



## **FEATURES OF ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS AND ISSUES OF THEIR TRANSLATION INTO UZBEK**

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**Abstract:** This paper investigates the distinctive features of English phraseological units and analyzes the challenges involved in translating them into Uzbek. Phraseological units, which include idioms, collocations, and fixed expressions, reflect the worldview, humor, and cultural practices of native speakers. Their translation into another language is rarely straightforward due to differences in linguistic structure, metaphorical systems, and cultural context. This study categorizes phraseological units, discusses their structural and semantic traits, and evaluates translation strategies through real-life examples. The analysis emphasizes the importance of linguistic competence and cultural literacy for successful idiomatic translation.

**Key words:** phraseological units, idioms, English-Uzbek translation, cultural equivalence, semantic transparency, translation strategies, figurative language, comparative linguistics.

### **Introduction**

Language is not only a tool for communication but also a repository of culture, history, and collective experience. Phraseological units (PUs) in English commonly known as idioms are deeply embedded in cultural norms and values, often presenting significant difficulties when translated into other languages like Uzbek. Idioms are more than the sum of their parts; their meanings are often figurative and not directly inferable from the meanings of individual words.

The Uzbek language, like English, has a rich stock of phraseological units. However, the differences in cultural references, metaphoric thinking, and grammatical patterns lead to major translation challenges. This paper aims to explore the features of English idioms, identify the main difficulties in translating them into Uzbek, and offer practical strategies and solutions for translators.

### **Methods**

This study adopts a **comparative-descriptive** and **qualitative analytical approach** to investigate the features of English phraseological units and their translation into Uzbek. The research methodology consists of several stages: data collection, classification, comparative analysis, and evaluation of translation strategies. Each stage is explained below.

### **Data Collection**

To ensure a representative sample of idiomatic expressions, a corpus of 100 commonly used English phraseological units was compiled from diverse authentic sources, including:

**Contemporary fiction and non-fiction books** (e.g., novels, essays)

**Subtitled movies and TV series** (for spoken idioms in context)

**Newspaper and magazine articles** (e.g., *The Guardian*, *BBC News*)

**Digital corpora** such as the *Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*

These sources were selected to reflect a variety of discourse types, from formal to informal, and to capture phraseological usage across different contexts (narrative, conversational, journalistic).

### **Classification of Idioms**

After collecting the idioms, they were categorized based on two main criteria:

**Semantic Transparency:**

**Transparent idioms:** Meanings are partly deducible (e.g., *lose one's temper*)

**Semi-transparent idioms:** Meaning somewhat obscure (e.g., *break the ice*)

**Opaque idioms:** Figurative meaning not related to component words (e.g., *kick the bucket*)

**Structural Type:**

**Verb-based phrases** (e.g., *pull someone's leg*)

**Noun phrases** (e.g., *a red herring*)

**Full clauses/proverbs** (e.g., *the early bird catches the worm*)

This classification was essential for understanding which idioms are more easily translatable and which present greater challenges.

**Selection of Uzbek Equivalents**

To identify corresponding Uzbek translations, the following resources and techniques were used:

**Uzbek-English and English-Uzbek bilingual dictionaries**, especially those including idiomatic expressions

**Published literary translations** from English into Uzbek, where idioms were used in actual translation practice

**Native Uzbek speaker input** (including linguistic experts and language teachers) to determine natural equivalents

**Online forums and language communities** to observe modern usage

Each English idiom was paired with one or more Uzbek equivalents, where available, and marked as:

Fully equivalent

Partially equivalent

Descriptive translation

No equivalent (requiring creative adaptation)

**Comparative Analysis**

Each idiom pair was analyzed with attention to:

**Lexical correspondence:** Do the individual words match or differ?

**Idiomatic value:** Is the figurative meaning retained?

**Cultural resonance:** Is the idiom's imagery or reference culturally understandable in Uzbek?

For example:

*Let the cat out of the bag* (meaning: to reveal a secret) has a direct equivalent in Uzbek: *sirni fosh qilmoq*, which retains both meaning and usage context.

In contrast:

*Hit the hay* (meaning: to go to bed) has no culturally grounded equivalent and often needs to be translated descriptively: *uxlashga yotmoq*.

**Evaluation of Translation Strategies**

To assess translation effectiveness, the idioms and their translations were evaluated based on how well they met the following criteria:

**Accuracy:** Is the intended meaning conveyed?

**Naturalness:** Does the translation sound fluent and idiomatic in Uzbek?

**Cultural appropriateness:** Does it align with Uzbek norms and conceptual frameworks?

The following translation strategies were identified and coded during analysis:

**Direct or full equivalence**

**Semantic or functional equivalence**

**Descriptive paraphrasing**

**Cultural substitution**

**Literal translation** (used rarely, and often marked as ineffective)

Each strategy was recorded in a spreadsheet for comparison, and frequency was calculated to determine which approaches were most effective across idiom types.

**Results**

**Types and Characteristics of English Phraseological Units**

Phraseological units in English exhibit various degrees of semantic opacity and structural fixity. They are typically categorized into:

**Pure idioms** (non-literal, opaque meaning):  
e.g., *Kick the bucket* → ‘to die’

**Semi-idioms** (partially literal, partially figurative):  
e.g., *Lose one’s head* → ‘to panic’

**Phraseological collocations** (fixed, but more transparent):  
e.g., *Make a decision, Strong tea*

English idioms often utilize metaphor and cultural imagery:

*Spill the beans* (to reveal a secret)

*Bite the bullet* (to endure pain bravely)

*Under the weather* (feeling sick)

These units serve multiple functions: they enrich language, simplify expression, enhance stylistic tone, and sometimes inject humor or sarcasm.

### Translation Equivalence and Examples

English Idiom	Uzbek Equivalent	Type
A blessing in disguise	Yaxshilikka xizmat qilgan kulfat	Partial equivalence
To let the cat out of the bag	Sirni fosh qilmoq	Full equivalence
Hit the nail on the head	Muammo tagiga yetmoq	Functional equivalence
Once in a blue moon	Juda kamdan-kam	Descriptive translation
Burn the midnight oil	Kechasi bilan ishlamoq/o‘qimoq	Adaptive translation
The elephant in the room	Hamma e’tibor bermayotgan katta muammo	No direct equivalent

Some idioms required **cultural contextualization** to retain meaning. For example:

*Break the ice* – If translated literally (*muzni sindirish*), it may be misunderstood. The correct contextual meaning in Uzbek would be: *suhbatni boshlash uchun muhitni yumshatmoq*.

### Challenges in Translation

**Semantic opacity:** The meaning cannot be deduced from words.

*Kick the bucket* literally translated (*chelakni tepmoq*) makes no sense in Uzbek.

**Cultural untranslatability:** Idioms tied to English customs (sports, geography, politics) often lack Uzbek analogs.

*Throw in the towel* (from boxing) → *Taslim bo‘lmoq*, but imagery is lost.

**Structural mismatch:** English idioms may not align grammatically with Uzbek syntax.

*The ball is in your court* → requires a complete rephrasing: *Endi navbat sizda*.

### Discussion

Idioms are culturally loaded linguistic phenomena, making their translation a multidimensional challenge. Literal translations frequently result in nonsense or stylistically inappropriate expressions. Hence, a **functional equivalence approach** where the goal is to reproduce the same effect on the target reader is often more effective than formal equivalence.

Professional translators and language learners need to be aware that:

Not all idioms need to be translated idiomatically.

Sometimes, stylistic or pragmatic force must take precedence over form.

Awareness of both source and target cultures is essential to avoid misinterpretations.

**Translators’ strategies** often include:

**Using existing equivalents** – Best choice where available.

**Paraphrasing** – Explaining the idiom’s meaning in plain language.

**Substitution with a culturally appropriate Uzbek idiom** – Keeping the idiomatic flavor.

**Omission** – Rarely, idioms may be removed if not essential to the message.

Furthermore, modern media and digital content introduce new idioms continuously, which means dictionaries must be updated regularly to reflect living usage.

## **Conclusion**

English phraseological units are rich in cultural content and figurative expression, offering both beauty and complexity. Their translation into Uzbek requires a blend of linguistic knowledge, cultural insight, and creative skill. While some idioms have direct equivalents, many demand interpretation, rephrasing, or creative adaptation. The study suggests more emphasis should be placed on idiomatic translation in academic curricula and translator training programs. Also, collaborative efforts should be made to develop more comprehensive bilingual idiom dictionaries and online resources that address real-world usage and provide contextual examples.

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