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“IDIOMS WITH THE COMPONENT “HEAD” AND THE PROBLEMS OF THEIR TRANSLATION (AN ANALYSIS BASED ON TRANSLATION STRATEGIES)”

Annotation

This article examines idiomatic expressions in English and Uzbek, including the component "head/bosh," focusing on the linguistic and cultural challenges encountered during translation. The study conducts a comparative analysis based on three major translation strategies: literal translation, equivalent substitution, and descriptive (explanatory) translation. In this case, each approach is demonstrated by examples of its advantages and disadvantages. Of special focus is a further examination of how the translation of idioms captures their semantic depth, connotative nuances, culture-specific features, and cultural distinctiveness. Results indicate that the preservation of meaning using equivalent expressions is achieved most effectively, while cultural differences are best explained using descriptive translation. This paper is significant in terms of translation theory, phraseology, and linguacultural approaches.

Key words: Idiomatic expressions, phraseological units, head-related idioms, translation strategies, literal translation, equivalent substitution, descriptive translation, linguacultural differences, semantic equivalence, pragmatic translation.

“ИДИОМЫ С КОМПОНЕНТОМ “ГОЛОВА” И ПРОБЛЕМЫ ИХ ПЕРЕВОДА (АНАЛИЗ НА ОСНОВЕ ПЕРЕВОДЧЕСКИХ СТРАТЕГИЙ)”

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматриваются идиоматические выражения в английском и узбекском языках, содержащие компонент "head/bosh", с акцентом на лингвистические и культурные трудности, возникающие при их переводе. Исследование представляет собой сравнительный анализ, основанный на трех основных переводческих стратегиях: дословный перевод, эквивалентная замена и описательный (объяснительный) перевод. Каждая стратегия иллюстрируется примерами с указанием ее достоинств и недостатков. Особое внимание уделяется анализу того, насколько перевод идиом способен передать их семантическую глубину, коннотативные оттенки и культурную специфику. Результаты показывают, что наиболее эффективно сохраняется значение при использовании эквивалентных выражений, в то время как культурные различия лучше всего передаются с помощью описательного перевода. Данная работа имеет важное значение с точки зрения теории перевода, фразеологии и лингвокультурологических подходов.

Ключевые слова: Идиоматические выражения, фразеологические единицы, идиомы с компонентом "голова", переводческие стратегии, дословный перевод, эквивалентная замена, описательный (пояснительный) перевод, лингвокультурные различия, семантическое соответствие, прагматический перевод.

“BOSH” KOMPONENTLI IDIOMALAR VA ULARNING TARJIMA MUAMMOLARI (TARJIMAVIY STRATEGIYALAR ASOSIDA TAHLIL)

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o'zbek tillaridagi "head/bosh" komponentiga ega bo'lgan idiomatik ifodalar tahlil qilinadi hamda ularni tarjima qilishda uchraydigan lingvistik va madaniy qiyinchiliklarga e'tibor qaratiladi. Tadqiqotda uchta asosiy tarjima strategiyasi – so'zma-so'z tarjima, ekvivalent almashtirish va tavsiflovchi (izohli) tarjima – asosida qiyosiy tahlil o'tkaziladi. Har bir yondashuv misollar yordamida yoritilib, uning afzallik va kamchiliklari ko'rsatib beriladi. Ayniqsa, idiomalarning tarjimasi orqali ularning semantik chuqurligi, konnotativ nozikliklari va madaniyatga xos xususiyatlarini qanday aks ettirish mumkinligi alohida tahlil qilinadi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, ekvivalent ifodalar orqali ma'noni saqlab qolish eng samarali strategiya hisoblanadi, madaniy tafovutlarni tushuntirishda esa izohli tarjima eng yaxshi usul sifatida namoyon bo'ladi. Mazkur maqola tarjima nazariyasi, frazeologiya hamda lingvokulturologik yondashuvlar nuqtai nazaridan muhim ahamiyatga ega.

Kalit so'zlar: Idiomatik iboralar, frazeologik birliklar, "Bosh" komponentli idiomalar, tarjima strategiyalari, so'zma-so'z tarjima, ekvivalent almashtirish, izohli (tavsiflovchi) tarjima, lingvokulturologik tafovutlar, semantik muvofiqlik, pragmatik tarjima.

Introduction. Idioms (phraseological units) are stable combinations of words that, as a whole, convey a figurative meaning. The purpose of this article is to analyze idiomatic expressions containing the component "head/bosh" and evaluate the most effective translation strategies across English and Uzbek languages. Translating idioms presents a complex issue for linguists, as literal translation usually leads to inaccurate outcomes. Idioms carry both semantic meaning and

stylistic color, so conveying their meaning requires transferring not just lexical content, but also contextual and cultural significance.

Particularly, idioms containing the word "head" (in English) or "bosh" (in Uzbek) -known as somatic idioms - are semantically distinct and often express states of thought or emotion. These somatic idioms are grounded in conceptual metaphors, where body parts like the head represent mental functions – a model

explored by Lakoff and Johnson (1980)[1]. Sapayeva (2023) explains that such idioms reflect a cognitive model where the 'head' metaphorically represents intellect, perception, and human mental experience in both languages[2]. For instance, the Uzbek expression "boshi osmonda" means "extremely happy" and the English proverb to lose one's head translates into "to lose one's composure or become panicked". Being non-lexical, idioms do not get their meaning from the meanings of individual words, and so, translation strategies have to be taken that are more specialized. If culture, imagery, and specific meanings are forgotten, then the fundamental meaning of an idiom will run astray or be misinterpreted. Consequently, idioms with the "head" part should be transcribed as a result of deep semantic and pragmatic analyses that were needed.

Methodology. This research is based on qualitative comparative analysis. It analyzes idiomatic occurrences sampled from English and Uzbek texts, bilingual dictionaries, Uzbek-English translations, and phraseological sources, containing the structure "head/bosh" lemma. The analysis focuses on the semantic and pragmatic shifts occurring during translation, and the study compares the effectiveness of three primary translation strategies: literal translation, equivalent substitution, and descriptive (explanatory) translation. Translation in Literal (the translator renders each word in its own dictionary meaning), although quick, it often results in superficial translations that cause semantic ambiguity or confusion.

Equivalent substitution. In this method, the translator looks for a culturally and contextually appropriate idiom in the target language that conveys the same meaning. If an exact equivalent is unavailable, a near-synonymous phrase is used. Its goal is to keep the initial look and feel of the imagery.

Descriptive (explanatory) translation - used where the target language does not have the equivalent of a direct translation. This is paraphrased, footnoted, or parenthesized with an explicit note to the idiom in question when this occurs. Though this method sacrifices the original wording and phrasing, it guarantees that everyone will know what you mean. Idioms were analyzed in isolation from the context of the original and then compared across 3 strategies. Each approach was debated with illustrations of advantages and disadvantages. These strategies reflect Baker's (1992) categorization, where translators choose procedures depending on genre, cultural proximity, and the idiom's communicative function[3]. This includes bilingual idiom dictionaries from the source (text or language), and some academic papers, translations of literary works. The semantic accuracy and reader comprehensibility for each of the strategies were evaluated as indicators of effectiveness.

Results. **Literal Translation:** The study indicated that idiomatic translation often ends in disaster. For example, the Uzbek idiom "bosh(ning) bulutlarda" can be translated to "head in the clouds" in English, which hardly makes any sense to the readers of Uzbek. The real meaning is, it should convey "to be daydreaming" literally. In a similar manner, the translation of Uzbek "boshi berk ko'cha" literally to English gives "closed head street" which is not only awkward but meaningless. Real meaning: "a futile or nowhere place." While literal has the advantage of quick and convenient translation will most likely carry semantic errors or pragmatic confusion. It can also be misunderstood, or the meaning of the idiom can be lost completely. Obviously, literal translation is fine only when the idiom is structurally and semantically identical in both languages.

Equivalent Translation: Idioms are best translated by looking for a phrasal equivalent in the target language. The approach thus retains the imagery and emotional nuances of the idiom

intact. For instance, the Uzbek idiom "boshi osmonda" may be equivalent to the English "over the moon" because both convey the same level of joy. Hence, "Boshim osmonda yuribdi" naturally equals "over the moon" exactly. Likewise, the English idiom "keep one's head" (staying calm during a difficult or dangerous situation) is not translated into Uzbek as "boshini saqlab qolmoq" but can be subtly communicated with a saying like "o'zini yo'qotmaslik" or "boshqaruvni qo'ldan bermaslik." According to the Farlex Idioms Dictionary (2024), "to keep one's head" means "to remain calm, sensible, and in control of one's emotions during a crisis"[4].

In this case, the source idiom substitution strategy works fine, replacing your source idiom with a culturally and semantically proper expression for the target language. This serves not only to keep the stylistic or functional, if you prefer, of the idiom but also its emotional influence. The goodness of this strategy is that it captures the authenticity and cultural primacy of the original text. In reality, not every translation can have an exact equivalent. In some cases, there is no matching idiom in the target language (if it means the same), or the closest equivalent has a different connotation. The Uzbek idiom "bir yostiqqa bosh qo'ymoq" ("to live for a lifetime"), which means to get married or similar, does not have a 100% accurate English equivalent. It may be translated as "to tie the knot" or "to grow old together," which are freer translations. Overall, where equivalents exist, this strategy ensures accuracy and naturalness. Yet it demands extensive linguistic resources and intercultural knowledge from the translator.

Descriptive Translation: In some cases, explaining the idiom's meaning in plain language is the most practical solution. When no strong or concise equivalent is available, translators can use descriptive translation. For example, the English idiom "head over heels in love" cannot be rendered literally in Uzbek as "boshliq oyog'i bilan sevib qolmoq." Instead, it can be translated as "o'ta mahliyo bo'lib qolgan" (deeply in love). Similarly, the Uzbek idiom "boshi berk ko'chaga kirib qolmoq" can be rendered in English as "to end up in a dead-end situation (a situation with no exit)," with a short explanation in parentheses. The strength of descriptive translation lies in its clarity. The reader understands the idiom's meaning even without prior cultural knowledge. This is particularly useful in scientific or technical texts where meaning takes priority over style. However, the downside is that such translation may reduce expressiveness and stylistic elegance. In literary works or live speech, explaining every idiom may affect fluency and distract readers from the main narrative. Nevertheless, for unfamiliar or culturally dense idioms, explanatory translation is often the safest route to avoid misinterpretation or pragmatic failure. As Newmark (1988) suggests, descriptive translation offers clarity when literal or equivalent forms are unavailable, ensuring communicative success over stylistic precision[5].

The study observed that translators frequently used this method when no equivalent was found by adding short clarifications or notes to make the idiom's meaning accessible. For example, the Uzbek sentence "Xalq orasida falonchi boshi kaltak yegan degan gap yuradi" was translated into English as "People say that he 'had his head beaten', meaning he was severely scolded." The idiom's meaning was clarified, although some imagery from the original expression was inevitably lost. These examples highlight the practical outcomes of each strategy. In summary, literal translation is only suitable for the most basic and matching expressions. Equivalent translation is the most effective for preserving meaning and tone, while descriptive translation serves as a necessary fallback when no equivalent is available.

Discussion. When considering various linguistic strategies for translation, the translator must account for factors such as genre, intended audience, and cultural milieu. While achieving idiomatic similarity is ideal, the divergent phrasal patterns in English and Uzbek frequently necessitate imaginative workarounds. For instance, many idioms about “head/bosh” reference cognition in both tongues, but their formulations and visions often differ substantially. According to Narzullayeva (2022), literal translation is mostly ineffective for idioms because it fails to retain both the emotional and semantic nuances of expressions, especially culturally bound units[6]. To bridge cultural gaps, a translator may need to transform an idiom semantically, conveying the meaning through different imagery. In such cases, achieving pragmatic equivalence is essential: the goal is to evoke the same emotional and cognitive reaction in the reader as the original expression does.

For example, the Uzbek idiom “boshi ko'kka yetdi” (literally, “his head reached the sky”, meaning “he was very happy”) can be translated as “he was on cloud nine” in English. This way, the feeling of happiness is conveyed through familiar imagery. Similarly, the idiom “bosh qotirmoq” (to think hard, to struggle with a problem) can be translated as “to rack one’s brains”, a very common English expression with the same meaning. These examples show that a translator must be well-versed not only in two languages but also in two cultures, a kind of biculturalism that complements bilingualism. It is no coincidence that experts often claim, “In a good translation, cultural knowledge outweighs linguistic competence.”

However, even an experienced translator may occasionally struggle to find an exact idiomatic equivalent that captures all layers of meaning. In such cases, a combined strategy may be employed, for example, partially translating the idiom idiomatically and partially providing an explanation. In literary translations, to preserve the author's stylistic nuances, the translator might first render the idiom literally, followed immediately by a brief explanation. This helps the reader become familiar with an unfamiliar cultural image while also understanding its meaning. Of course, this method can sometimes compromise the text's conciseness, especially in fiction, but it remains useful when interpreting cultural allusions.

Idiom translation pragmatic risk: choosing the wrong equivalent. One of the major pragmatic risks of idioms translation could be substitution of an idiom with another similar one, as a result, it does not always match the tone or stylistic register. “Boshiga balo ortmoq” – “to bring trouble upon oneself works” as a translation; however, to paraphrase it word-for-word, “load trouble upon your own head” would sound unnatural and opaque for an English reader.

Balancing semantic precision with pragmatic effectiveness is therefore one of the translator's main challenges. Literalism, translating idioms word-for-word (a

calque approach), rarely achieves communicative goals. At the same time, completely omitting an idiom can strip the text of richness and alter the author's tone. Our research shows that most translators follow this principle: when an idiomatic counterpart exists, use it; if not, paraphrase or provide an explanation. This strategy often proves effective. Of course, like all creative processes, translation resists rigid formulas. A translator's task is to seek the version that most faithfully conveys the spirit and intent of the original text. The ultimate goal is to reproduce, in the target language reader, the same understanding and emotional resonance experienced by readers of the original.

Conclusion. The findings of this study on translating idioms containing the component “bosh” (head) demonstrate that each case requires an individual approach. The key conclusions are as follows:

Literal translation is usually unsatisfactory, as idioms tend to lose or distort their meaning when translated word-for-word. If a translator chooses to translate an expression literally, they must first ensure that it conveys the same meaning in both languages. If not, it is better to abandon literalism altogether.

Using an equivalent idiom is the most effective strategy. It maintains both the semantic essence and the affective baggage of the original text. The translator needs to have the idiomatic assets of the target language, he/she must have a phrase list and choose the most fitting variant. Quality: When the right translation shows up, translation absorbs automatically, naturally, but the reader gets its meaning without actually sensing an idiom.

A direct equivalent cannot be seen when an explanatory translation turns out to be the best option. In these kinds of scenarios, the translator will offer a very short gloss within the text or at the end of a literal translation, or sometimes in a footnote. This rendering more accurately describes the sense but sacrifices the figurative richness of the source. Thus, in literary translation, an equivalent should always be preferred, with only in scientific or technical texts explanatory notes being more accepted.

In conclusion, translating idiomatic expressions is a complicated solution by linguistic riddle. The translator has to do it all technically at once as a multi-disciplinary researcher. Every type of example has a different way - for example, when “head” is the part of the idiom, we have two approaches, maybe a direct translation fits in some instances, and is complete in some other instances. The main suggestion is to interpret each idiom, connotative meaning, and communicative function, and then convey it in the most proper and effective way that matches the target language capability.

Essentially, it will not be the words alone but the words and spirit they contain. A perceptive translator needs to be both adaptive and pragmatic: sometimes to let the idiom “go free” to transfer across borders and, other times, “take it by the hand” across those linguistic crotches.

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