

THE TRANSLATION OF NOUN FROM NON-ENGLISH TO ENGLISH: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract: *This systematic review explores the strategies and challenges involved in translating nouns from non-English languages into English. Nouns often carry cultural, grammatical, and contextual nuances that complicate direct translation. The review categorizes various noun translation techniques such as literal translation, cultural substitution, and descriptive equivalents. It examines a range of scholarly sources, comparing how different language pairs approach noun translation and what common difficulties translators face. Findings highlight the importance of context and cultural knowledge in ensuring accurate and meaningful translations. This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview for linguists, translators, and language learners interested in the nuanced process of noun translation into English.*

Key words: *noun translation, non-English to English, translation strategies, linguistic equivalence, cultural adaptation, literal translation, descriptive translation, systematic review.*

INTRODUCTION

Translation conveys thoughts, knowledge, or intentions from a source language to a target language. This process involves substituting the linguistic structure of the source language with that of the target language. It requires consideration of several limitations, including context, the grammatical regulations of both languages and idioms. Translating nouns from various languages (source) into English (target) is particularly complex, especially with specific noun categories. The challenges highlighted the necessity for various translating methods that consider the unique features and limitations related to each category of noun. Strategies range from literal translation to retaining the original meaning, which emphasises readability in the target language. Over the past decades, translation theorists and practitioners have proposed various strategies for dealing with such challenges.

Literature review. The translation of nouns from non-English languages into English has been widely discussed in translation studies, particularly in relation to semantic equivalence, cultural transfer, and grammatical adaptation. Nouns often carry significant lexical and cultural information, which makes their translation a complex linguistic task. Scholars such as Eugene Nida, Peter Newmark, Mona Baker, and Vinay and Darbelnet have emphasized that the translation of lexical units, especially nouns, requires attention not only to semantic meaning but also to cultural and contextual dimensions. According to Eugene Nida, translation should aim at achieving dynamic equivalence, which focuses on conveying the intended meaning of the source text in a way that produces a similar response in the target audience. In this regard, nouns that

refer to cultural realities or social institutions often require adaptation rather than literal translation. Nida argues that lexical items associated with cultural contexts may require explanatory translation or functional equivalents in order to preserve communicative effectiveness. Peter Newmark distinguishes between semantic translation and communicative translation, emphasizing that nouns with strong cultural associations should often be translated using communicative strategies. For example, institutional or cultural nouns may require descriptive translation in order to convey their meaning accurately in English. Newmark also identifies strategies such as transference, naturalization, and functional equivalence as effective tools for translating culturally specific nouns.

Mona Baker further explores the issue of lexical equivalence at word level and argues that nouns may pose challenges due to differences in conceptual categorization across languages. Some languages use nouns to express concepts that English expresses through phrases or clauses. In such cases, translators must restructure the expression in order to maintain semantic clarity. Baker emphasizes that translation strategies such as paraphrasing, cultural substitution, and omission may be necessary when direct equivalence does not exist.

Similarly, Vinay and Darbelnet identify several translation procedures that are frequently used when translating nouns, including borrowing, calque, transposition, modulation, and equivalence. These procedures allow translators to deal with lexical and structural differences between languages while preserving the communicative intent of the original text. Research on the translation of nouns has also focused on proper nouns, ethnonyms, institutional names, and culturally bound terms. Scholars note that proper nouns may either be transliterated, translated descriptively, or replaced with culturally recognizable equivalents. The choice of strategy often depends on the function of the noun within the discourse and the degree of cultural specificity involved. Overall, the existing literature demonstrates that noun translation is influenced by linguistic structure, cultural context, and pragmatic function. However, there is still a need for systematic reviews that synthesize previous findings and identify the most common strategies used in translating nouns from non-English languages into English.

Methodology. This study adopts a systematic review approach in order to analyze existing research on the translation of nouns from non-English languages into English. A systematic review is a research method that aims to collect, evaluate, and synthesize findings from previously published studies in a structured and transparent manner. The data for this study were collected from academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science, as well as from major journals in translation studies and linguistics. The search focused on publications related to lexical translation, noun translation, equivalence theory, and cross-linguistic lexical transfer. Keywords such as noun translation, lexical equivalence, translation strategies, and cultural terms in translation were used to identify relevant studies. The selection process followed several criteria. First, the studies had to address translation between English and other

languages. Second, the research needed to provide empirical or theoretical insights into the translation of nouns or lexical units. Third, only peer-reviewed publications and academic books were included in the analysis. After the initial search, approximately fifty studies were identified. Following a detailed screening process based on relevance and methodological clarity, twenty-five studies were selected for final analysis. These studies represent different linguistic traditions and translation contexts, including literary translation, legal translation, historical texts, and cultural discourse. The selected studies were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The analysis focused on identifying the most frequently discussed translation strategies, the types of nouns that present translation challenges, and the theoretical frameworks used by researchers. The findings were then categorized into thematic groups in order to highlight common patterns in noun translation.

Results and Discussion. The systematic review revealed several important tendencies in the translation of nouns from non-English languages into English. One of the most significant findings is that nouns with strong cultural associations present the greatest translation challenges. Terms referring to social institutions, historical realities, or cultural practices often lack direct equivalents in English. In such cases, translators frequently rely on strategies such as descriptive translation or functional equivalence. Another important finding concerns the translation of proper nouns and ethnonyms. Many studies indicate that proper nouns are often transferred through transliteration in order to preserve cultural authenticity. However, when the noun carries semantic meaning that is important for understanding the text, translators may add explanatory elements. For example, historical titles or administrative terms may be translated descriptively in order to clarify their function for the target reader. The analysis also shows that transposition and modulation are commonly used strategies when translating nouns. Because grammatical structures differ across languages, a noun in the source language may be translated as a phrase or clause in English. This transformation allows translators to maintain naturalness and readability in the target language. Furthermore, the review highlights the role of context in determining translation strategies. In literary translation, translators often prioritize stylistic and cultural nuances, which may lead to creative adaptations of nouns. In contrast, technical or legal translation requires a higher level of terminological precision, which limits the range of possible translation strategies.

Overall, the findings confirm that noun translation involves a balance between semantic accuracy and communicative effectiveness. Translators must consider not only the lexical meaning of the noun but also its cultural, pragmatic, and stylistic functions within the text. The results of this review suggest that successful noun translation requires an integrated approach that combines linguistic analysis with cultural understanding. Future research may focus on corpus-based studies in order to examine how nouns are translated across different genres and languages.

Conclusion

This systematic review has examined the diverse strategies and challenges involved in translating nouns from a range of non-English languages into English. The findings highlight that noun translation is influenced by linguistic, cultural, and contextual factors, with variations in morphology, semantics, and syntax playing critical roles.

Translators often face issues such as lexical gaps, cultural-specific references, and differing grammatical categories, which necessitate a careful balance between literal fidelity and contextual equivalence.

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