Revue algérienne des lettres **Issn 2602-621X | Eissn 2661-4447**

Volume 9, n°3 | 2025 pages 333-346

Soumission : 21/11/2025| Acceptation : 21/02/2026 | Publication : 03/06/2026

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Translating Cultural Elements Using Yandex Translate: Selected Examples

La traduction des éléments culturels à l'aide de Yandex Translate : sélection d'exemples

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Abstract: *This article aims to examine how Yandex Translate handles the translation of cultural elements by analyzing applied models that include proverbs, idiomatic expressions, and symbols with cultural connotations. The study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach to compare machine translation with human translation in order to assess the program's efficiency in conveying cultural meanings. The findings reveal that Yandex performs relatively well in translating direct linguistic meanings; however, it fails to render deeper cultural dimensions, particularly in proverbs, idioms, and symbolic expressions. The study concludes that these shortcomings stem from the limited cultural awareness embedded in machine translation models, highlighting the essential need to integrate cultural knowledge into translation systems to enhance translation quality and achieve both semantic and cultural equivalence across languages.*

Keywords: *machine translation, cultural elements, Yandex translate, human translation, artificial intelligence, cultural equivalence.*

Résumé: *Cet article a pour objectif d'examiner la manière dont Yandex Translate traite la traduction des éléments culturels, à travers l'analyse de modèles appliqués comprenant des proverbes, des expressions idiomatiques et des symboles à connotation culturelle. L'étude adopte une approche descriptive et analytique visant à comparer la traduction automatique à la traduction humaine, afin d'évaluer l'efficacité du programme dans la transmission des significations culturelles. Les résultats révèlent que Yandex réussit relativement bien à traduire les significations linguistiques directes ; cependant, il ne parvient pas à restituer les dimensions culturelles profondes, en particulier dans les proverbes, les idiomes et les expressions symboliques. L'étude conclut que ces insuffisances découlent de la conscience culturelle limitée intégrée dans les modèles de traduction automatique, soulignant la nécessité essentielle d'intégrer la connaissance culturelle dans les systèmes de traduction afin d'améliorer la qualité des traductions et d'atteindre une équivalence à la fois.*

Mots-clés: *traduction automatique, éléments culturels, Yandex translate, traduction humaine, inteligence artificielle, équivalence culturelle.*

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Translation is a vital bridge connecting cultures and civilizations, enabling the transfer of knowledge, the exchange of values, and the sharing of human experiences across societies and nations. Previous related studies have highlighted the crucial role of translation in fostering intercultural understanding, emphasizing that cultural elements such as proverbs, metaphors, idiomatic expressions, and geographical names carry contextual meanings that go beyond literal linguistic sense, making their translation a significant challenge for both traditional and modern machine translation systems (Mentari, 2025:20). With the digital revolution and the advancement of artificial intelligence technologies, translation has undergone a profound shift toward automated solutions, relying on machine learning algorithms to process texts with speed and relative accuracy. However, the capacity to represent the cultural dimension remains limited, raising questions about the effectiveness of these systems in conveying culturally nuanced messages accurately. The research problem of this study is therefore defined as follows: How does Yandex Translate handle the translation of cultural elements that carry semantic and contextual meanings beyond the direct linguistic sense ? From this problem statement, the following research questions were raised :

- To what extent is Yandex Translate efficient in conveying cultural elements?
- What types of errors or cultural distortions may occur in its translations?
- What factors influence the accuracy of machine translation of cultural content?

The study rests on the following hypotheses:

- Yandex Translate is likely to succeed in conveying direct linguistic meaning with acceptable accuracy, but fails to fully render deep cultural dimensions.
- Cultural translation errors are expected to be more pronounced in proverbs, symbols, and idiomatic expressions with strong cultural backgrounds.
- The limited accuracy of cultural translation may stem from insufficient representation of cultural knowledge in the datasets used to train the machine model.

The study aims to analyze Yandex Translate’s performance in translating various cultural elements, highlight the limitations of artificial intelligence in representing cultural dimensions, and propose practical solutions to enhance the quality of machine translation from a cultural perspective.The research adopts a descriptive-analytical applied methodology, employing Yandex Translate as the primary analytical tool and selecting a sample of short texts containing diverse cultural elements, such as proverbs, metaphors, idiomatic expressions, and place names, with a focus on source and target language texts to evaluate the system’s ability to convey cultural meanings accurately. The novelty of this study lies in providing a precise applied analysis of Yandex Translate’s approach in handling cultural elements, while suggesting criteria and solutions to improve machine translation from a cultural standpoint, thereby addressing an existing knowledge gap in previous research on automated cultural translation in an endeavor to bridge it.

I. Theoretical Concepts

1. The concept of cultural elements and their translation

Language is considered one of the most prominent components of cultural identity. It is not a mere tool for communication, but a semantic system that embodies a given society’s worldview and reflects its intellectual and social backgrounds. From this perspective emerged the concept of cultural element as a central tool for understanding the complex relationship between language and culture, and later between language, culture, and

translation. This concept encompasses everything through which language expresses cultural peculiarities, whether in everyday vocabulary, value-laden symbols, customs and traditions, or social and religious practices manifested in linguistic use and meaning. Many scholars and theorists, including Eugene Nida and Peter Newmark, have attempted to classify these elements in order to analyze their nature and identify their function within texts. Eugene Nida argues that: "Cultural differences arise from a wide range of factors, including material culture such as food, clothing, and housing, as well as social institutions, religious beliefs, and linguistic patterns that shape how a community" (Nida, 1964: 91-92). This means that cultural elements range from tangible material components such as food, clothing, and housing to social, religious, and linguistic elements that reflect the depth and symbolic system of a culture. Peter Newmark, on the other hand, proposes a more detailed classification, dividing cultural elements into natural environment, material culture, social organization, ideas and customs, and language itself as a representation of a society's thought and worldview[2]. These classifications bring forward a fundamental idea: the cultural element cannot be alienated from its original environment, as its meaning is shaped within its own original cultural context, making its literal transfer more challenging at the expense of its original significance.

From this standpoint, cultural translation emerged as a qualitative development in modern translation theories. Translation is no longer a purely linguistic process; it has become a cultural act that requires deep awareness of the differences between cultures. The translator, in this sense, does not merely transfer words but conveys worldviews and patterns of thinking. Cultural translation involves reconstructing the text in the target language while preserving its original spirit, taking into account the cultural background of the target reader. This approach has sparked much debate, especially in light of Lawrence Venuti's work, in which he introduced the dichotomy of domestication and foreignization as strategies for handling cultural elements. Domestication seeks to make the text appear familiar within the target culture (Venuti, 1995 :20), whereas foreignization maintains the "foreignness" and cultural specificity of the original text. The translator is therefore constantly confronted with this tension: should they preserve the identity of the source text, or facilitate its integration into the target culture ? Thus, it can be said that understanding the cultural element is an essential step for every translator, and that cultural translation is not a simple linguistic transfer but an intellectual practice that requires the ability to make informed decisions that balance accuracy and cultural appropriateness. Language and culture are inseparable, and translation is the bridge linking them, thereby enhancing human communication and promoting dialogue among peoples.

2. The Role of Translation Theories in Handling Cultural Elements

The relationship between translation and culture is one of the central issues that has preoccupied scholars in the field of translation studies. Translation is not merely a mechanical linguistic transfer, but a complex cultural act that is closely tied to the social and civilizational contexts in which texts are produced. In this regard, several theories have emerged to explain how cultural elements can be transferred across languages, most

[2] **See** : Carine Omar, Cultural transfer in poetic translation, Journal of translation and languages, Vol.20, No.2,2021, p.310

notably Nida's theory of Dynamic Equivalence, Lawrence Venuti's concepts of Domestication and Foreignization, and Hans Vermeer's Skopos Theory. All of these approaches attempt to address the fundamental challenge of maintaining fidelity to the source text and culture while ensuring clarity and acceptability in the target culture.

Within the framework of dynamic equivalence, Nida argues that successful translation is achieved not by transferring linguistic structures only, but by reproducing the same effect the original text has on its audience (equivalent effect). He emphasizes that "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message"[3]. Accordingly, the translator must strive to evoke a response in the target reader similar to that of the source reader, which often requires adapting or replacing certain cultural references to fit the cultural context of the target language. Lawrence Venuti, on the other hand, approaches the issue from a broader ideological viewpoint through his well-known dichotomy of Domestication and Foreignization. He argues that domestication draws the foreign text closer to the target culture, making it more familiar to the reader, while foreignization seeks to preserve the cultural distinctiveness of the source text and highlight its difference (Venuti, 1995:19). Venuti stresses that choosing between these strategies is not merely a linguistic decision, but an ideological stance: domestication may erase cultural otherness, whereas foreignization preserves diversity and resists cultural assimilation. Hans Vermeer's Skopos Theory, developed within the German functionalist school, offers a functional perspective centered on the notion of purpose. Vermeer maintains that the way cultural elements are handled depends primarily on the function the text is intended to perform in the target culture (Vermeer, 1989: 228). If the purpose is educational or informative, additional explanation may be necessary; however, if the purpose is literary or aesthetic, preserving the cultural specificity of the source text may be more appropriate. In conclusion, despite their different orientations, these three theories agree that translation is as much a cultural process as it is a linguistic one, and that the translator plays an active role in shaping meaning rather than merely transferring it. From striving for equivalent effect, to balancing domestication and foreignization, to aligning translation with its intended purpose, these approaches collectively demonstrate that translating cultural elements lies at the heart of the translation process. They reveal the limitations of language in representing the other and introduce translation as a vital bridge for intercultural communication and human understanding.

3. Machine Translation and Cultural Aspects

The cultural dimension represents one of the most complex challenges in the context of machine translation, as software often processes texts at the level of words and grammatical structures without adequately considering the cultural dimensions that give these words depth and meaning. In this regard, recent studies indicate that machine translation may encounter particular difficulties in conveying cultural "aesthetics," given that there are fixed and variable components in aesthetic expression that interact with both the source and target cultures. This demonstrates that artificial intelligence alone is insufficient to fully grasp these dynamics, requiring instead a framework that integrates cultural knowledge with computational processing (Meftah, 2023 :342). Moreover,

[3] **See**: Yinhua Xiang, Dynamic Equivalence: Features and Merits, Theory and Practice in Language Studies, Academy Publisher, Vol. 1, No. 9, September 2011, p.1253

researchers also address the issue of transferring cultural elements through other translation media. For example, a study by Diaf Fatima Zahra shows that translating audiovisual elements, such as films, requires adopting a precise approach, because cultural differences are manifested not only in language but also in the historical, social, and cultural context of the original audience. If these gaps are not taken into account, the translation may fail to convey the intended message or cultural meaning (Diaf, 2022 :38). The principle of cultural fidelity extends beyond professional texts to literary works. Qadri Abdeljalil demonstrates how literary translators reconstruct the cultural dimension of the source text in a way that allows target language readers to comprehend “rituals and concepts unfamiliar to them” without distorting or erasing them. This underscores that translation is not merely a mechanical transfer of language but a conscious cultural reinterpretation, a capacity that machine systems alone cannot fully achieve (Qadri, 2023: 659).

From a strategic perspective, a study by "Omar Laabed" and "Mahbouba Bekouche" shows that translating culturally specific elements in literary texts calls for a deeper translator’s awareness, as some elements cannot be rendered literally without losing significant meaning. In such cases, translators may resort to techniques such as borrowing, explanation, or re-expression, depending on the translatability of the element within the target context (Laabed & Mahbouba , 2022: 811). Furthermore, "Sofiane Djeffal" and "Raihane Khouissat" point out that modern algorithms, despite their ability to mimic certain styles, lack the interpretive capacities necessary to handle omission or implied meaning, requiring human intervention to ensure accuracy and depth (Djeffal & Khouissat, 2024:576). Therefore, it can be concluded that, despite its considerable capabilities, machine translation remains heavily dependent on human intervention - particularly when cultural elements are central to the text. Human translators’ intervention and provision of supplementary cultural insights contribute to producing translations that are not only linguistically correct but also culturally rich and accurate, making translation a true bridge for intercultural communication rather than a mere mechanical conversion of languages.

4. Strategies of Yandex Translate in Dealing with Cultural Elements

In handling cultural elements within texts, Yandex Translator employs a variety of strategies aimed at achieving a balance between linguistic accuracy and cultural sensitivity. The system alternates between literal translation, cultural adaptation, and preserving the foreign character of the text, in addition to providing clarification, explanation, and context supported by neural models. Although these approaches contribute to improving translation quality, the complexity of cultural components and their variation across languages require careful analysis and, when necessary, human intervention to ensure the effective conveyance of cultural meaning. Among these strategies are the following (Mentari, 2025 : 27-28)

a) Literal or direct translation: Yandex transfers words and phrases from the source language to the target language as they are. This strategy is suitable for simple or universal elements, such as colors and numbers, but often proves ineffective when dealing with culturally specific concepts or idiomatic expressions.

b) Cultural adaptation (Domestication): Yandex occasionally replaces an unfamiliar cultural element with one familiar to the target audience, such as converting a local

holiday into one widely recognized by the user. While this facilitates comprehension, it reduces the original cultural 'foreign' flavor of the text.

c) Foreignization: the program preserves certain cultural elements as they are, such as names of foods or customs, sometimes adding brief clarifications to maintain the cultural integrity of the text, though this may make comprehension more difficult for some users.

d) Explicitation: the program adds in inline annotations or explanatory notes, supported by some of Yandex's advanced AI models, such as explaining the term "Ramadan" as "the Muslim fasting month." This strategy is limited in scope but adds cultural value to the translation.

e) Reuse and Alignment: relying on databases or previous translations, Yandex draws on past examples to translate similar cultural elements. This improves cultural alignment but remains constrained by the preexisting data.

F) Contextual Matching: using neural models that take the overall sentence or text context into account, for instance, translating the Japanese term "tea ceremony" as "Japanese tea ceremony" rather than the literal "tea," thereby more accurately reflecting its cultural meaning.

Although Yandex Translate employs multiple strategies to handle the translation of cultural elements, the complexity of culture and the differences between languages make it essential for translators or researchers to pay careful attention to these aspects in practical applications. Studying how the system interacts with culturally rich texts and incorporating human intervention when necessary allows for a more precise understanding of its capabilities and limitations. These aspects will be explored in detail in the following section.

II / Results and Discussion



The official interface of the Yandex program

What is the Yandex Translate application?

Yandex Translate is a web service provided by Yandex, designed for translating texts and web pages into other languages. It employs self-learning statistical machine translation developed by Yandex. The system builds its own dictionary based on the analysis of millions of translated texts. To translate a text, the program first compares it with a database of words, then with basic language models in an attempt to determine the

meaning of the expression within the textual context. The translation feature, which appears on search results pages (under the "Translate" button), was introduced in 2009 and was initially based on PROMT. The Russian Wikipedia version was created for translating from English into Russian. In addition, the automated translation was integrated into the Yandex Browser, which automatically translates texts from supported foreign languages.
When it was launched in beta mode in the spring of 2011, Yandex translator was available only in three languages, namely English, Russian, and Ukrainian, with a limit of 10,000 characters. As of January 2017, the translation has become available in 90 languages, including Arabic.

The First Example

On Thanksgiving, people in the United States usually have a big dinner with turkey and pumpkin pie. (A cultural element related to food customs and traditional occasions)	
Yandex Translate	في عيد الشكر، يتناول الناس في الولايات المتحدة عادة عشاءً كبيرًا مع الديك الرومي وفطيرة اليقطين.
Human Translation	في عيد الشكر، وهو احتفال أمريكي سنوي، يتناول الناس في الولايات المتحدة عادةً عشاءً كبيرًا يضم الديك الرومي وفطيرة اليقطين.

This example appeared within a socio-cultural English text discussing American customs during national occasions. It focused specifically on the manifestations of the Thanksgiving celebration in the United States from both cultural and social perspectives. Thanksgiving is considered one of the most well-known national holidays in American culture. It is celebrated annually in November, and families traditionally gather for festive meals that typically include turkey and pumpkin pie. The original text aims to highlight the collective spirit of the American family during this occasion, portraying it as a moment of gratitude and appreciation that reflects deep-rooted religious and human values in American society.
This example clearly demonstrates that the source text contains a cultural element represented by the term Thanksgiving, which refers to a social and religious occasion with a national character in American culture. The translation produced by Yandex Translate was linguistically accurate in terms of conveying the syntactic and lexical structure of the sentence. It preserved the word order and main meanings; however, it handled the cultural element “Thanksgiving” in a neutral and literal manner, assuming that the Arabic reader would automatically understand the nature of this celebration. Here lies the central issue of machine translation when dealing with cultural components: it tends to rely on direct lexical correspondences without considering the cultural background of the target audience. The term Eid al-Shukr “Thanksgiving” does not carry the same connotations or symbolic value in the Arab culture as it does in the American culture, which leads to a loss or weakening of cultural understanding in the translated text. In the human translation the author produced, a brief explanatory note was intentionally added “a national American celebration” as a deliberate semantic intervention aiming at achieving cultural equivalence, in addition to linguistic equivalence. This clarification helps to convey the implicit cultural information of the source text, making the Arabic translation more comprehensible and natural for readers who do not share the same cultural background. In conclusion, this example is rich in cultural references that cannot be translated literally

into Arabic without further explanation, since the target reader may lack sufficient knowledge about the historical and social significance of this celebration and the values it represents. Therefore, the Thanksgiving example serves as a typical translational situation for assessing the performance of Yandex Translate in rendering culturally loaded words and expressions from English into Arabic.

The Second Example

He spilled the beans about their secret plan. (Idiomatic expression)	
Yandex Translate	لقد سكبت الفاصوليا عن خطتهم السرية.
Human Translation	أفشى سر خطتهم / كشف عن خطتهم السرية.

The example (He spilled the beans about their secret plan) represents a precise sample of the challenges faced by machine translation systems when dealing with idiomatic expressions with deep cultural roots. This English expression is not merely a literal statement referring to a physical action; rather, it is a figurative expression embedded in Anglo-Saxon culture, used to denote the act of revealing a secret or disclosing hidden information. When translated using Yandex Translate, the output was "He spilled the beans about their secret plan", rendered in Arabic as "لقد سكبت الفاصوليا عن خطتهم السرية." This translation is entirely literal and demonstrates that the system failed to recognize the idiomatic nature of the expression, treating it instead as an ordinary linguistic construction subject to direct lexical equivalence. As a result, the figurative meaning of the phrase is lost, and the Arabic version becomes awkward and illogical, and sounds unnatural to the Arab target audience, since the phrase "spilling the beans" carries no symbolic or idiomatic meaning in Arabic culture. This outcome highlights a clear limitation in contextual and cultural comprehension on the part of machine translation, as such systems rely mainly on statistical bounds between words without the ability to grasp figurative structures or cultural connotations. In contrast, the human translation displayed greater awareness of the pragmatic context and intended meaning by using semantic equivalents such as "أفشى سر خطتهم" (He revealed their secret plan) or "كشف عن خطتهم السرية" ("He disclosed their secret plan"). These expressions belong to the Arabic cultural and linguistic system and perform the same communicative function as the source expression, inducing the equivalent effect. The contrast between these two outputs illustrates that human translation engages in what is known as cultural interpretation the ability to move beyond the surface level of language to capture its figurative and intended meanings. This example also shows that while Yandex Translate can preserve grammatical structure and surface accuracy, it remains limited in its ability to comprehend indirect semantic relationships, emphasizing the need to integrate elements of cultural intelligence into machine translation systems. Hence, it becomes evident that the cultural element is not a marginal detail in the translation process but rather a central component that determines the success of meaning transfer between languages. It further reveals the essential difference between automatic (machine) translation and culturally informed human translation that takes both linguistic and contextual dimensions into account.

The Third Example

When in Rome, do as the Romans do. (Proverb / Traditional saying)	
Yandex Translate	عندما تكون في روما، افعل كما يفعل الرومان.
Human Translation	إذا كنتَ في قومٍ فاحلُب في إنائهم

In this proverb, the saying “When in Rome, do as the Romans do” carries a figurative meaning deeply rooted in Western culture and cannot be understood literally. The Yandex program provided a grammatically correct translation: “When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do,” yet it remained confined to the linguistic form without grasping the cultural significance. The human translator, however, understood that the intended meaning is to encourage adapting to the customs of the people in the place where one sets foot. Therefore, they introduced an equivalent saying in Arabic, which reads (إذا كنت في قوم فاحلُب في إنائهم), literally meaning in English (when you visit a people, milk in their vessel). It is assumed that the database fed into Yandex Translate did not include (at least at the time of the study) the existing equivalents of proverbs and wise sayings, which do not need to be recreated but to be found in both source and target cultures. It becomes clearer that machine translation often relies on direct literal translation without recognizing the social and cultural context of the proverb. In contrast, the human translator possesses the ability to connect the text to the cultural situation in which it originated. Hence, the cultural element is not a luxury but a fundamental aspect of understanding the implicit meaning of language. Its absence makes machine translation grammatically accurate but semantically poor, while its presence gives the text life and harmony with the target culture. This example demonstrates the need for translation programs like Yandex to develop models capable of understanding metaphors and proverbs within their cultural contexts. It also highlights the essential role of humans in refining translations to suit the culture of the target language.

The Fourth Example

During Ramadan, families gather after sunset to enjoy iftar, often starting with dates and soup. (Religious custom)	
Yandex Translate	خلال شهر رمضان، تجتمع العائلات بعد غروب الشمس للاستمتاع بالإفطار، وغالبًا ما تبدأ بالتمور والحساء.
Human Translation	خلال شهر رمضان، تجتمع العائلات بعد غروب الشمس لتناول وجبة الإفطار الرمضانية، وغالبًا ما يبدأون بالتمر والحساء.

Both Yandex and human translation rendered the phrase "During Ramadan" as "*خلال شهر رمضان*", which is accurate both linguistically and culturally. The word ***Ramadan*** is not translated but rather transliterated, as it represents a specific religious and cultural term in the Islamic world and is recognized globally. "Families gather after sunset" was translated as "*تجتمع العائلات بعد غروب الشمس*" in both versions, which is grammatically and contextually correct. However, the author's suggested translation seeks to highlight that this gathering is not merely a social gathering, but rather a devotional act with a spiritual dimension connected to breaking the fast after a day of fasting. This nuance prepares the reader for a deeper semantic understanding in the following sentence:
"to enjoy iftar".
Here, the importance of the cultural element becomes evident:

- Yandex translated it as "*للاستمتاع بالإفطار*" ("to enjoy the iftar"), which is a literal rendering focusing only on the linguistic dimension. The system interpreted the word "***enjoy***" in its direct sense ("to take pleasure in"), while overlooking the cultural and religious meaning of *iftar*, which refers to the special Ramadan meal for breaking the fast. It is not merely an act of enjoyment or eating, but rather a spiritual and social ritual.
- In contrast, the author's suggested translation rendered it as "*لتناول وجبة الإفطار الرمضانية*" ("to have the Ramadan iftar meal"), adding the words *meal* and *Ramadan* to emphasize the cultural aspect and flavor.

"often starting with dates and soup"

- Yandex: "*وغالبًا ما تبدأ بالتمور والحساء*"
- Human translation: "*وغالبًا ما يبدأون بالتمر والحساء*"

The difference between these two expressions is subtle yet essential in terms of cultural and grammatical harmony.

- Yandex used the verb "*تبدأ*" (feminine singular form, referring implicitly to the meal or the act itself), which is grammatically correct but loses the collective human tone of Ramadan atmosphere, where the true agents are the families or the fasting individuals.
- The author's version used "*يبدأون*" (they begin), linking the action directly to the human subjects -the families or individuals - which captures the cultural reality of the scene: people gathering, holding dates in their hands, and beginning to break their fast together.

The difference between the two translations does not lie merely in linguistic accuracy but in the depth of cultural understanding of the text. While Yandex's translation — though formally correct — remains on the linguistic surface, it fails to penetrate the social and spiritual meaning of Ramadan and iftar. Machine translation processes the sentence as a description of an ordinary meal, whereas the author's translation interprets it as a ritual event combining worship, family bonding, and spiritual joy. This demonstrates the crucial role of cultural awareness in translation. A deep understanding of both the source and target cultures guides the translator's choice of words and structure. A term like *iftar* cannot simply be reduced to "breakfast," as it carries connotations of time (after sunset), purpose (breaking the fast), and communal participation (family, shared meal). Hence, the human translator's choice — "*وجبة الإفطار الرمضانية*" ("the Ramadan iftar meal") — removes ambiguity and conveys the full cultural meaning. Similarly, the choice of the verb "*يبدأون*"

("they begin") reflects the translator's cultural sensitivity and responsibility, linking the act of beginning the meal to the people themselves, thereby transmitting the warmth, spirituality, and communal essence of the Ramadan iftar — a richness that machine translation fails to capture.

The Fifth Example

He dreamed of visiting Broadway to watch a musical. (Cultural symbol / Element related to performing arts)	
Yandex Translate	حلم بزيارة برودواي لمشاهدة عرض موسيقي.
Human Translation	حلم بزيارة برودواي، شارع المسارح الشهير في نيويورك، لمشاهدة عرض موسيقي.

Yandex Translate rendered the source sentence, "He dreamed of visiting Broadway to watch a musical", as *"حلم بزيارة برودواي لمشاهدة عرض موسيقي"* (He dreamed of visiting Broadway to watch a musical), while the human translation (the author's) rendered it as *" حلم بزيارة برودواي، شارع المسارح الشهير في نيويورك، لمشاهدة عرض موسيقي"* (He dreamed of visiting Broadway, the famous theatre street in New York, to watch a musical). When comparing the two versions, it illustrates the fine line between linguistic accuracy and the depth of cultural understanding. On the linguistic level, Yandex's translation is grammatically correct: it properly rendered *dreamed* as "حلم," used "بزيارة" for "of visiting," and translated "to watch a musical" as "لمشاهدة عرض موسيقي." However, despite this grammatical precision, the produced translation failed to capture the cultural dimension of the key term *Broadway*. This word is not merely a street name; it is a cultural and artistic symbol in the Western world, referring to New York City's theatre district — the heart of American musical theatre. To an English-speaking reader, *Broadway* instantly evokes images of stage lights, musicals, and artistic glamour, whereas an Arab reader unfamiliar with this background would perceive it as just another place name. This is why the author's suggested translation includes a brief clarification — *"the famous theatre street in New York"* — which does not alter the original meaning but rather bridges the cultural gap for the Arabic reader. Such an addition helps the target audience understand that the dream is not about visiting a random street, but about experiencing an iconic artistic destination. In this way, the translation shifts from a literal rendering to a culturally communicative text that transmits both meaning and atmosphere.

Although both translations rendered *"to watch a musical"* as "لمشاهدة عرض موسيقي", the produced effect differs. After the cultural clarification of *Broadway*, the phrase now carries a deeper sense: it refers not to a generic concert, but specifically to a Broadway-style musical, a theatrical art form distinctively tied to that location. This subtle enrichment of meaning demonstrates how cultural awareness reshapes comprehension beyond literal wording. Through this example, it becomes evident that the cultural element lies at the heart of translation. Linguistic accuracy alone cannot guarantee the transfer of the full meaning. Machine translation, such as Yandex, processes words as isolated linguistic units, while a culturally aware human translator recognizes that each

term carries historical, social, and cultural associations. Thus, the simple addition of “the famous theatre street in New York” is not an unnecessary elaboration — it is a cultural bridge that reconstructs meaning for the target audience. Consequently, this comparison highlights that a successful translation is measured not only by grammatical correctness but by its ability to convey the cultural spirit and contextual depth of the original text coherently and expressively.

Conclusion

Translation of cultural elements is one of the most intricate and challenging issues in the field of translation studies, especially when using machine translation such as Yandex Translate, which represents a model of artificial intelligence development in the service of translation. However, despite its advanced technical capabilities, such tools still encounter significant difficulties in dealing with the cultural dimensions of texts, as they remain far removed from the human sensitivity and contextual understanding that characterize human translation. Through both theoretical and practical analysis, several key findings have been reached :

Machine translation, particularly Yandex Translate, achieves acceptable linguistic accuracy in general texts; however, it shows clear limitations when dealing with culturally loaded words and expressions.

The absence of cultural and contextual awareness causes the system to lean toward literal translation, which often strips the text of much of its symbolic and connotative meaning.
The system lacks the ability to recognize implicit or figurative meanings, leading to inadequate translation of proverbs, idioms, and metaphors.

Yandex adopts domestication as a strategy rather than foreignization, adapting the text to fit the target language even when this weakens the original cultural identity.

The findings indicate that Yandex Translate achieves reasonable accuracy in conveying direct linguistic meanings, yet it remains weak in representing the deeper cultural and contextual dimensions of the text. While it succeeds in translating general vocabulary, it fails to convey the symbolic and social background that forms the essence of cultural meaning.

The study also revealed that most errors occur in the translation of proverbs, idiomatic expressions, symbols, and figurative language, which are frequently rendered literally and thus lose their underlying meaning. Cultural distortions also appear when the system replaces a specific cultural reference with an inappropriate one from the target culture.

The analysis showed that the main factor behind these limitations is the lack of cultural knowledge fed into the datasets. The system relies more on linguistic statistics than on semantic interpretation, and it lacks mechanisms for processing complex symbolic or contextual meanings.

The hypothesis stating that Yandex succeeds in conveying direct linguistic meaning with acceptable accuracy but fails to capture the deep cultural dimension of texts has been

confirmed. The practical findings demonstrate that machine translations are often grammatically correct but semantically and culturally weak.

It was also confirmed that cultural translation errors are most evident in proverbs, symbols, and idiomatic expressions with strong cultural backgrounds, as the system relies on statistical word associations without recognizing figurative or culturally implied meanings.

Furthermore, the study validated that the limited accuracy of cultural translation mainly stems from the insufficient representation of cultural knowledge in the datasets used to train neural models, which prevents them from grasping the relationship between language and its cultural or social context.

Finally, it can be concluded that despite these limitations, machine translation can still serve as a valuable assistant to human translators, particularly in the early stages of comprehension or drafting. Improving the performance of machine translation in cultural contexts requires integrating linguistic knowledge with cultural intelligence by feeding the systems with datasets that include social and cultural backgrounds.

Recommendations

Developers of translation programs, such as Yandex Translate, should work on integrating cognitive and cultural models into their algorithms. Translation systems should not be limited to linguistic analysis alone but should also encompass understanding of symbols, contextual meanings, and cultural differences between languages.

Neural machine translation systems must be trained on datasets that include literary, folkloric, religious, and media texts from multiple cultures, allowing the systems to gain a deeper awareness of cultural and linguistic patterns.

Machine translation should be regarded as an **assistive tool** rather than a substitute for human translators. Combining the speed of automated systems with the accuracy and cultural sensitivity of human translators ensures higher-quality translations.

It is recommended to develop intelligent modules within the system capable of identifying idiomatic and figurative expressions and suggesting **interpretive or culturally equivalent translations** instead of literal translations that may distort the original meaning.

Conducting comparative studies between Yandex Translate and other systems, such as Google Translate and DeepL, is important to identify differences in the accuracy of translating cultural elements and identify the strengths and weaknesses of each system.

Research projects that combine Linguistics, Translation Studies, and Artificial Intelligence should receive funding and support to scrutinize the interaction between culture and technology in the field of translation.

Translation institutes and departments, along with translator training courses, should train students on how to use machine translation reasonably and smartly, review, pinpoint, and

correct translation errors, and raise their awareness of the limitations of automated systems.

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