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PHILOLOGICAL COMMENTARY IN TRANSLATION

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Annotation: This article examines the significance and functions of philological commentary in the translation process. It highlights why detailed linguistic, historical, and cultural explanations are essential for accurately conveying the meaning of complex or archaic texts. The study explores various types of philological commentary – lexical, cultural, stylistic, textual, and pragmatic – and analyzes their role in preserving the original author's intent and style. The article argues that philological commentary not only enhances the readability of translated texts but also reduces cultural distance between the reader and the source text. As a result, philological commentary becomes an indispensable tool for achieving clarity, fidelity, and depth in translation.

Keywords: philological commentary, translation studies, cultural explanation, linguistic analysis, stylistic features, text interpretation, archaic vocabulary, translator's competence, equivalence, historical context.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается значение и функции филологических комментариев в процессе перевода. Показано, что подробные лингвистические, исторические и культурные пояснения являются необходимыми для точной передачи содержания сложных или архаичных текстов. Анализируются основные виды филологических комментариев — лексические, культурные, стилистические, текстологические и прагматические — и их роль в сохранении авторского замысла и художественного стиля оригинала. В работе обосновывается, что филологический комментарий повышает понятность перевода, сокращает культурную дистанцию между читателем и исходным текстом и является важнейшим инструментом обеспечения точности и глубины перевода.

Ключевые слова: филологический комментарий, переводоведение, культурные пояснения, лингвистический анализ, стилистические особенности, интерпретация текста, архаичная лексика, компетентность переводчика, эквивалентность, исторический контекст.

Translation is not only a process of converting words from one language into another — it is a complex act of interpreting meanings, cultural references, and historical layers embedded in a text. When translators work





with classical literature, ancient manuscripts, religious works, or texts rich in figurative language, they often encounter expressions and concepts that cannot be fully conveyed through direct translation alone. In such cases, philological commentary becomes an essential tool for clarifying the deeper meaning of the original work.

Philological commentary refers to additional explanations that help readers understand linguistic, cultural, historical, and stylistic elements of a text. These notes may describe archaic vocabulary, explain mythological or religious references, highlight regional dialects, or discuss stylistic techniques used by the author. Through these explanations, translators not only preserve the meaning of the original text but also make it accessible to modern readers who may not be familiar with the cultural background of the source language.

In translation studies, philological commentary plays a crucial role in maintaining fidelity to the source text while ensuring that the translated version remains clear and meaningful. Without such commentary, important nuances may be lost, and the translated text may appear incomplete or misleading. Therefore, the use of philological commentary helps bridge the gap between languages, cultures, and time periods. It enriches the reader's understanding, supports accurate interpretation, and strengthens the overall quality of the translation.

The need for philological commentary in translation arises from the nature of texts themselves. Every literary work is shaped by the historical period in which it was written, the cultural environment surrounding the author, and the linguistic norms of that era. As a result, many words, expressions, cultural references, and symbolic elements may be unclear or unfamiliar to modern readers, especially those from a different linguistic background. For this reason, translators must provide philological commentary to ensure that the meaning of the text is conveyed accurately and fully.

Firstly, philological commentary is essential for explaining archaic vocabulary and historical expressions. Classical literature, ancient manuscripts, and religious texts often contain linguistic forms that are no longer used in contemporary language. Without proper explanation, readers may misunderstand the meaning or miss the significance of certain references. Commentary fills this gap by offering clarity and helping readers grasp the original message.

Secondly, philological commentary plays a crucial role in clarifying **cultural realia** – elements related to customs, traditions, historical events, beliefs, and social practices of a particular community. Such references may be completely unknown to readers of another culture. By providing explanations, the translator ensures that the cultural background of the source text is





preserved and that the translated version reflects the intended meaning as closely as possible.

Thirdly, philological commentary helps readers understand **literary and stylistic features**. Many texts use metaphors, allusions, symbolic imagery, or poetic devices that require interpretation. Simply translating the words is not enough; the translator must reveal the underlying meaning, aesthetic function, and stylistic nuance. Commentary enables readers to appreciate these elements and engage more deeply with the text. Philological commentary assists bridge the gap between the reader and the text. Since every text belongs to a specific historical and cultural context, modern readers may find it distant or unfamiliar. Commentary reduces this distance by offering background knowledge and contextual information. As a result, translation becomes not only a linguistic activity but also a cultural mediation process that brings the original work closer to the reader.

Philological commentary can take several forms, each serving a specific purpose in helping readers understand the text. One common type is lexical commentary, which explains unusual or archaic words. For example, in translating Navoiy's *"Xamsa"*, words like *"golgasht"* or *"ayvor"* may not have direct equivalents in modern English. A lexical snoska (footnote) can define these terms, clarifying their meaning and context for the reader.

Another type is cultural commentary, which explains historical events, customs, or social practices referenced in the text. For instance, in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the concept of "Elisabethan court etiquette" may be unfamiliar to contemporary readers. A brief explanation in a footnote allows readers to understand the character's actions and the social context. Textual commentary is also important when dealing with variant readings or historical versions of a text. For example, in classical Quranic translations, slight differences in manuscripts can affect the meaning.

Pragmatic commentary explains how language functions in specific contexts, including politeness, humor, or irony. For instance, in Russian literature, the diminutive suffix *-ochka* can convey intimacy or affection. A translator may add a footnote to preserve this nuance, ensuring readers grasp the emotional tone.

Philological commentary is an indispensable component of the translation process. It helps translators clarify the meaning of archaic words, cultural references, stylistic devices, and historical contexts that may be unfamiliar to modern readers. By providing lexical, cultural, stylistic, textual, and pragmatic explanations, commentary preserves the author's original intent while making the text accessible and meaningful in another language.

Without philological commentary, translations risk losing important nuances, misrepresenting the source text, or leaving readers confused. In





contrast, careful use of commentary enhances comprehension, bridges cultural and temporal gaps, and strengthens the overall quality and reliability of the translation. Therefore, incorporating philological commentary is not just an academic exercise – it is a crucial practice that enriches the reader's experience and ensures that translations remain faithful, accurate, and culturally informative.

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