

CHALLENGES IN TRANSLATING IDIOMS FROM UZBEK INTO ENGLISH

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Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada o'zbek tilidagi iboralarni ingliz tiliga tarjima qilish jarayonida uchraydigan asosiy muammolar tahlil qilinadi. Idiomalarning milliy-madaniy xususiyatlari, semantik mazmuni va obrazlilik tarjima jarayonini murakkablashtiruvchi omillar sifatida yoritiladi. Shuningdek, maqolada idiomalarni tarjima qilishning ekvivalent topish, tavsifiy tarjima, so'zma-so'z tarjima va madaniy moslashtirish kabi asosiy usullari misollar asosida ko'rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari tarjimonlardan nafaqat til bilimini, balki madaniyatlararo kompetensiyani ham talab qilishini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: *idioma, tarjima, frazeologizm, ekvivalentlik, madaniyatlararo kommunikatsiya, o'zbek tili, ingliz tili, semantika, tarjima strategiyalari, madaniy moslashtirish.*

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматриваются основные трудности перевода узбекских идиом на английский язык. Особое внимание уделяется культурной специфике, семантическим особенностям и образности идиоматических выражений, которые затрудняют процесс перевода. Также анализируются основные стратегии перевода идиом, включая использование эквивалентов, описательный перевод, дословный перевод и культурную адаптацию. Исследование показывает, что успешный перевод идиом требует не только высокого уровня владения языками, но и глубоких знаний культурных особенностей обоих народов.

Ключевые слова: *идиома, перевод, фразеология, эквивалентность, межкультурная коммуникация, узбекский язык, английский язык, семантика, стратегии перевода, культурная адаптация.*

Abstract

This article examines the major challenges involved in translating Uzbek idioms into English. It focuses on the cultural specificity, semantic complexity, and figurative nature of idiomatic expressions that make translation difficult. The paper also discusses the main translation strategies, including the use of equivalent idioms, descriptive translation, literal translation, and cultural adaptation, supported by relevant examples. The findings indicate that successful idiom translation requires not only linguistic proficiency but also strong intercultural competence and an in-depth understanding of both Uzbek and English cultures.

Keywords: *idiom, translation, phraseology, equivalence, intercultural communication, Uzbek language, English language, semantics, translation strategies, cultural adaptation.*

Translation is not merely the transfer of words from one language into another; it is also the transfer of culture, emotions, and meaning. Among the most difficult linguistic elements to translate are idioms, as they often carry figurative meanings that cannot be understood from the literal meanings of individual words. Uzbek idioms are deeply rooted in the nation's history, customs, traditions, and worldview, making their translation into English particularly challenging. This article explores the linguistic and cultural difficulties encountered in translating Uzbek idioms into English, examines different translation strategies, and provides examples illustrating the effectiveness of each approach. Language serves as a bridge between people, cultures, and civilizations. Translation plays a vital role in facilitating communication across linguistic boundaries. However, translators frequently encounter expressions that resist direct translation due to their figurative meanings. Idioms represent one of the most culturally specific aspects of any language.

An idiom is a fixed expression whose meaning cannot usually be predicted from the meanings of its individual words. Every language possesses thousands of idiomatic expressions that reflect its culture and historical development. Uzbek is particularly rich in idioms derived from agriculture, family life, hospitality, religion, and traditional customs. English also contains numerous idiomatic expressions, although many differ significantly in imagery and cultural background.

The translation of idioms requires not only linguistic competence but also cultural awareness and creative problem-solving skills.

Understanding Idioms

Idioms are stable combinations of words that function as a single semantic unit. Their figurative meaning differs from the literal meanings of their components.

For example:

- Uzbek: **Ko'z qorachig'iday asramoq**
- Literal translation: *To protect like the pupil of one's eye*
- English equivalent: *To cherish or To protect like the apple of one's eye.*

Similarly,

- Uzbek: **Tilini tishlamoq**
- Literal translation: *To bite one's tongue*
- English equivalent: *To bite one's tongue.*

Interestingly, some idioms coincide in both languages due to universal human experiences.

Importance of Idioms in Communication

Idioms enrich communication by making speech more expressive, emotional, and culturally meaningful. They enable speakers to convey complex ideas efficiently while reflecting shared cultural values.

Idioms are commonly used in:

- Literature
- Journalism
- Daily conversation
- Political speeches
- Films
- Television
- Social media

Their proper translation is essential for preserving both meaning and stylistic effect.

Major Challenges in Translating Uzbek Idioms into English

1. Cultural Differences

The greatest obstacle is cultural specificity.

Many Uzbek idioms refer to customs unfamiliar to English-speaking audiences.

Example:

Uzbek:

Qozonga yaqin yursang, qorasi yuqadi.

Literal translation:

If you stay close to the cauldron, its soot will stain you.

Meaning:

Bad company influences people negatively.

Possible English equivalent:

"If you lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas."

Although the wording differs, the communicative meaning remains similar.

2. Lack of Equivalent Idioms

Some Uzbek idioms simply have no English counterpart.

Example:

Uzbek:

Ko'ngli tog'dek.

Literal translation:

His heart is as big as a mountain.

Meaning:

Very generous.

Possible translation:

"He is extremely generous."

Here, descriptive translation is more appropriate.

3. Figurative Meaning

Literal translation often produces meaningless or humorous results.

Example:

Uzbek:

Burnidan ip o'tkazsa bo'ladi.

Literal translation:

A thread could pass through his nose.

Actual meaning:

He is extremely obedient.

Correct translation:

"He is very obedient."

Literal translation would confuse English readers.

4. Lexical Differences

Certain Uzbek words carry cultural meanings without direct English equivalents.

Examples include:

- Mahalla
- Navro'z
- Sumalak
- Tandir
- Do'ppi

Such culturally loaded vocabulary often appears within idiomatic expressions.

5. Religious and Historical References

Many Uzbek idioms contain Islamic or historical references unfamiliar to English readers.

Example:

Xudo xohlasa.

English equivalent:

"God willing."

While English possesses a similar expression, not every religious idiom has an equivalent.

6. Stylistic Differences

Idioms differ in tone.

Some Uzbek idioms sound humorous, respectful, poetic, or ironic.

A translator must preserve not only meaning but also style.

Translation Strategies

Professional translators employ several strategies.

1. Using an Equivalent Idiom

Whenever possible, translators should replace an Uzbek idiom with an English idiom expressing the same meaning.

Example:

Boshini yo'qotmoq

↓

"Lose one's head."

2. Paraphrasing

If no equivalent exists, explanation is preferred.

Example:

Og'ziga talqon solmoq

↓

"He remained completely silent."

3. Literal Translation

This strategy works only when both languages share identical imagery.

Example:

Bite one's tongue

↓

Tilini tishlamoq.

4. Cultural Adaptation

The translator substitutes an English idiom with similar communicative value.

Example:

Qozonga yaqin yursang, qorasi yuqadi.

↓

"If you lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas."

5. Omission

In rare situations where an idiom has little significance, translators may omit it while preserving the overall meaning.

Examples of Uzbek Idioms and Their English Equivalents

Uzbek Idiom	Literal Translation	English Equivalent
Ko'z qorachig'iday asramoq	Protect like the pupil of the eye	Protect like the apple of one's eye
Tilini tishlamoq	Bite one's tongue	Bite one's tongue
Burnidan ip o'tkazsa bo'ladi	Pass thread through his nose	Very obedient
Qo'li ochiq	Open-handed	Generous
Yuragi orqasiga tortdi	Heart moved backward	He became frightened
Boshi osmonga yetdi	Head reached the sky	Over the moon

Og'ziga talqon solmoq

Put flour in one's mouth

Keep silent

Ko'ngli tog'dek

Heart like a mountain

Very kind and generous

The Role of Cultural Competence

Successful idiom translation requires more than bilingual proficiency. Translators need deep knowledge of both source and target cultures.

They should understand:

- traditions;
- historical background;
- religion;
- humor;
- symbolism;
- social norms;
- pragmatics;
- context.

Without cultural competence, even grammatically correct translations may fail to convey the intended meaning.

Machine Translation and Idioms

Modern machine translation systems have improved considerably with the development of artificial intelligence. However, idioms remain problematic because machines often translate them literally.

For example:

Uzbek:

Boshi osmonga yetdi.

Machine translation:

"His head reached the sky."

Human translation:

"He was over the moon."

This demonstrates the continuing importance of human translators in handling figurative language.

Recommendations for Translators

To improve idiom translation, translators should:

- study phraseology in both languages;
- read authentic literary works;
- develop intercultural competence;
- consult bilingual idiom dictionaries;
- analyze context carefully;
- avoid literal translation unless appropriate;
- preserve both meaning and stylistic effect;

- revise translations from the reader's perspective.

Conclusion

Translating idioms from Uzbek into English is a complex process that extends beyond lexical substitution. It demands a deep understanding of linguistic structures, cultural values, historical contexts, and communicative intentions. Since many Uzbek idioms are culture-bound, translators often face the challenge of finding equivalent expressions that preserve both meaning and emotional impact. Various strategies—including equivalence, paraphrasing, cultural adaptation, literal translation, and omission—can be employed depending on the context. Ultimately, successful idiom translation contributes to effective intercultural communication and helps preserve the richness of both Uzbek and English linguistic heritage.

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