

**THE TRANSLATION STRATEGIES OF ZOONYMIC PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN
THE ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES**

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Abstract. This article examines the main translation strategies used in rendering English zoonymic phraseological units into Uzbek. Zoonymic phraseological units, which include animal names as key components, reflect national mentality, cultural stereotypes, and historical experience of a speech community. The study focuses on semantic, cultural, and pragmatic challenges that arise in translation and analyzes how translators overcome these difficulties through various strategies such as full equivalence, partial equivalence, descriptive translation, cultural substitution, and omission. A comparative and contrastive analysis of selected English and Uzbek phraseological units is conducted to demonstrate similarities and differences in imagery, connotation, and usage. The research adopts an academic yet accessible style and provides illustrative examples with explanations. The findings show that successful translation of zoonymic phraseological units requires not only linguistic competence but also deep cultural awareness.

Keywords: zoonymic phraseological units, translation strategies, equivalence, cultural specificity, English, Uzbek.

Introduction. In modern linguistics and translation studies, phraseological units occupy a special place due to their semantic complexity, figurative nature, and strong cultural embeddedness. Among them, zoonymic phraseological units – expressions containing names of animals – are particularly rich in imagery and evaluative meaning. Such units as as sly as a fox, a dark horse, or kill two birds with one stone are widely used in English and often pose serious challenges for translators. The relevance of this study is determined by the growing need for high-quality translation between English and Uzbek in the context of globalization, education, and intercultural communication.

Since zoonymic phraseological units reflect national worldview and cultural stereotypes, their literal translation often leads to semantic distortion or loss of expressive effect. Therefore, the choice of an appropriate translation strategy becomes crucial.

The aim of this article is to analyze the main translation strategies applied to English zoonymic phraseological units in Uzbek and to identify the most effective ways of preserving meaning, imagery, and pragmatic impact. The objectives include:

- defining the notion of zoonymic phraseological units;
- identifying their cultural and semantic features;
- analyzing translation strategies through comparative examples;
- evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies.

Theoretical background of zoonymic phraseological units. Phraseological units are stable combinations of words characterized by semantic integrity and reproducibility in speech. Zoonymic phraseological units constitute a subgroup of phraseological units in which animal names function as key lexical components. Animals in such expressions are rarely used in their literal meaning; instead, they serve as metaphors symbolizing human qualities, behavior, or

social roles. In English phraseology, animals such as fox, lion, dog, horse, and sheep are frequently used to represent traits like cunning, bravery, loyalty, endurance, or passivity. Similarly, in Uzbek phraseology, animals like tulki, bo'ri, eshak, qo'y, and it carry culturally specific connotations formed through centuries of collective experience.

From a cultural perspective, zoonymic phraseological units act as linguistic markers of national mentality. For instance, while the dog is often associated with loyalty in English culture (a lucky dog, every dog has its day), in Uzbek culture it may carry more negative or neutral connotations in certain contexts. Such differences significantly influence translation choices.

Translation challenges of zoonymic phraseological units. The translation of zoonymic phraseological units involves several types of difficulties:

1. Semantic challenges. One of the major difficulties in translating zoonymic phraseological units lies in their inherently figurative nature. Unlike ordinary word combinations, the meaning of a phraseological unit cannot be inferred simply from the meanings of its individual words. These expressions often carry metaphorical, cultural, or context-specific connotations, which are crucial for their correct interpretation. For example, the English idiom to let the cat out of the bag literally mentions a cat and a bag, yet its actual meaning is completely unrelated to any real animal; it signifies the act of revealing a secret or disclosing confidential information. A literal, word-for-word translation into Uzbek—sumkadan mushukni chiqarish—would be nonsensical and fail to convey the intended message. To achieve an effective translation, the translator must understand the idiomatic meaning and render it in a way that preserves both the sense and the pragmatic effect in the target language. This may involve using an equivalent Uzbek idiom, a descriptive phrase, or a culturally adapted expression that communicates the same idea without confusing the reader. Such semantic challenges are particularly pronounced in zoonymic units because animal symbolism can vary significantly across languages and cultures, making the preservation of both meaning and imagery a complex task.

2. Cultural challenges. Another significant difficulty in translating zoonymic phraseological units is related to cultural differences and the symbolic meaning of animals. Animals often carry specific connotations in a given culture, shaped by historical experience, folklore, and social norms. For example, an animal that symbolizes positive traits such as intelligence, loyalty, or bravery in one culture may represent entirely different or even negative qualities in another. This cultural asymmetry creates challenges for translators, as a literal translation may not only distort the meaning but also mislead the reader or fail to evoke the intended emotional and evaluative effect. For instance, in English, the dog is commonly associated with loyalty and fidelity, as seen in phrases like a lucky dog or every dog has its day. In contrast, in Uzbek culture, dogs can sometimes be perceived more neutrally or even negatively in certain idiomatic contexts. Similarly, the fox symbolizes cunning in both languages, but the nuances of this cunning and its moral evaluation can differ, requiring careful consideration in translation. These cultural differences necessitate the use of flexible translation strategies. Translators may need to adapt the source-language image to a culturally equivalent target-language image, provide descriptive explanations, or employ a combination of strategies to preserve the original meaning and communicative function. Awareness of these cultural factors is essential for ensuring that the translated phraseological unit resonates appropriately with the target audience and maintains both its expressive and pragmatic functions.

3. Pragmatic challenges. In addition to semantic and cultural difficulties, the translation of zoonymic phraseological units is often complicated by pragmatic factors. These expressions are not merely lexical combinations; they carry expressive, emotional, and stylistic nuances that contribute to the overall tone and communicative impact of the text. Preserving this pragmatic

dimension is frequently more important than maintaining a strict word-for-word correspondence between the source and target languages. For example, English idioms like a dark horse or to have a bee in one's bonnet convey not only literal meaning but also subtle evaluative judgments, humor, or irony. A direct translation into Uzbek may fail to reproduce these stylistic and emotional undertones, resulting in a flat or misleading expression. To address this issue, translators often employ strategies such as adaptation, paraphrasing, or substitution with culturally and contextually appropriate Uzbek equivalents.

Moreover, pragmatic challenges become particularly pronounced in literary, journalistic, or conversational texts where tone, register, and rhetorical effect are essential. The translator must consider factors such as the intended audience, communicative situation, and cultural expectations to ensure that the translation preserves both the meaning and the intended effect of the original expression. Ignoring these pragmatic aspects can lead to translations that are technically accurate but stylistically and emotionally inadequate, thus undermining the communicative purpose of the text.

Main translation strategies. Based on the analysis of English–Uzbek translation practice, the following translation strategies are most commonly used.

1. Full equivalence represents the most straightforward strategy in translating zoonymic phraseological units, occurring when the English expression has a direct Uzbek counterpart that preserves its meaning, imagery, and stylistic nuances. This approach ensures that both the figurative sense and the pragmatic effect are maintained, allowing the target-language reader to experience the same impression as the source-language audience. Example: as busy as a bee → ariqdek mehnatkash (or ari kabi tinimsiz ishlaydigan). In this case, although the lexical elements differ slightly between English and Uzbek, the animal imagery (bee / ari) and the evaluative meaning (diligence, industriousness) are preserved. Full equivalence is especially effective when the symbolic meaning of the animal is similar across both cultures, as it allows for a natural and culturally appropriate translation without requiring additional explanation. However, achieving full equivalence is not always possible. It depends on the existence of similar metaphorical associations in both languages and on the ability of the target language to convey the same stylistic and emotional coloring. When such conditions are met, full equivalence provides an elegant and concise solution, preserving both the linguistic and cultural integrity of the phraseological unit.

2. Partial equivalence is used when the main semantic content of a phraseological unit is preserved in translation, but the original imagery or stylistic nuance cannot be fully retained. This strategy allows translators to convey the essential meaning while adapting the expression to the target language context. Example: a dark horse → kutilmagan nomzod. In this case, the animal image (horse) is lost, but the central idea—an unexpected or secretive candidate—remains intact. Partial equivalence is especially useful when literal translation would result in confusion or loss of clarity for the target audience. While some metaphorical or cultural richness may be sacrificed, the communicative function of the unit is maintained.

3. Descriptive Translation is applied when no direct equivalent exists in Uzbek, and the translator needs to explain the meaning of the phraseological unit in a clear and contextually appropriate way. This approach prioritizes understanding over preserving the original lexical or figurative form. Example: to smell a rat → biror narsadan shubhalanmoq. Here, the zoonym (rat) disappears completely, yet the intended meaning—the suspicion that something is wrong—is clearly conveyed. Descriptive translation is particularly effective when cultural or linguistic differences make literal or equivalent translation impossible.

4. Cultural substitution involves replacing the animal image from the source language with a target-language equivalent that has similar symbolic or evaluative meaning in the target culture. This strategy helps preserve both figurative meaning and stylistic effect. Example: as sly as a fox → tulki kabi ayyor. Since the fox represents cunning in both English and Uzbek cultures, the substitution retains the original metaphorical sense and stylistic nuance. Cultural substitution is widely used to bridge cultural gaps while maintaining naturalness and readability in the target language.

5. Omission is a last-resort strategy, employed when a phraseological unit is redundant, too culturally specific, or untranslatable without overcomplicating the text. In such cases, the translator may choose to omit the expression entirely to maintain clarity and coherence. While omission sacrifices the expressive and stylistic richness of the original, it is sometimes necessary to ensure that the overall message is not distorted or obscured, especially in technical, scientific, or highly formal texts.

Comparative and contrastive analysis. A detailed comparative analysis of English and Uzbek zoonymic phraseological units highlights both shared tendencies and notable differences in how animals are employed metaphorically to describe human traits and behaviors. In both languages, animal imagery serves as a vivid tool for expressing personality characteristics, social roles, and evaluative judgments.

However, the specific choice of animals and the symbolic meanings attached to them often vary due to cultural, historical, and linguistic factors. For example, the English expression a sheepish look conveys shyness, embarrassment, or a timid demeanor. In Uzbek, similar meanings may be expressed without directly referencing sheep, using other culturally appropriate metaphors or idiomatic constructions. Likewise, English frequently employs the lion to denote bravery or courage, as in lion-hearted, while Uzbek may use sher or entirely non-zoonymic metaphors to convey the same notion, depending on the context and stylistic requirements. These examples demonstrate that while the underlying communicative intent may align across languages, the linguistic and cultural realization differs. Consequently, translators must adopt flexible, context-sensitive strategies that account for both semantic and cultural disparities. They must carefully select translation approaches—whether full equivalence, partial equivalence, descriptive translation, or cultural substitution—to preserve meaning, stylistic effect, and cultural resonance in the target language.

In sum, comparative analysis confirms that successful translation of zoonymic phraseological units requires not only linguistic proficiency but also a deep understanding of the cultural frameworks that shape metaphorical associations in each language.

The role of context in translation. Context plays a crucial and often decisive role in determining the most suitable strategy for translating zoonymic phraseological units. The meaning, stylistic effect, and cultural resonance of a phraseological unit can vary significantly depending on the textual and situational context, requiring the translator to make informed and flexible choices. For instance, the same expression may demand different translation approaches depending on the genre, target audience, or communicative purpose of the text. In literary translation, the preservation of imagery, metaphorical richness, and emotional coloring is usually prioritized, as these features contribute to the artistic and aesthetic impact of the work. For example, an idiom like to let the cat out of the bag may be rendered creatively in Uzbek to retain its figurative and narrative effect in a novel or story. Conversely, in scientific, technical, or journalistic texts, clarity, precision, and unambiguous meaning often take precedence over

preserving stylistic or metaphorical features. In such cases, descriptive translation or cultural adaptation may be more appropriate, even if the original imagery is lost.

Moreover, context also includes factors such as the level of formality, the cultural background of the intended audience, and the specific communicative goals of the text. Awareness of these contextual elements allows translators to choose strategies that maintain the functional equivalence of the phraseological unit, ensuring that the translation is both accurate and culturally resonant. In conclusion, understanding the role of context is essential for effective translation.

It guides the selection of strategies—full equivalence, partial equivalence, descriptive translation, cultural substitution, or omission—and ensures that both the semantic and pragmatic functions of zoonymic phraseological units are preserved in the target language.

Conclusion. The present study demonstrates that the translation of English zoonymic phraseological units into Uzbek is a multifaceted and intricate process that demands not only linguistic proficiency but also deep cultural awareness and sensitivity to pragmatic nuances. Due to the metaphorical, culturally embedded, and stylistically rich nature of these expressions, no single translation strategy can be regarded as universally applicable. Instead, translators must carefully select the most appropriate approach based on the specific context, genre, audience, and communicative goals of the text. Strategies such as full and partial equivalence allow translators to maintain naturalness and preserve both meaning and imagery when a direct correspondence exists.

In cases where literal or equivalent translation is impossible, descriptive translation and cultural substitution serve as effective tools for overcoming non-equivalence, ensuring that the intended meaning and pragmatic effect are communicated clearly to the target audience. Comparative analysis of English and Uzbek zoonymic phraseological units confirms that these expressions are not merely linguistic constructs but also cultural markers reflecting national mentality, social norms, and collective experiences. This cultural dimension underscores the importance of considering both semantic and pragmatic aspects in translation practice.

The findings of this study have practical implications for professional translators, linguists, and students of translation studies. By providing insights into effective translation strategies and highlighting the challenges posed by zoonymic phraseological units, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of cross-cultural communication and the preservation of metaphorical and stylistic richness in translation. Ultimately, it emphasizes the importance of a balanced approach that integrates linguistic accuracy, cultural fidelity, and pragmatic effectiveness.

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