

THE ROLE OF INDIRECT TRANSLATION IN THE RECEPTION OF THE KOREAN WAVE IN UZBEKISTAN

Makhbuba Allamova

E-mail: mahbuba0398@gmail.com

Abstract. *This paper examines the role of translation, particularly indirect translation through Russian or English, in the dissemination of Korean popular culture products in Uzbekistan. The study draws on the practices of Uzbek-language online media platforms and in-depth interviews with four Korean-Uzbek translators. The findings show that indirect translation has provided rapid and cost-effective access to Korean content, but has also increased the risk of losing semantic accuracy, emotional nuance, and cultural specificity. The study argues that improving the quality of direct translation requires specialist training and institutional support.*

Keywords: *indirect translation, direct translation, Korean Wave, Hallyu, audiovisual translation, Korean language, Uzbek language.*

INTRODUCTION

The Korean Wave, or Hallyu, has spread widely across the world in recent decades through K-pop, television dramas, films, and other cultural products (Kim, 2013; Lee & Nornes, 2015; Shim, 2006; Akhmedova & Im, 2024). In this process, translation is not merely the substitution of linguistic units; it is also a means of conveying cultural meaning, social relationships, and emotional nuance to a new audience. Although demand for Korean content has increased in Uzbekistan, the number of qualified specialists who translate directly from Korean into Uzbek remains limited. Consequently, media platforms often rely on Russian or English translations rather than the original Korean text.

Indirect translation refers to translating a source text into another language on the basis of an existing translation in a pivot language rather than directly from the original (Pięta & Maia, 2015). It enables content to be delivered rapidly in less common language pairs, but each stage of translation increases the likelihood of shifts in meaning, abridgement, and the loss of cultural detail (Gambier, 2003; Landers, 2001). It is therefore important to examine the practical implications of Korean-Russian-Uzbek and Korean-English-Uzbek translation chains.

The purpose of this study is to identify the reasons for using indirect translation, as well as its advantages and limitations, in the translation of Korean media products into Uzbek in Uzbekistan, and to compare it with direct Korean-Uzbek translation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative approach. In the first stage, the translation practices used for Korean television dramas on Uzbek-language media platforms, including Uzmov.net, Uzmedia.tv, Uzbeklar.biz, Seriallar.net, and Maxfilm.tv, were examined. Attempts were made to obtain information from platform administrators about source texts, workflows, and the availability of specialists. The platforms that responded reported that Korean content was translated into Uzbek primarily from Russian or English versions.

In the second stage, in-depth interviews were conducted with four translators experienced in translating from Korean into Uzbek. Two participants were specialists with many years of teaching and translation experience, while the other two were master's students in Korea who also worked as freelance translators. The interviews addressed the translation process, methods for ensuring accuracy, the rendering of culture-specific elements, attitudes toward indirect translation, and challenges in the field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis showed that indirect translation is widespread in Uzbekistan's audiovisual content market. The principal reasons are the shortage of specialists working in the Korean-Uzbek language pair, the wide availability of Russian- and English-language subtitles and dubbed versions, pressure to release content quickly, and the need to reduce costs. An administrator of Maxfilm.tv confirmed that translations were prepared from Russian versions, while a representative of Seriallar.net stated that Russian or English source materials were generally used. This approach enables platforms to respond rapidly to audience demand.

The practical value of indirect translation cannot be denied. It provides access to content when a direct translator is unavailable, shortens turnaround times, and reduces costs. These features played an important role in the initial popularization of Hallyu in Uzbekistan. Furthermore, some concepts that have already been explained in the pivot language may make it easier to select forms that are comprehensible to Uzbek audiences.

However, the interviews revealed serious quality-related risks associated with indirect translation. All four translators stated that, whenever possible, they preferred to

translate directly from the original Korean text. In their view, translation through Russian or English may simplify or alter the original meaning, interpersonal relationships among characters, and emotional nuance. In particular, when Korean honorific forms, social status markers, kinship terms, and context-dependent expressions have already been adapted in the pivot language, the Uzbek translator may no longer be able to reconstruct the original forms and meanings.

Direct translation, by contrast, allows translators to interpret the context, register, and cultural references of the source text without mediation. The interview participants emphasized that this is especially important in Korean dramas, historical films, and educational materials. At the same time, direct translation does not automatically guarantee high quality: in addition to proficiency in both languages, translators must possess skills in audiovisual translation techniques, localization, editing, and quality assurance.

The findings indicate a gap between professional translation standards and practices in the online media market. Whereas specialists prioritize semantic and cultural accuracy, platforms focus more heavily on speed, cost, and the regular delivery of content. This problem cannot be resolved simply by rejecting indirect translation. The most viable approach is to increase the number of direct translators; where indirect translation is necessary, to verify it against the original Korean text; to develop terminological databases; and to introduce editing and quality-assurance stages.

CONCLUSION

Indirect translation has served as an important means of facilitating the rapid entry of Korean media products into Uzbekistan and the popularization of Hallyu. However, semantic, emotional, and cultural losses may occur when content is translated from Korean into Uzbek through Russian or English. The practices of the platforms examined demonstrate dependence on pivot languages, while the translator interviews highlight the advantages of direct translation in preserving cultural accuracy and context.

To improve the quality of Korean-Uzbek translation sustainably, higher education institutions should strengthen specialized translation courses, develop practice-oriented programs in audiovisual translation, expand bilingual terminological resources, and establish professional editing systems on media platforms. Indirect translation may remain a supporting solution when specialists are unavailable, but it should not become the primary standard without verification against the original text and appropriate quality assurance.

REFERENCES

1. Gambier, Y. (2003). Working with relay: An old story and a new challenge. In *Speaking in Tongues: Language across Contexts and Users* (pp. 47-66). Universitat de València.
2. Kim, Y. (2013). *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global*. Routledge.
3. Landers, C. E. (2001). *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide*. Multilingual Matters.
4. Lee, S., & Nornes, A. M. (2015). *Hallyu 2.0: The Korean Wave in the Age of Social Media*. University of Michigan Press.
5. Pięta, H., & Maia, R. B. (2015). Integrating indirect translation into the academic education of future generations of translators across Europe: A Lisbon model. *Translating Europe Forum*, Brussels.
6. Shim, D. (2006). Hybridity and the rise of Korean popular culture in Asia. *Media, Culture & Society*, 28(1), 25-44.
7. Akhmedova, S., & Im, S. (2024). K-POP as a main tool of Korean soft power towards Central Asia. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*, 16(2), 3801-3808.