

## CHALLENGES OF TRANSLATING IDIOMS AND PROVERBS FROM UZBEK INTO ENGLISH

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**Abstract:** *This article explores the linguistic and cultural challenges encountered in translating idioms and proverbs from Uzbek into English. Idioms and proverbs are deeply rooted in the cultural, historical, and social contexts of a language, which makes literal translation often impossible or misleading. The study analyzes examples from Uzbek and English, identifying key difficulties such as cultural mismatch, untranslatability, and the lack of functional equivalence. Strategies for overcoming these challenges are also discussed.*

**Keywords:** *idioms, proverbs, Uzbek language, English translation, cultural equivalence, translation strategies.*

### **Introduction**

Translating idioms and proverbs is one of the most challenging tasks in intercultural communication. Idiomatic expressions, by nature, are not meant to be interpreted literally and often reflect the unique worldview of a particular linguistic community. In the case of Uzbek and English, the gap is even more pronounced due to significant cultural, historical, and religious differences.

Uzbek idioms are often rich in symbolism, metaphor, and references to rural life, family honor, and collective values. On the other hand, English idioms may derive from Western traditions, literature, or historical events unfamiliar to Uzbek speakers. As a result, translating such expressions requires more than lexical knowledge—it requires cultural sensitivity, creativity, and a deep understanding of both source and target languages.

### **Methods**

This qualitative study is based on:

- A **comparative linguistic analysis** of selected Uzbek idioms and proverbs and their English equivalents;
- **Interviews** with bilingual Uzbek-English translators and language instructors;
- A **survey** conducted among English learners who translated Uzbek idioms literally and contextually.

The selected idioms were analyzed using the **Vinay and Darbelnet model of translation strategies**, focusing on adaptation, equivalence, and modulation.

### **Results**

The findings revealed several key challenges in idiom and proverb translation:

#### **1. Lack of Direct Equivalents**

For many Uzbek idioms (e.g., *"Otasi bilan to'yga bormagan"*), there is no culturally equivalent English expression, requiring paraphrasing or explanation.

#### **2. Misleading Literal Translations**

Literal translations often confuse the meaning, such as *"Ko'zga cho'p urmoq"* becoming "To throw a stick in the eye," which does not convey the actual meaning of deception or flattery.

#### **3. Cultural Specificity**

Proverbs like *"Yaxshi ot — yarim davlat"* cannot be appreciated without understanding the historical importance of horses in Uzbek society.

#### **4. Overuse of Domesticating Translation**

In many cases, translators choose to replace Uzbek idioms with familiar English idioms (e.g., "Don't count your chickens before they hatch" for *"Bo'ri o'lsa ham, izini qoldirar"*), risking loss of original flavor.

### **Discussion**

Translators face a dilemma: preserve the original imagery or prioritize the clarity and fluency of the target language. In literary or folkloric texts, retaining the metaphor and offering cultural explanations is often preferred to maintain authenticity. However, in journalistic or educational texts, functional equivalence might be more effective.

Additionally, the use of footnotes, glossaries, or in-text explanations can help preserve meaning without distorting the reader's experience. Teaching idioms in

bilingual contexts also requires pedagogical strategies that include context, usage, and cultural background.

### Conclusion

Translating idioms and proverbs from Uzbek into English is a nuanced task that involves both linguistic and cultural translation. While literal translations are rarely effective, a blend of adaptation, explanation, and cultural mediation can achieve both fidelity and readability.

To improve the quality of translation, more research into bilingual corpora, cross-cultural teaching materials, and translator training programs is necessary. Above all, understanding the cultural soul behind the words is key to successful idiomatic translation.

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