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## ISSUES OF TRANSLATING PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN LITERARY WORKS

**Abstract.** *This article examines the translation of phraseological units in literary texts from English into Uzbek. The study addresses five principal problem categories: loss of connotation, stylistic divergence, form-meaning equivalence, absence of direct lexical equivalents, and individual translator approaches. Cultural aspects are highlighted through a comparative analysis of food-related phraseological units in English and Uzbek, with attention to their Biblical, Islamic, and ethnographic sources. The article demonstrates that successful literary translation of phraseological units requires the translator to balance linguistic competence with deep cultural awareness, and to preserve figurative meaning, emotional coloring, and artistic effect while adapting expressions to the target language and culture.*

**Keywords:** *phraseological units; literary translation; connotation; stylistic equivalence; cultural factors; food-related idioms; English-Uzbek translation.*

### INTRODUCTION

Phraseological units in literary texts represent one of the most challenging aspects of translation. A translator must take into account not only the literal meaning of such expressions but also their stylistic coloring, emotional connotations, cultural background, and figurative imagery. In the process of translating phraseological units from English into Uzbek, differences between the two languages and cultures often create difficulties in preserving the author's original intention and artistic effect. Therefore, adequate translation requires deep knowledge of both linguistic and cultural contexts (Salomov, 1961; Kunin, 1955).

Comparative analysis of English and Uzbek phraseology reveals both universal and national features. English and Uzbek belong to different language families; therefore, their traditions, customs, and cultural values differ considerably. Phraseological units often reflect the mentality, traditions, and lifestyle of a particular people (Rakhmatullayev, 1978). This article examines five specific categories of difficulty encountered in translating English phraseological units into Uzbek, followed by a comparative cultural analysis with particular attention to food-related phraseological expressions.

## METHODS

The article employs comparative-analytical and descriptive methods. English phraseological units from literary and journalistic sources are compared with their available Uzbek equivalents, and the translation strategies applied are analyzed. Food-related phraseological units are analyzed as a representative sub-corpus, drawing on Pinnavaia's (2010) study of food and drink idioms in English, Rakhmatullayev's (1978) dictionary of Uzbek phraseology, Sultonova's (2022) study of religious phraseologisms, and Kunin's (1955) treatment of English phraseology. Statistical data on the frequency of food-related idioms in journals and literary works over the past two centuries are also considered.

## RESULTS

**1. Loss of phraseological connotation.** One of the major difficulties in translating phraseological units is preserving their emotional and expressive connotation. Some English idioms contain figurative meanings and emotional shades that are difficult to reproduce fully in Uzbek. For example, "a storm in a teacup" means exaggerating a small problem. A literal translation into Uzbek would fail to convey the figurative and emotional effect of the original. Therefore, it is more appropriate to use the Uzbek equivalent "pashshadan fil yasamoq" (making an elephant out of a fly), which reflects both the meaning and stylistic impact of the source expression. In such cases, the translator must consider the cultural context and select an adequate analogue.

**2. Stylistic differences.** Phraseological units in literary texts often serve to create a particular style or emotional atmosphere. Translators should preserve not only the meaning but also the stylistic character of the expression. The English idiom "to butter

someone up” means flattering someone to gain benefit. A neutral rendering such as “to please someone with praise” does not fully convey the humorous and expressive nature of the original. More suitable alternatives would be expressions such as “to win someone over with sweet words” or “to flatter skillfully,” which better preserve the emotional coloring and artistic effect (Kunin, 1955).

**3. Form and meaning equivalence.** Sometimes the form of phraseological units may appear similar while their meanings differ significantly between languages. The English idiom “bring home the bacon” means achieving success or earning money for one’s family. Translating it simply as “to earn money” does not preserve its figurative meaning. Translators may use “to provide for the family” or “to earn the family’s livelihood” in order to maintain the figurative and cultural essence of the original (Rakhmatullayev, 1978).

**4. Lack of lexical equivalents.** Certain English phraseological units have no direct lexical equivalents in Uzbek. In such cases, translators use descriptive or alternative phraseological expressions. The idiom “spill the beans” (to reveal a secret) has no exact Uzbek equivalent, so translators render it as “to reveal a secret” or “to disclose hidden information.” Although the figurative image changes, the communicative meaning is preserved (Salomov, 1961).

**5. Individual translator approaches.** Personal approaches and methods play an important role in the translation process. The English expression “the proof is in the pudding” (real quality can be judged only by results) illustrates this problem well. A literal translation sounds unnatural in Uzbek and fails to reflect the figurative meaning. Translators therefore use more precise and meaningful expressions such as “work is judged by its result” or “the truth of an action can be known from its outcome,” which convey the core idea more clearly while preserving the figurative essence of the original (Kunin, 1955).

**6. Food-related phraseological units: cultural and religious sources.** Studies show that 76% of food-related phraseological units identified over the last two centuries have been widely used in journals and literary works. According to Pinnavaia (2010:126), William Shakespeare introduced several food-related expressions into English, including “be caviar to someone,” “the world is one’s oyster,” and “the milk of human kindness.” The Bible has significantly influenced the development of food-related phraseological units in English. Three principal examples illustrate this:

“Adam’s apple” derives from the Biblical account of Adam eating the forbidden fruit, a piece of which allegedly became lodged in his throat. “The apple of Sodom” refers to something attractive in appearance but worthless in reality, originating from legends about the sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. “A forbidden fruit” symbolizes temptation and the human desire for prohibited things (Sultonova, 2022).

Among Muslim peoples including Uzbeks, food-related phraseological units are closely connected with Islamic traditions and concepts such as halal (permitted) and haram (forbidden). Uzbek phraseological expressions such as “opening the mouth,” “closing the mouth,” and “making an intention” are associated with fasting practices during Ramadan and reflect religious traditions and the spiritual lifestyle of Muslims (Sultonova, 2022).

At the national-ethnographic level, English food-related expressions such as “pudding time” (the time during a meal when traditional pudding is served) and “high tea” (a light evening meal connected with the English tradition of drinking tea at around five o’clock) reflect distinctively English culinary customs. Uzbek phraseology includes expressions containing the names of traditional dishes such as osh, chuchvara, patir, and palov. Uzbek hospitality has contributed to the formation of many national phraseological units, including: “maslahat oshi” (a gathering to discuss how to organize a ceremony or celebration); “patir ushatmoq” (a ceremony symbolizing agreement between families for a marriage); and “osh bermoq” (to organize a feast by cooking pilav for guests). The expression “maslahat oshi” is unique to Uzbek culture and reflects the tradition of relatives gathering to discuss and organize important family events (Rakhmatullayev, 1978).

## DISCUSSION

The five problem categories identified in this article correspond to a fundamental asymmetry between English and Uzbek phraseological systems: they are not merely different languages but vehicles of different cultural worlds, different religious histories, and different relationships between food, community, and symbolic meaning. The food-related idioms analyzed in the results section make this asymmetry particularly visible: while English food phraseology draws heavily on Biblical imagery and on specific British culinary customs (tea-time, pudding), Uzbek food phraseology is shaped by Islamic practices (Ramadan fasting, halal-haram distinctions), the centrality of hospitality

in Uzbek culture, and specific national dishes that carry strong social and ceremonial significance (Sultonova, 2022; Rakhmatullayev, 1978).

The practical implication is that the five translation strategies discussed functional equivalent, descriptive translation, stylistic compensation, cultural adaptation, and individual interpretive choice are not competing methods to be selected arbitrarily but complementary tools whose appropriate application depends on the nature of the specific translation problem. Loss of connotation calls for functional equivalence; absence of lexical equivalent calls for descriptive translation; stylistic divergence calls for compensation. The translator's cultural and linguistic knowledge determines which tool is most appropriate in a given context (Kunin, 1955; Salomov, 1961).

## CONCLUSION

Translating phraseological units from English into Uzbek is a complex process that requires not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural and stylistic awareness. Literary translators must preserve the figurative meaning, emotional coloring, and artistic effect of idioms while adapting them to the target language and culture. Food-related phraseological units especially reflect national traditions, religion, and worldview, revealing both universal and culture-specific features of English and Uzbek phraseology. Successful translation therefore depends on the translator's ability to balance meaning, style, and cultural context in order to convey the author's original intention effectively (Pinnavaia, 2010; Rakhmatullayev, 1978; Salomov, 1961).

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