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Linguistic Features of the Expression of National Values in the Translation of "Baxtiyor Oila"

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Annotation: This article examines the linguistic features involved in expressing national values in the English translation of Shaykh Muhammad Sodiq Muhammad Yusuf's seminal work Baxtiyor Oila (A Happy Family). The study focuses on how core Uzbek and Islamic-national values—such as family cohesion, respect for parents and elders, moral purity, mutual responsibility between spouses, child-rearing ethics, and the spiritual foundation of domestic life—are rendered through lexical, phraseological, pragmatic, and discursive means. Drawing on comparative analysis of the original Uzbek text and its English translation, the paper identifies key translation strategies, including modulation, cultural substitution, semantic adaptation, and selective explicitation. It demonstrates that while certain culture-specific connotations and emotional depths undergo transformation, the moral and ethical core of the national value system is largely preserved through functionally equivalent linguistic choices. The research contributes to translation studies, linguoculturology, and intercultural communication by highlighting the translator's role as a mediator of national worldview in religious-educational discourse.

Keywords: national values, linguistic features, translation strategies, Baxtiyor Oila, Uzbek language, Islamic ethics, family concept, cultural adaptation, modulation, functional equivalence.

Introduction

National values constitute the deep-seated moral, spiritual, and social principles that shape a people's collective identity and worldview. In the Uzbek cultural and linguistic tradition, these values are closely intertwined with the concept of oila (family), which is regarded not merely as a social unit but as a sacred institution, a "small homeland," and the primary site for the transmission of ethical norms, intergenerational respect, and spiritual continuity. The family is repeatedly framed in Uzbek linguistic and cultural discourse as the foundation of social stability, moral education, and national character.

Shaykh Muhammad Sodiq Muhammad Yusuf's Baxtiyor Oila (first published by Hilol Nashr, with subsequent editions expanding to over 500 pages) stands as one of the most influential modern Uzbek works addressing family life from an Islamic perspective. The book systematically elucidates the rights and duties of spouses, the selection of a marriage partner, the upbringing of children, relations with parents and in-laws, the observance of sila-i rahm (maintaining kinship ties), and the ethical foundations of a harmonious household. It draws extensively on Qur'anic verses, Hadith, and the example of the righteous predecessors, while remaining accessible through clear, didactic, and culturally resonant language.

The English translation, titled A Happy Family, makes this body of teaching available to a broader international readership. Translating such a text involves more than transferring propositional content; it requires the careful handling of linguistic features that encode national and religious values.

These include kinship terminology, honorific forms of address, evaluative vocabulary, proverbial and idiomatic expressions, religious formulae, and culturally loaded metaphors. The central research question of this study is how these linguistic means of expressing national values are transformed, preserved, or adapted in the process of translation, and what strategies enable the target text to convey the moral and cultural force of the original.

The theoretical framework of the article rests on established principles of translation studies (Nida's dynamic equivalence, Newmark's communicative translation, Venuti's foreignization and domestication, and Baker's work on non-equivalence) combined with insights from linguoculturology and axiological linguistics. The analysis is qualitative and comparative, examining selected passages that prominently feature expressions of family-related national values.

Main Part

1. The Concept of Family (Oila) as a Core National Value and Its Linguistic Realization

In Uzbek linguoculture, the concept oila occupies a central position in the national value system. It is associated with collectivism, intergenerational solidarity, respect for elders (kattalarga hurmat), mutual care (mehr-oqibat), loyalty, and moral responsibility. Linguistic evidence of this centrality appears in a rich network of kinship terms that distinguish paternal and maternal lines (amaki, tog'a, xola, amma), affectionate suffixes (-jon: otajon, onajon, akajon), and numerous proverbs and fixed expressions that elevate family harmony to a societal ideal (for example, "Oilasi tinchning – vatan tinch" – "If the family is at peace, the homeland is at peace").

In Baxtiyor Oila, these values are articulated through a didactic yet emotionally charged style. The author repeatedly emphasizes that a happy family is built upon mutual respect, patience (sabr), compassion, and adherence to Islamic ethical norms. Linguistic devices include:

- Direct evaluative statements that assign moral weight to specific behaviours (e.g., causing distress to parents is described as among the gravest sins).
- Religious formulae and invocations that embed everyday advice within a spiritual framework.
- Concrete illustrations drawn from Prophetic tradition and everyday life that reinforce collective responsibility.

In the English translation, the broad conceptual field of oila is rendered primarily as "family" or "happy family." While this captures the denotative core, certain connotations of extended kinship obligation and spiritual destiny (baxt itself carrying nuances of fortune, divine favour, and lasting contentment beyond momentary emotion) are inevitably narrowed. Translators frequently compensate through contextual expansion or by selecting emotionally stronger English equivalents in key passages.

2. Lexical and Semantic Features Expressing National Values

Axiological (value-laden) vocabulary constitutes a primary linguistic vehicle for national values. Positive evaluative terms such as halol (permissible/pure), pok (pure), sabrli (patient), mehrli (compassionate), hurmatli (respectful), and sadoqatli (loyal) carry strong cultural and religious resonance in the original. Negative counterparts (gunoh, zulm, xiyonat) function as moral warnings.

Comparative analysis of the translation reveals several recurring semantic shifts:

- **Semantic loss**: Certain spiritually charged expressions lose intensity. For instance, the invocation "Alloh sizni o'zi asrasin" may become "May God protect you," which is accurate but less intimate and less culturally marked than the original formula.

- **Modulation**: Changes in point of view or perspective allow the moral content to remain while adjusting to English discourse norms. An original statement framing parental distress as a major sin is often rephrased to maintain ethical force while sounding natural in English.
- **Cultural substitution and explicitation**: Terms rooted in Islamic or Central Asian practice (mahr, idda, sila-i rahm, aqiqa) are either retained with brief explanation, rendered by functional equivalents ("bridal gift," "waiting period," "maintaining kinship ties"), or expanded descriptively so that the target reader grasps both the practice and its value-laden significance.

These strategies reflect a predominantly communicative approach aimed at functional equivalence rather than strict formal correspondence. The translator prioritizes the transmission of the ethical message over the preservation of every culture-specific lexical flavour.

3. Phraseological and Pragmatic Dimensions

Phraseological units and pragmatic formulae are particularly rich carriers of national values. Uzbek expressions related to family life often encode hierarchy, reciprocity, and spiritual sanction. Forms of address, blessings, and warnings about the consequences of disrespecting parents or breaking kinship ties exemplify high-context communication typical of Uzbek culture.

In translation, these elements pose challenges of non-equivalence. Direct literal renderings can sound archaic or overly formal in English; complete domestication risks erasing the national colouring. The observed solutions tend toward guided foreignization accompanied by selective explicitation: key terms are kept close to the original where they carry identity value, while surrounding discourse is adjusted for readability. Religious formulae are frequently adapted to familiar English religious register ("May God protect you," "It is a great sin…") so that the moral weight is retained even if the precise cultural texture is softened.

4. Discursive and Stylistic Features

The overall discourse of Baxtiyor Oila is didactic, authoritative yet pastoral, and richly intertextual with sacred sources. National values are not merely stated; they are woven into a coherent moral narrative that links individual family conduct to the well-being of the community and the pleasure of the Creator. The translation largely preserves this discursive structure. Chapter organization, the progression from theoretical principles to practical advice, and the frequent citation of Qur'anic and Hadith material remain intact. Stylistically, the English version tends toward clarity and accessibility, occasionally sacrificing some of the rhythmic or formulaic solemnity of the Uzbek original in favour of fluent, contemporary prose suitable for an international Muslim and non-Muslim readership.

Discussion

The translation of national values in Baxtiyor Oila illustrates a fundamental tension in intercultural transfer: the need to remain faithful to the source culture's axiological system while ensuring comprehensibility and persuasive force for the target audience. The dominant strategies—modulation and cultural substitution—prove effective in preserving the ethical core (respect for parents, marital responsibility, child-rearing as a sacred trust, the family as the nucleus of social morality). At the same time, inevitable losses occur in emotional intensity, culture-specific connotations of baxt and kinship obligations, and the high-context pragmatic force of certain formulae.

These findings align with broader observations in the translation of Uzbek literary and religious texts: national colouring is best retained through a balanced approach that combines foreignization of central culturemes with pragmatic adaptation of surrounding discourse. Complete domestication would dilute the Islamic-Uzbek specificity that gives the work its distinctive voice; rigid literalism would impede accessibility. The translator of A Happy Family largely succeeds in navigating this middle path, functioning as a cultural mediator who enables the national value system to speak across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

The study also underscores the pedagogical and social significance of such translations. By making a major contemporary Uzbek exposition of family ethics available in English, the work contributes to intercultural dialogue and to the global circulation of Islamic ethical thought rooted in Central Asian experience.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The linguistic expression of national values in Baxtiyor Oila relies on a dense network of evaluative lexicon, kinship terminology, religious formulae, phraseological units, and didactic discourse structures. In the English translation, these features undergo systematic semantic and pragmatic adjustments—primarily modulation, cultural substitution, and selective explicitation—that preserve the moral and educational substance while adapting form to the expectations of the target language and culture.

The analysis confirms that successful translation of value-laden religious-educational discourse requires not only linguistic competence but also deep cultural and ethical sensitivity. The translator must recognize which elements carry identity value and which may be adapted without loss of essential meaning.

Suggestions for further research and practice include:

- Compilation of a bilingual glossary of key axiological and kinship terms from Baxtiyor Oila with cultural commentary.
- Comparative studies of other modern Uzbek religious and literary works in translation to identify recurrent patterns in the rendering of national values.
- Development of translator training modules focused on high-context, value-laden discourse from Central Asian Islamic traditions.
- Reception studies examining how English-speaking readers interpret the family ethics presented in the translation.

By attending carefully to the linguistic features that encode national values, translators can ensure that works such as Baxtiyor Oila continue to enrich intercultural understanding and to transmit the ethical heritage of the Uzbek people to a wider world.

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