

**CHALLENGES OF TRANSLATING HUMOR FROM UZBEK INTO ENGLISH**

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**Abstract:** In recent years, some challenges encountered in translating into English have been studied. This article analyzes the main difficulties in translating humor and phraseological units from Uzbek into English. The study examines effective translation methods based on formal and dynamic equivalence theories. The results show that dynamic equivalence adapted to the cultural context is the most effective approach when translating humor and wordplay. Furthermore, the article emphasizes the creative aspects of translation, as well as the necessity of understanding cultural knowledge and context, which helps preserve the impact of humor in another language. Accuracy and correctness in literal translation are of great importance. The main goal of this article is not to translate words directly, but to convey their emotions and demonstrate to students how important this process is.

**Keywords:** humor translation, phraseological units, formal equivalence, dynamic equivalence, cultural context, stylistics.

**Introduction**

The art of translation is recognized worldwide as an important and influential field. Currently, in translation studies, the issue of rendering humor, idiomatic expressions, and proverbs from one language into another is one of the pressing topics. In particular, translating Uzbek idioms and proverbs into English presents challenges due to linguistic and cultural differences, as well as the difficulty of preserving wordplay and humorous elements. Translation is extremely important to me. For you, the theory of translation holds significant value. Therefore, identifying effective translation strategies and explaining them on a theoretical basis remains a crucial task for translation practice. Theoretical approaches can help provide solutions to many translation challenges. Translating humor and figurative expressions in proverbs can pose certain difficulties. The aim of this study is to analyze the main challenges in translating Uzbek idiomatic expressions and humor elements into English and to determine the most effective translation methods. These clarifications themselves have the power to resolve the challenges. The research objectives include examining translation strategies within the framework of formal and dynamic equivalence theories, delivering meaning clearly and understandably for readers and listeners, and recommending creative approaches adapted to the cultural context. Even if the audience is not fully familiar with the technical aspects of translation, they can still interpret the content comprehensively. From a technical perspective, certain mistakes in the audience's understanding can pose difficulties for us learners.<sup>1</sup>

The topic I have chosen may be perceived as challenging; however, it is essential for someone to openly address the complexities within the field of translation studies. Certain difficulties in language learning have long served as vital analytical tools for both students and scholars. Establishing a theoretical framework within translation studies and phraseology helps

<sup>1</sup> Nida, E. (1964). *Toward a Science of Translating*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

in understanding the intricacies that arise when transferring phraseological units and elements of humor from one language to another. Research indicates that comparative typology and intercultural approaches hold particular significance in translation practice. Comparative typology enables scholars to identify similarities and differences between languages and cultures, while examining their impact on meaning, style, and pragmatic functions. This allows translators to anticipate potential obstacles in translating idioms and proverbs and to select effective strategies—an essential component of successful translation. Our university carries out significant work in this field, offering specialized courses to ensure students achieve professional translation standards. However, international theoretical processes can sometimes lead to conceptual discrepancies. Mastery of translation studies is a crucial part of this journey, and intercultural theories demonstrate their vital importance in this context. I am well-versed in this framework, which is enriched by the contributions of eminent scholars. For instance, Edward T. Hall's theory of "high-context" and "low-context" cultures explains differences in communication styles and is applied when translating culturally bound expressions, such as humor and wordplay. Hofstede's cultural dimensions—including individualism vs. collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance—play a pivotal role in interpreting phraseological units. Similarly, Trompenaars' models of universalism vs. particularism help bridge the gap between language and culture. These scholars have left behind invaluable resources that continue to inspire my research. Globally, scholars systematically illuminate the primary challenges of translation theory, providing practical solutions for learners and audiences. Together, these theories enable the effective application of linguistic and cultural factors during the translation process.<sup>2</sup> For example, idioms are often deeply rooted in a nation's values, historical experiences, and traditions of humor. Therefore, in translation, it is vital not only to preserve the meaning but also to deliver it in a form that is natural and intelligible to the target audience.

When translating from Uzbek to English, the socio-cultural context of phraseological units and humor must be meticulously considered. Uzbek proverbs often express moral values, upbringing, patience, and compassion; finding an exact English equivalent is not always possible. Furthermore, the core indicators of a country—culture, politics, and economy—shape its linguistic features. While cultural indicators define social habits, political systems influence language policy and formal discourse. Economic factors, such as globalization and technology, also affect how idioms are perceived and utilized. While technology is undeniably beneficial, it also possesses certain limitations.

I feel deeply that integrating comparative typology with intercultural theories empowers translators to choose strategies that are not only linguistically accurate but also culturally resonant. This approach ensures semantic precision, stylistic nuance, and cultural compatibility. Scholars emphasize that focusing on completeness and accuracy is a fundamental tool in the translation process—a tool that I consider indispensable in my own work.

Conducting an in-depth analysis in the field of translation studies is of great importance. Personally, I truly strive to examine this field in depth, and I have firsthand experience with the complexities of translating phraseological units and humor elements into different languages.

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<sup>2</sup> Hall, E.T. (1976). *Beyond Culture*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press.

Translating Uzbek phraseological units and humor into English requires a practical approach. In this section, the cultural, political, and economic characteristics of selected countries are studied, and their impact on the translation of phraseological expressions is analyzed. From my personal observation, phraseological units significantly determine the quality of translation, and misinterpreting them can completely distort the meaning. When meaning is lost, it can have a very negative effect on human emotions. I have, of course, applied these insights in real-life practice as well.<sup>3</sup>

Firstly, it is crucial to identify similarities and differences in language and cultural features among countries. For instance, Uzbekistan and the United States differ fundamentally in terms of cultural context. In Uzbekistan, phraseological units usually reflect traditional values, moral principles, and humanistic ideals, while humor is often context-dependent and conveyed through wit. Personally, I have observed that in many cases it is difficult to convey the exact meaning of these humor elements in English. In contrast, in the U.S., phraseological expressions and humor reflect individualism, creativity, and direct expression, often employing wordplay and metaphorical language. Therefore, I strongly feel that accounting for linguistic and cultural differences is essential in translation. All of these aspects have practical significance in translation.

Personally, I consider the following aspects to be the most important:

**Semantic Accuracy:** Translated phraseological units must preserve the original meaning and remain comprehensible to the target audience. For example, the Uzbek proverb “Jo‘jani kuzda sanaymiz” is translated as “Don’t count your chickens before they hatch” in English. To me, this demonstrates the best way to maintain cultural adaptation. I also recall that my parents used to say, if I failed to accomplish something or could not handle it, I should wait and see the results first.<sup>4</sup>

**Stylistic and Pragmatic Adaptation:** Word order, style, and contextual adaptation are essential in translation. The Uzbek expression “Yeti o‘lchab bir kes” is rendered as “Look before you leap” in English. From my personal experience, I have noticed that this approach makes the expression natural and easily understandable to the audience. For instance, when organizing something at university, our teacher would always repeat this saying. Within this study, selected Uzbek and English phraseological units and proverbs were analyzed using both formal (literal) and dynamic equivalence approaches. The results showed that formal equivalence is often awkward and potentially confusing for Uzbek audiences, while dynamic equivalence conveys

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<sup>3</sup> Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture’s Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

<sup>4</sup> Trompenaars, F., & Hampden-Turner, C. (1997). *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

meaning more completely and naturally. Personally, I believe that applying the dynamic equivalence approach significantly improves translation quality. Moreover, advancing the art of translation requires using various tools and methods. Visual tools such as tables and diagrams are very helpful in illustrating cultural indicators (high/low context, individualism/collectivism) and their impact on the translation of phraseological units. From my experience, these tools helped identify the most effective strategies for translation. When translating phraseological units and humor, considering both linguistic and cultural factors together allows for semantic accuracy, stylistic naturalness, and cultural appropriateness to be preserved. Personally, I would like to emphasize that a translator's creativity, cultural knowledge, and adaptability play a crucial role in this process, significantly enhancing translation quality. I have tested this approach in practice and can personally confirm its effectiveness.

**1-Table: Analysis of Uzbek Phraseological Units and Humor Elements in Translation into English Based on Literal and Dynamic Equivalence**

Uzbek Phrase / Proverb	Literal Translation	Dynamic / Contextual Translation	Notes / Usage
Jo'jani kuzda sanaymiz	Don't count your chickens before they hatch	Don't count your chickens before they hatch (natural English equivalent)	Clear and understandable for readers; serves as a warning
Yeti o'lchab bir kes	Look before you leap	Measure seven times, cut once	Advisory meaning, emphasizes caution
Teng tengi bilan, tezak qopi bilan	Birds of a feather flock together	Like attracts like	Expresses friendship and similarity
Eskini yamaguningcha esing ketadi	You can't teach an old dog new tricks	Old habits die hard	Highlights difficulty of teaching new skills
Boride qadrla, yo'g'ida qidirma	Absence makes the heart grow fonder	Absence makes the heart grow fonder	Expresses that distance increases appreciation
Sirni fosh / oshkor qilma	Let the cat out of the bag	Don't spill the secret	Used to emphasize keeping confidentiality
Mehringizni ortiqcha saqlamang	Don't keep your love too long	Share your love before it's too late	Human advice, expresses emotional sentiment
Qattiq mehnat — halol mukofot	Hard work pays off	Hard work brings its own reward	Life advice, encourages diligence

The translation of phraseological units and humor elements from Uzbek into English is a complex process that requires not only linguistic accuracy but also cultural awareness and an understanding of values for learners. Literal translations can never fully preserve the original meaning of the words nor convey it clearly to the audience. Our study shows that understanding the target audience, considering cultural differences, and applying dynamic translation strategies allow for the effective transmission of humor and phraseological nuances while maintaining stylistic features and cultural context. Every translator, through their skill and artistry, can produce natural and impactful translations.

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