

TRANSLATION STRATEGIES FOR ONOMASTIC UNITS IN TOURISM TEXTS

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23211409>**Abstract:**

This article examines the main strategies used to translate onomastic units in tourism texts, with particular attention to the preservation of cultural meaning and communicative accessibility. The study focuses on Uzbek-English tourism translation and considers transliteration, established equivalents, preservation, contextualization, and descriptive translation as major strategies.

Keywords: onomastic units, tourism translation, proper names, translation strategies, cultural meaning, toponyms, Uzbek-English translation.

Tourism translation is an important form of intercultural communication because tourism texts introduce foreign audiences to the history, geography and cultural heritage of a destination. Within such texts, onomastic units occupy a particularly significant position. They include geographical names, personal names, names of historical sites, institutions and other culturally identifiable entities.

Proper names cannot always be transferred mechanically from one language into another. Their translation may involve linguistic, historical and cultural considerations. Parianou argues that proper names create specific translation problems and that their treatment should be related to their communicative and functional role in the target text.

In tourism discourse, this issue becomes especially relevant because the target reader may have limited background knowledge of the source culture. Consequently, the translator must balance authenticity with comprehensibility.

Onomastic Units in Tourism Translation. Onomastic units in tourism texts can be divided into several major groups:

- **toponyms** – names of cities, regions and geographical features;
- **anthroponyms** – names of historical and cultural figures;
- **names of historical and cultural sites;**
- **institutional and cultural names.**

Geographical names are particularly important because they provide the basic spatial framework of tourism discourse. The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) emphasizes that standardized geographical names are essential for clear communication, identification and international information exchange. It also stresses the importance of nationally standardized names and scientifically based romanization systems.

Thus, consistency in rendering geographical names is not merely a stylistic preference; it is an important aspect of accurate international communication.

Main Translation Strategies. The translation of onomastic units requires the selection of an appropriate strategy according to the linguistic form, cultural significance and communicative function of the name. In tourism discourse, the translator should preserve the identity of the source name while ensuring that it remains understandable to international visitors. The most common strategies include transliteration, established equivalents, preservation with contextualization, descriptive translation, and dual naming.

3.1. Transliteration and Romanization

Transliteration refers to the transfer of a proper name from one writing system into another while preserving its original phonological and graphic identity as far as possible. In Uzbek-English tourism translation, this strategy is particularly relevant to geographical and historical names.

For example:

- **Qo'qon → Kokand**
- **Farg'ona → Fergana**
- **Xorazm → Khorezm**

The main advantage of transliteration is that it preserves the identity and recognizability of the source-language name. However, a transliterated form may not always be transparent to foreign tourists. Therefore, the translator may need to combine transliteration with contextual or descriptive information.

3.2. Established Equivalents

An **established equivalent** is a target-language form that has already become conventional through historical, academic, cartographic or international usage. In such cases, creating a new transliteration is usually unnecessary because the target audience already recognizes the established form.

For example:

- **Abu Ali ibn Sino → Avicenna**
- **Buxoro → Bukhara**
- **Samarqand → Samarkand**

This strategy contributes to consistency and conforms to established international usage. It is particularly important in academic and tourism texts intended for an international audience.

Preservation with contextualization involves retaining the original proper name while adding a generic term or brief explanation that identifies the nature of the referent.

For example:

- **Ming O'rik → Ming Urik archaeological site**
- **Ko'kaldosh → Kukeldash Madrasah**
- **Gur-i Amir → Gur-Emir Mausoleum**

This strategy is especially effective in tourism discourse because the proper name preserves cultural authenticity, whereas the additional element provides essential information for readers unfamiliar with the source culture.

Thus, the structure can be represented as:

Culturally specific name + explanatory/generic element

This approach creates a balance between **cultural preservation and communicative accessibility**.

Descriptive translation is used when a proper name contains culturally or semantically significant information that cannot be adequately communicated through direct transfer alone. Instead of translating the name word-for-word, the translator provides a description of the referent or its cultural function.

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For example, when a culturally specific architectural name is unfamiliar to international visitors, the translator may retain the original name and add information concerning its historical function, architectural type or cultural significance.

The principal purpose of this strategy is therefore **not to replace the proper name but to make its cultural reference accessible to the target audience**.

This strategy is particularly useful for tourism texts because international visitors often require contextual information rather than merely the phonetic reproduction of a name.

Dual naming involves presenting the local name together with an established English, historical or internationally recognized variant.

For example:

- **Movarounnahr (Transoxiana)**
- **Xorazm (Khwarazm)**

This strategy is useful when both forms have cultural or historical relevance. It allows the translator to preserve the local identity of the name while simultaneously providing a form that may be more familiar to international readers.

Dual naming can also be particularly effective in historical tourism texts, where different naming traditions may reflect different historical periods.

Overall, these strategies demonstrate that the translation of onomastic units is not limited to direct linguistic substitution. **Transliteration** primarily preserves the original form, **established equivalents** ensure conformity with conventional target-language usage, **contextualization** improves accessibility, **descriptive translation** clarifies culturally specific references, and **dual naming** connects local and internationally recognized forms. Therefore, the choice of strategy should be determined by the cultural significance of the name, its established usage and the communicative needs of the target audience.

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