian form: *shpala*, *strelka*, *perron*, *vokzal*, *depo*, *teplovoz*, *elektrovoz*. Direct translation from English now produces competing variants (*elektr lokomotiv*, *platforma*), creating doubt about which form is correct [1].

4. Strategies for Translating Railway Terms

The choice of strategy depends on the text type, the reader and the status of the concept in the target language [5; 7].

- **Borrowing:** *lokomotiv*, *vagon*, *konteyner*. It ensures uniformity but, if overused, weakens the target language's own resources.
- **Calque:** *railway* → *temir yo'l*; *rolling stock* → *harakatlanuvchi tarkib*; *freight train* → *yuk poyezdi*. A poor calque may sound unnatural.
- **Descriptive translation:** *maglev* → *magnit maydoni yordamida yerdan ko'tarilib harakatlanuvchi poyezd*. It is precise but long, so it suits first mentions and non-specialist readers [5].
- **Transliteration with explanation:** *kupe* (a compartment sleeping car), *platskart* (an open-plan sleeping car).
- **Functional equivalent:** *commuter train* → *shahar atrofi poyezdi*. Functional similarity is not identity, so it needs care.
- **Neologism:** *tezyurar poyezd* (*tez* "fast" + *yurar* "going") for *high-speed train*. Such creation is mainly a task for terminology committees, since it requires standardisation [6].

No strategy is universally best; a combination often works, for example a borrowed term with an explanation at first use and the short form afterwards.

5. Practical Recommendations

Translators should identify the field and the variety of English (British or American) first, and understand the concept from specialised sources rather than only bilingual dictionaries. They should consult railway glossaries, standards and parallel texts, keep a project glossary to use one equivalent per concept, check false friends, adapt the text to the reader and consult a railway specialist in complex areas such as signalling.

6. Conclusion

Translating railway terms means transferring concepts between two systems of knowledge, not just finding dictionary matches. The main problems, from non-equivalence and polysemy to false friends and the influence of Russian, can be reduced by choosing a suitable strategy (borrowing, calque, descriptive translation, transliteration or neologism) according to context and reader. Standardised Uzbek railway terminology and cooperation between translators, linguists and railway specialists remain essential for the quality of specialised translation.

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