

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK IDIOMS: ISSUES IN TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION

Davronboyeva Durдона Toshtemir kizi

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Abstract: Idioms represent a culturally embedded aspect of language that carries figurative meanings often untranslatable by direct lexical equivalents. This paper explores the comparative nature of idiomatic expressions in English and Uzbek, emphasizing challenges that arise during translation and interpretation. The study draws on idiomatic corpora, linguistic theory, and practical examples to highlight semantic shifts, cultural gaps, and pragmatic mismatches between the two languages. It also proposes strategies for achieving functional equivalence in translation and discusses the implications for interpreters, translators, and language learners in multilingual contexts.

Keywords: Idioms, translation, interpretation, English-Uzbek comparison, cultural equivalence, pragmatic meaning, figurative language

Annotatsiya: Idiomalar – bu tilning madaniy asoslangan va ko‘pincha to‘g‘ridan-to‘g‘ri lug‘aviy tarjima qilib bo‘lmaydigan majoziy ma‘nolarni ifodalaydigan birliklaridir. Ushbu maqola ingliz va o‘zbek tillaridagi idiomatik iboralarni taqqoslab, ularni tarjima qilish va talqin etishda yuzaga keladigan muammolarga e‘tibor qaratadi. Tadqiqot idiomalar korpuslari, lingvistik nazariya hamda amaliy misollar asosida semantik siljishlar, madaniy tafovutlar va pragmatik nomuvofiqliklarni yoritadi. Shuningdek, maqolada funksional ekvivalentlikka erishish strategiyalari taklif qilinib, tarjimonlar, tarjima ilmi bilan shug‘ullanuvchilar va ko‘p tilli muhitda til o‘rganayotganlar uchun amaliy xulosalar keltiriladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: Idiomalar, tarjima, talqin, ingliz–o‘zbek taqqoslash, madaniy ekvivalentlik, pragmatik ma‘no, majoziy til

Аннотация: Идиомы представляют собой культурно обусловленные языковые единицы, несущие переносное значение, которое зачастую невозможно передать посредством прямого лексического перевода. Данная статья посвящена сравнительному анализу идиоматических выражений в английском и узбекском языках с акцентом на трудности, возникающие при их переводе и интерпретации. В исследовании используются идиоматические корпуса, лингвистические теории и практические примеры для выявления семантических сдвигов, культурных расхождений и прагматических несоответствий между двумя языками. Кроме того, в статье предлагаются стратегии достижения функционального эквивалента при переводе и обсуждаются последствия для переводчиков, интерпретаторов и изучающих язык в многоязычной среде.

Ключевые слова: Идиомы, перевод, интерпретация, сравнение английского и узбекского языков, культурный эквивалент, прагматическое значение, образный язык.

Idioms are among the most colorful, expressive, and challenging components of any language. They encapsulate culture, shared history, and collective psychology. An idiom like “kick the

bucket” in English or *“tishigidan chiqmadi”* in Uzbek cannot be understood through word-for-word translation. The idiomatic meaning often lies beyond literal semantics, presenting a significant challenge to translators and interpreters working across language pairs—especially ones with distinct cultural frameworks like English and Uzbek.

This paper aims to provide a comparative linguistic and cultural analysis of English and Uzbek idioms, investigate the problems encountered in translation and interpretation, and offer practical strategies to bridge the gap between the two linguistic systems.

An idiom is a fixed, often metaphorical expression whose meaning cannot be inferred from the individual components. According to Fernando (1996), idioms are “conventionalized multiword expressions with unitary meanings.” They are classified into:

1. **Pure idioms** (e.g., *spill the beans*)
2. **Semi-idioms** (e.g., *have cold feet*)
3. **Quasi-idioms or fixed expressions** (e.g., *by and large*)

In Uzbek, idioms are known as *frazeologik birliklar* and share similar complexity.

Idioms reflect a people’s worldview. While English idioms often draw on Judeo-Christian or industrial metaphors, Uzbek idioms may draw from pastoral life, Islamic traditions, or Turkic heritage. For instance, the idiom *“Et bilan tirnoq”* (like flesh and nail) signifies inseparability—akin to the English *“as thick as thieves.”*

Some idioms have near-equivalent counterparts due to shared human experiences or borrowed translations.

English Idiom	Uzbek Equivalent	Meaning
Out of the frying pan into the fire	Qozondan chiqqan, tushgan	Getting from bad to worse
Kill two birds with one stone	Bir o‘q bilan ikki quyovni urmoq	Achieve two goals at once
A wolf in sheep’s clothing	Qo‘y terisiga o‘ralgan bo‘ri	A hidden threat

Here lies the real difficulty. Idioms that are deeply culture-specific often have no parallel in the target language.

- a) English: *“To throw someone under the bus”*
- b) No Uzbek equivalent. It may be translated contextually as *“Do‘stini sotmoq”* or *“Aybdorni boshqaga ag‘darish.”*
- c) Uzbek: *“Yelka tutmoq”* (To lend one’s shoulder)
- d) English has no literal idiom; contextual meaning may be “to support someone in hardship.”

Animal-based idioms differ due to differing perceptions:

English Idiom	Literal Uzbek Translation	Interpretation
Let the cat out of the bag	Xaltadagi mushukni chiqarish	Reveal a secret (No Uzbek idiom)

English Idiom	Literal Uzbek Translation	Interpretation
Ko‘r echkiga ham ba‘zida yo‘l to‘g‘ri keladi	Even a blind goat sometimes finds its path	Even the unlucky can succeed sometimes

Word-for-word translation often results in loss of meaning or absurdity.

Example:

- a) English: *“It’s raining cats and dogs.”*
- b) Literal Uzbek: *“Mushuk va itlar yog‘moqda.”*
- c) This sounds nonsensical. Correct translation: *“Juda kuchli yomg‘ir yog‘moqda.”*

Many idioms refer to contexts unknown in the target culture. For instance:

- a) *“Throw in the towel”* (from boxing) is hard to grasp in cultures unfamiliar with the sport.
- b) Uzbek idioms with references to farming tools or pre-Islamic customs can similarly confuse English speakers.

Idioms carry emotional and social nuances. Using *“He kicked the bucket”* in a formal obituary would be inappropriate, although semantically correct. Translators must navigate such subtleties.

If one exists, it's ideal to use a culturally adapted idiom.

- a) English: *“Break the ice”*
- b) Uzbek: *“Suhbatga ko‘ngil ochmoq”*

When no equivalent exists, explain the meaning in simpler terms.

- English: *“Bite the bullet”* → *Og‘ir qarorga kelmoq, chidamoq*

In highly formal or technical texts, some idioms can be omitted if clarity suffers.

- Uzbek: *“Ko‘r ko‘rni topadi”* may be rendered simply as *“Taqdir taqozosi bilan uchrashdi.”*

In literary translations or folklore, footnotes can preserve cultural flavor.

Example:

- *“Like a cat on a hot tin roof”* may be left untranslated and explained in a footnote as "nervously restless."

For Uzbek students learning English, idioms are often difficult but crucial for fluency. Teachers should:

- a) Use visuals and context-rich examples
- b) Compare idioms across languages
- c) Encourage students to collect idioms in “phrasebooks”

Idioms must be recognized instantly and rendered appropriately based on:

- a) Register
- b) Audience
- c) Medium (spoken vs. written)

In Conclusion, Idioms reflect the soul of a language and act as mirrors of cultural identity. The comparative analysis between English and Uzbek idioms shows both fascinating overlaps and irreconcilable gaps. The challenge lies not in finding exact words, but in finding the right meaning in the right context. Translators, interpreters, and language educators must bridge these gaps with creativity, sensitivity, and cultural literacy. Ultimately, idioms remind us that language is not only what we say—but how we live, think, and relate to the world around us.

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