

THE ROLE OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN TRANSLATION  
IN THE INTERACTION OF CULTURE AND LANGUAGE: ON THE  
EXAMPLE OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK

*University of Exact and Social Sciences*

*Master's 2nd year*

***Khudaykulova Sayyora Tojiddin kizi***

*Scientific supervisor Babayeva Salima*

***Abstract:*** This article explores the role of phraseological units in translation, focusing on the interaction between language and culture in English and Uzbek. Phraseological units reflect national identity, historical experience, and cultural values. Translating such expressions requires not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural awareness. The study examines the challenges of translating culturally marked phraseological units, outlines modern strategies for achieving functional and cultural equivalence, and emphasizes the importance of cultural mediation in the translation process.

***Key words:*** Phraseological units, translation, cultural component, English language, Uzbek language, intercultural communication, linguocultural approach

### **Introduction**

Phraseological units are stable expressions that convey meanings beyond the literal interpretation of their constituent words. They are deeply rooted in the traditions, beliefs, and collective experience of a linguistic community. In the context of English and Uzbek, these units carry cultural significance, reflecting national worldview and social norms. The process of translating such units is not merely a linguistic task but also a cultural one. Translators must consider semantic meaning, pragmatic function, and cultural connotation to ensure that the translated expression communicates both the content and the cultural essence of the original. In today's globalized world, effective translation of culturally marked

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phraseological units plays a critical role in promoting intercultural understanding and preserving the richness of national languages.

Phraseological units with a cultural component are key carriers of cultural knowledge and worldview. In English, many idiomatic expressions derive from historical events, biblical references, maritime practices, or social institutions. For example, idioms related to seafaring or royal traditions carry cultural meanings that may not be immediately understandable to non-native speakers. Direct translation into Uzbek without cultural adaptation may result in a loss of meaning or nuance.

In Uzbek, phraseological units often emerge from daily life, agriculture, family values, and traditional moral norms. Expressions emphasizing patience, respect for elders, hospitality, and community cohesion reflect the national mentality. Translating such units into English requires strategies that preserve meaning, communicative effect, and cultural significance. Literal translation frequently fails to achieve this goal, while functional equivalence, descriptive translation, and cultural adaptation are more effective approaches. Functional equivalence involves finding a phraseological unit in the target language with a similar communicative effect. Descriptive translation provides an explanation when no direct equivalent exists. Cultural adaptation replaces unfamiliar cultural elements with more accessible expressions while maintaining the intended effect.

Another important consideration is the stylistic and emotional dimension of phraseological units. Idioms often convey humor, irony, evaluation, or emotional intensity, which must be preserved in translation to maintain the expressive quality of the text. Ignoring these aspects can weaken the impact of the translated material. Modern linguocultural approaches emphasize analyzing the cognitive and cultural underpinnings of phraseological units to select appropriate translation strategies. This ensures that translations are accurate, culturally meaningful, and communicatively effective. Phraseological units are one of the most expressive and culturally loaded elements of any language. They reflect collective experience, historical background, national values, and social norms. In English and Uzbek, these units are not merely linguistic constructs but also cultural symbols, carrying

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information about a community's worldview. Translating such units requires the translator to consider both linguistic meaning and cultural context to convey not only the semantic content but also the pragmatic and emotional nuances.

### **Cultural specificity in english phraseological units**

English phraseological units are often rooted in historical, religious, or social practices. Many idioms derive from the Bible, medieval traditions, or professional life such as navigation, commerce, and agriculture. For instance, “to carry coals to Newcastle” is an idiomatic expression whose meaning – doing something unnecessary – is linked to the historical context of coal-rich Newcastle in England. Without understanding this context, a literal translation into Uzbek could confuse readers. Similarly, expressions like “spill the beans” or “let the cat out of the bag” convey cultural-specific imagery and idiomatic meanings that may not have a direct equivalent in Uzbek. Translators often need to explain, adapt, or find functional equivalents to preserve meaning.

### **Cultural specificity in uzbek phraseological unit**

Uzbek phraseological units frequently emerge from agrarian life, family structures, and moral or ethical values. Expressions like “Baliq boshidan sasiydi” (“A fish rots from the head”) reflect social hierarchies and moral responsibility, while “Sho‘r bo‘lsa ham, ichida suv bo‘ladi” (“Even if it is salty, it still contains water”) emphasizes pragmatism and acceptance of imperfections. These culturally marked expressions convey not just semantic meaning but also national attitudes, making literal translation into English insufficient. Translators must consider cultural adaptation or explanatory translation to maintain the communicative function.

### **Translation strategies**

Modern translation theory emphasizes several strategies to address the challenges of translating phraseological units:

- **Functional equivalence:** Translators seek idioms or expressions in the target language that perform a similar communicative role. For example, “to

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carry coals to Newcastle” can be functionally translated as “to do something unnecessary” in English–Uzbek contexts.

- **Descriptive or explanatory translation:** When no equivalent exists, the translator describes the meaning, ensuring comprehension while preserving cultural reference.
- **Cultural adaptation:** Unfamiliar cultural elements can be replaced with a target-culture element of similar impact. For instance, an Uzbek idiom referencing a local cultural practice may be adapted to an English expression that conveys a comparable moral or social lesson.

### **Pragmatic and stylistic considerations**

Phraseological units often carry emotional or evaluative meaning, including humor, irony, exaggeration, or moral judgment. Maintaining these stylistic features is essential to preserve the text’s expressive quality. For instance, an idiom used humorously in Uzbek must be translated in a way that retains the humor or irony in English, even if the literal words differ.

Recent research emphasizes linguocultural analysis, which examines phraseological units as cognitive and cultural models. This approach helps translators understand the deeper cultural associations, symbolic meanings, and conceptual metaphors embedded in idioms. By analyzing the interaction between language, thought, and culture, translators can select strategies that maintain both meaning and cultural identity, resulting in translations that are not only accurate but also culturally resonant.

### **Examples of translation challenges**

1. English idiom: “Break the ice” – Uzbek literal translation: “Muzni sindirish” may not convey the social function; adapted translation: “Gapni ochish” (starting a conversation).
2. Uzbek idiom: “Tog‘ni silkitib, changni ko‘tar” – literal English: “Shake the mountain, raise dust”; functional adaptation: “Make a big fuss about something small.”

Through careful strategy selection, translators ensure that phraseological

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units convey both semantic meaning and cultural significance, preserving the interaction between language and culture.

The translation of phraseological units is one of the most complex tasks in linguistics and intercultural communication because such units carry both semantic meaning and cultural significance. In English and Uzbek, phraseological units are not merely linguistic expressions but also cultural markers that reflect the historical experience, social norms, moral values, and worldview of a nation. Translating these units requires careful consideration of language, culture, and context to preserve both meaning and cultural essence. Phraseological units often contain imagery, humor, or evaluative nuances that cannot be fully captured through literal translation alone, making cultural competence essential for translators.

English phraseological units often derive from historical events, religious texts, professional life, and social practices. For example, expressions such as “to carry coals to Newcastle” or “spill the beans” are culturally specific; they rely on knowledge of English history, idiomatic conventions, or social metaphors. A literal translation of these expressions into Uzbek may fail to convey the intended meaning, as the cultural context is unfamiliar to the target audience. In such cases, translators often use functional equivalence, replacing the source idiom with a target-language expression that has a similar communicative function, or descriptive translation, providing a brief explanation of the meaning.

Uzbek phraseological units, on the other hand, often reflect agrarian life, family structures, hospitality, and moral principles. Idioms like “Baliq boshidan sasiydi” (“A fish rots from the head”) emphasize leadership responsibility, while “Sho‘r bo‘lsa ham, ichida suv bo‘ladi” (“Even if it is salty, it still contains water”) conveys pragmatism and acceptance of imperfections. Direct translation of such expressions into English often results in semantic loss or misinterpretation. Translators may therefore employ cultural adaptation, replacing unfamiliar elements with culturally relevant ones in the target language, or descriptive translation to maintain clarity while preserving cultural meaning.

The pragmatic and stylistic dimensions of phraseological units are equally

important in translation. Idioms carry emotional, evaluative, and humorous nuances that contribute to the expressive richness of the text. For instance, an Uzbek idiom used humorously must be translated into English in a way that retains its humor, even if the words differ. Modern translation studies emphasize the linguocultural approach, which views idioms as cognitive models shaped by cultural experience. By analyzing the underlying conceptual metaphors, symbolic associations, and cultural schemas, translators can better understand the intended meaning and select appropriate translation strategies that preserve both semantic content and cultural significance.

Examples illustrate these challenges and solutions. The English idiom “break the ice,” which means to initiate conversation in a socially awkward situation, cannot be translated literally into Uzbek as “Muzni sindirish” without losing its social nuance. A culturally adapted translation, such as “Gapni ochish,” effectively conveys the intended meaning. Conversely, the Uzbek idiom “Tog‘ni silkitib, changni ko‘tar” literally means “Shake the mountain, raise dust,” but functionally it can be rendered in English as “Make a big fuss about something small,” capturing both meaning and pragmatic effect.

In conclusion, phraseological units serve as a vital intersection of language and culture, and their translation requires more than linguistic knowledge alone. Translators must navigate semantic, pragmatic, and cultural layers to convey both meaning and cultural essence. Strategies such as functional equivalence, descriptive translation, and cultural adaptation enable translators to maintain the expressive and cultural value of idioms. By integrating linguistic and cultural awareness, translators can facilitate effective intercultural communication and preserve the richness of national languages, ensuring that phraseological units remain meaningful, expressive, and culturally resonant in both English and Uzbek.

### **Conclusion**

Phraseological units play a crucial role in the interaction of language and culture. Translating culturally marked units in English and Uzbek requires more than linguistic competence; it demands cultural awareness, pragmatic

understanding, and careful strategy selection. Functional equivalence, descriptive translation, and cultural adaptation are essential tools for translators seeking to preserve meaning and cultural essence. By integrating linguistic and cultural knowledge, translators can ensure that phraseological units retain their expressive and cultural value, fostering intercultural understanding and enriching communication between English and Uzbek speakers.

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