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TRANSLATING UZBEK-ENGLISH PROVERBS: CULTURAL GAPS AND STRATEGIES

Annotation

This article analyzes cultural differences arising in the process of translating proverbs into Uzbek and English, as well as strategies for their elimination. Proverbs are studied as a reflection of folk culture and national thinking. The effectiveness of such approaches as "literal translation," "functional equivalence," "cultural substitution" and "descriptive translation" in the translation process is shown on the basis of examples. The results show that ensuring cultural equivalence in the translation of proverbs is the main skill of the translator.

Key words: proverbs, translation strategies, cultural difference, equivalence, Uzbek, English.

O‘ZBEK - INGLIZ MAQOLLARINI TARJIMA QILISH: MADANIY BO‘SHLIQLAR VA STRATEGIYALAR

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada maqollarni o‘zbek va ingliz tillariga tarjima qilish jarayonida yuzaga keladigan madaniy farqlar hamda ularni bartaraf etish usullari tahlil qilinadi. Maqollar xalq madaniyati va milliy tafakkurning aks etishi sifatida o‘rganiladi. "So‘zma-so‘z tarjima", "funktional ekvivalentlik", "madaniy o‘zgartirish" va "tavsifiy tarjima" kabi yondashuvlarning samaradorligi misollar yordamida ko‘rsatib beriladi. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, maqollar tarjimasida madaniy ekvivalentlikni ta‘minlash tarjimonning asosiy mahorati hisoblanadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: maqollar, tarjima strategiyalari, madaniy farq, ekvivalentlik, o‘zbek tili, ingliz tili.

ПЕРЕВОД УЗБЕКСКО-АНГЛИЙСКИХ ПОСЛОВИЦ: КУЛЬТУРНЫЕ ЛАКУНЫ И СТРАТЕГИИ

Аннотация

В данной статье анализируются культурные различия, возникающие в процессе перевода пословиц на узбекский и английский языки, а также стратегии их преодоления. Пословицы рассматриваются как отражение народной культуры и национального мышления. На примерах показана эффективность таких подходов, как "дословный перевод", "функциональная эквивалентность", "культурная замена" и "описательный перевод" в процессе перевода. Результаты показывают, что обеспечение культурной эквивалентности при переводе пословиц является ключевым навыком переводчика.

Ключевые слова: пословицы, стратегии перевода, культурные различия, эквивалентность, узбекский язык, английский язык.

Introduction. Translation is one of the oldest types of activity in the history of mankind, and for thousands of years it has served as a means of intercultural communication between languages. Today, in a multinational and multilingual world, it is practically impossible to achieve success in any field without translation. Translation is a complex process that requires not only knowledge of the language, but also art and a scientific approach. It has its own rules, methods and principles. A proverb is a genre of oral folk art, in which the life of the people, the life conclusions of ancestors, their attitude to society, history and spiritual state are reflected. Therefore, the translator must understand not only the culture of their own language, but also the culture of the target language. The translator is a bridge between cultures; they must be able to convey not only words, but also culture and meaning.

Proverbs are the most concise and profound form of folk thought. They express values embodied in language, culture, customs and social life. For the translator, the correct expression of proverbs in another language requires great skill and cultural sensitivity, since he conveys not only the words, but also the cultural meanings behind them. According to Dabaghi et al. (2010) the study of proverbs is called paremiology (from Greek *παροιμία* - *paroiμία*, "proverb"). Meider (1985: 119) has defined the proverb as "a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation". When translating Uzbek and English proverbs, the problem of "cultural sentence" - that is, the absence of a concept or image in one language in another - is often observed.

Therefore, to translate proverbs correctly, the translator must apply various strategies.

While translating proverbs, idioms and set phrases, translators generally follow three main approaches:

1. Identifying a direct equivalent in the target language;

2. Using a culturally and contextually appropriate alternative;

3. Providing a literal, word-for-word translation. (Khabibullayeva et al, 2025)

If neither of the above strategies is used, the translator tries to convey the main content or general idea of the original phrase. This situation shows not only that proverbs have a complex structure, but also their deep cultural content.

Literature review and methodology. The issue of translating proverbs has always been relevant in translation studies, since proverbs are one of the most pressing points of language and culture. They are studied as stable units that embody the historical experience, worldview, moral norms and social values of the people. Therefore, the translation of proverbs from one language to another is considered not only a linguistic, but also a cultural problem. Research conducted within the framework of paremiology shows that proverbs are concise in form, but deep in content. Dabaghi et al. (2010) emphasize that the cultural component plays a key role in the translation of proverbs, noting that literal translation often distorts the original content. In their opinion, a meaningful and functional approach should be prioritized when translating proverbs (Dabaghi et al., 2010). In translation theory, the issue of cultural equivalence holds a special place. The theory of dynamic and functional equivalence, proposed

by Nida, demonstrates that in translation, impact and content are more important than form (Nida, 1964). This approach is widely applied in the translation of proverbs, as many proverbs lack direct equivalents in other languages. In such cases, the translator aims to preserve the effect of the original text on the reader. Newmark (1988) emphasizes the necessity for caution when dealing with cultural elements in translation and suggests strategies of "cultural substitution" and "descriptive translation." According to him, if a particular cultural image is incomprehensible in the target language, it is advisable to replace it with an image more familiar to that culture or provide an explanatory translation (Newmark, 1988). In Uzbek translation studies, great attention is paid to the issue of translating proverbs. Tadjieva (2025) in her research emphasizes that Uzbek proverbs have deep religious, social, and national roots, and shows that not taking into account the cultural context in their translation leads to incorrect interpretation (Tadjieva, 2025). In particular, proverbs about parents, hospitality and neighborliness are analyzed as an important part of the Uzbek mentality. Khabibullayeva et al. (2025) distinguish three main strategies in the translation of proverbs: finding a direct equivalent, using a culturally and contextually appropriate variant and literal translation. In their opinion, among these strategies, functional equivalence is the most effective method, as it allows preserving the content and cultural load (Khabibullayeva et al., 2025). In general, the analysis of existing literature indicates that the translation of proverbs demands not only a high level of linguistic knowledge from the translator but also intercultural competence. Success in translating Uzbek and English proverbs is directly linked to the translator's ability to comprehend cultural differences and select an appropriate translation strategy.

In this study, a comparative method based on qualitative analysis was used. As research material, five proverbs in the Uzbek language were selected and their English translation variants were analyzed. Proverbs were sorted by random selection, paying special attention to their religious, social, and cultural content. In the course of the research, the semantic content, cultural load and pragmatic function of each proverb were determined and compared with its English counterparts. The strategies used in the translation process - literal translation, functional equivalence, cultural substitution and descriptive translation - were considered separately and their effectiveness was evaluated. During the analysis, scientific sources on paremiology and translation theory were taken as a basis. In particular, the principles of cultural equivalence, a functional approach, and contextual translation formed the theoretical basis of the research (Meider, 1985; Nida, 1964; Newmark, 1988). The obtained results were analyzed in order to identify the differences between Uzbek and English cultures and determine the most optimal strategies for translating proverbs.

Results and Discussion. In this section, we will take 5 randomly selected Uzbek proverbs, translated them into English and analyzed them.

"Ota rozi- Xudo rozi" → "Honor your parents and you will live long" (The Holy Bible, Exodus 20:12).

According to Tadjieva (2025), there is a hadith "The pleasure of Allah the Almighty depends on the pleasure of the father and his anger. In folk art, we use: "Ota rozi-Xudo rozi". This proverb has a religious and spiritual basis. It means that a person achieves God's pleasure through respect for parents. In English, this concept is expressed in religious (Christian or Islamic) sources, or in moral form. If we translate this proverb word for word, we will not be able to convey the cultural context. For this reason, the proverb closest to the meaning of this proverb in English can be a proverb from the Bible.

"Mehmon kelsa, pastga tush, palov bermoq ahdga tush" → "It is a sin against hospitality, to open your doors and darken your countenance"

Tadjieva (2025) explained the meaning of this proverb as follow: pilaf is one of the main dishes of Uzbek cuisine. It is also a tradition to treat guests with pilaf when they come to the house. Also, when a guest arrives, they are seated at the head of the house, the host sits at the bottom of the tablecloth. The proverb expresses

the nationality inherent in the Uzbek people. However, pilaf, seating guests at the head of the house is not characteristic of English culture; we cannot translate this proverb literally, so we translate it while preserving the meaning of general hospitality.

"It is a sin against hospitality, to open your doors and darken your countenance" explains hospitality as a moral principle. Both proverbs emphasize the need to value the guest; the difference is that in the Uzbek proverb, the traditional and in the Irish proverb, the general moral context is at the center.

"Hovli olma, qo'shni ol" → "Choose your neighbors before your house,"

The Uzbek proverb "Hovli olma, qo'shni ol" expresses how important neighborliness is in our national culture. In Uzbek society, a neighbor is perceived not only as a person living nearby, but also as an integral part of life, an assistant, sympathizer, and sometimes as a family member. In English culture, however, this concept is interpreted quite differently. The English proverb "Good fences make good neighbors" is a clear example of this. He emphasizes that to maintain peace and respect between people, it is necessary to protect a certain distance, personal territory. Therefore, this Uzbek proverb can be perceived unusual in the English cultural context. It is difficult to fully convey this difference in translation. Therefore, instead of literal translation (Do not buy a house, buy a neighbor) it is advisable to use the equivalent (equivalence) or functional (functional equivalence) translation strategy. If we translate it as "Choose your neighbors before your house," In this strategy, the translator abandons literal translation and instead strives to preserve the meaning and cultural content of the original text. That is, the content, not the words, is translated. In English, there is a phrase "Choose your neighbors before your house," which, like the Uzbek proverb, conveys the idea that "surroundings are more important than a place to live."

"Ko'rpangga qarab oyoq uzat" → "Cut your coat according to your cloth". The Uzbek proverb "Ko'rpangga qarab oyoq uzat" is expressed in English as "Cut your coat according to your cloth." Both mean the same thing - the idea of not working beyond one's capabilities, living in accordance with existing conditions. The difference is that in the Uzbek language the meaning is expressed by the image of a "Ko'rp (blanket)" and in the English language by the image of a "cloth". In this case, the translation employs a "cultural equivalence strategy", meaning that the meaning is preserved and expressed by a specific cultural element of each language.

"Harakatda baraka" → "Practise makes perfect"

The Uzbek proverb "Harakatda baraka" means that blessings and success can be achieved through action, work, and diligence. In a literal translation ("There is blessing in action"), this proverb does not sound natural in English, and the concept of "blessing" may be unfamiliar to the English reader. Therefore, the proverb "Practice makes perfect" was chosen. This translation expresses the main content of the original proverb in English in a natural and understandable way, preserving diligence and the effectiveness of action. Still, "some phraseological units, folk proverbs, and figurative expressions may be lost or become moderate in the translation. Because such units are closely related to national culture, it is not easy to find an alternative in another language" (Khalimova N.A. 2024).

Conclusion. This study analyzed the cultural differences arising in the process of translating Uzbek and English proverbs and strategies for their elimination. The analysis showed that the literal approach in the translation of proverbs is often insufficient in conveying cultural content, therefore such strategies as functional equivalence, cultural substitution, and descriptive translation are more effective. Also, the translation of proverbs requires not only linguistic knowledge, but also the translator's cultural sensitivity and the ability to correctly understand the context. The research results showed that the translator needs to choose an appropriate strategy, taking into account the differences between Uzbek and English cultures. Thus, the original meaning, national character, and pragmatic function of the proverb are preserved. In general, the translation of proverbs is a complex and

relevant field in translation studies, which shows that it directly depends on the translator's cultural competence and the correct choice of translation strategies. The research results can serve as a

basis for the development of more effective methodologies for the translation of proverbs and phraseological units in the future.

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