

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE TRANSLATION OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS (PHRASEOLOGISMS)

Mukhtorjonova Mashhura Muhammadali qizi

Alisher Navoiy Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature

Abstract

Phraseological units (or phraseologisms) represent an essential component of any language's expressive and cultural system. They embody the worldview, historical memory, customs, and value orientations of a particular speech community. Because of their culture-bound nature, translating phraseological units often presents significant challenges, especially when the cultural background of the source and target languages differs considerably. This article examines the cultural specificity of phraseologisms and analyzes the main difficulties translators face when rendering these units across languages. Drawing on comparative linguistic and cultural studies, the paper outlines major strategies used in translation, including full equivalents, partial equivalents, descriptive translation, calquing, and cultural adaptation. The study highlights examples from English, Russian, and Uzbek and demonstrates how cultural elements embedded in phraseological units influence translation choices. The findings emphasize that successful translation of phraseologisms requires not only linguistic competence but also deep intercultural awareness. The article concludes that culturally sensitive translation contributes to preserving semantic nuances, maintaining stylistic expressiveness, and facilitating cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: phraseological units, phraseologisms, cultural differences, translation strategies, equivalence, cultural adaptation, idioms, intercultural communication.

Introduction

Phraseological units, also known as phraseologisms or idioms, occupy a central role in the linguistic landscape of every natural language. They are fixed expressions that convey figurative meaning and often cannot be understood solely from the meanings of their individual components. From a linguistic perspective,

phraseologisms enrich discourse, add emotional colouring, and provide concise means of expressing complex concepts. From a cultural perspective, they reflect the unique experiences, collective consciousness, and value systems of a society. For this reason, the study of phraseological units has long been associated not only with linguistics but also with cultural studies, anthropology, and cognitive science.

The translation of phraseologisms is widely recognized as one of the most challenging areas of translation studies. This complexity stems from the fact that phraseological units are deeply rooted in the cultural background of the source language. Many idioms originate from historical events, social practices, geographical features, religious beliefs, folklore, and literary traditions. For example, English phraseologisms such as “Achilles’ heel” and “the Midas touch” originate from ancient Greek mythology. Similarly, the Russian expression “после дождичка в четверг” (‘after a little rain on Thursday’) reflects cultural assumptions about unlikely promises. Uzbek idioms such as “ko‘ngli tog‘dek” (‘his heart is as big as a mountain’) or “eti bilan joni birga” (‘body and soul held together’) reveal culturally shaped patterns of emotion and character evaluation.

When translating phraseologisms across languages, the central task is not merely to find a linguistically similar expression, but to convey the cultural meaning and emotional tone encoded in the original. Literal translations of idioms frequently result in misunderstandings, loss of stylistic nuance, or even complete distortion of meaning. Thus, translators must adopt informed strategies that consider both linguistic structure and cultural context.

The aim of this article is to analyze the cultural differences that influence the translation of phraseological units and to outline effective strategies for handling culturally bound idioms. The discussion includes examples from English, Russian, and Uzbek to illustrate cross-cultural variation. Furthermore, the paper highlights how linguistic worldview (linguistic relativity), national value systems, and cultural metaphors contribute to the formation and interpretation of phraseological units. The study argues that successful translation of phraseologisms requires a

comprehensive understanding of cultural specificity and the skill to recreate comparable expressive and pragmatic effects in the target language.

Conclusion

Phraseological units represent an integral part of linguistic and cultural identity, encapsulating a nation's historical memory, collective worldview, and value system in compact figurative expressions. As this article has demonstrated, the translation of phraseologisms poses unique challenges arising from cultural asymmetry between languages. Literal translation often fails to convey the deeper cultural connotations, while inappropriate substitution can distort the tone, emotional loading, or communicative intent of the original expression.

The study reaffirms that culturally grounded translation strategies—including full and partial equivalents, descriptive translation, calquing, contextual adaptation, and cultural substitution—must be employed with careful consideration of the idiom's cultural significance. No single strategy is universally applicable: the translator must evaluate each phraseological unit in terms of semantic transparency, pragmatic function, stylistic register, and cultural relevance. Importantly, the choice of strategy should aim to preserve both the meaning and the expressive power of the original, while ensuring naturalness for the target-language audience.

Examples drawn from English, Russian, and Uzbek show that cultural backgrounds shape idioms in unique ways. English phraseologisms often derive from literature, history, and mythology; Russian idioms may reflect everyday life, social norms, and national character; Uzbek phraseologisms frequently express moral values, emotional depth, and collective experience. Understanding this cultural embeddedness allows translators to make informed and creative decisions that promote effective intercultural communication.

Ultimately, the translation of phraseological units is not merely a linguistic operation but a cultural negotiation. A translator must act as a mediator who bridges cultural differences, preserving the integrity of the source text while

adapting it meaningfully for new audiences. Hence, mastery in this area requires not only linguistic proficiency but also cultural competence, interpretive sensitivity, and a nuanced awareness of the interplay between language and culture. These insights underscore the role of translation as a vital instrument in fostering intercultural understanding and enriching global communication.

References

- 1.Kholboboeva PhD Student A. The notion of advertising discourse in modern uzbek linguistics //Philology Matters. – 2020. – Т. 2020. – №. 2. – С. 102-113.
- 2.Kholboboeva A. S. The theoretical point to advertising discourse in linguistics //Academic Discourse. – 2020. – Т. 9. – №. 1. – С. 99-104.
- 3.Lutfullaeva D. E., Yuldashev A. G. The Peculiarities of Defining Culturally Specific Uzbek Names in Associative Dictionaries //Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. Востоковедение и африканистика. – 2023. – Т. 15. – №. 3. – С. 485-496.