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THE ROLE OF TRANSFORMATIONS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN ACHIEVING PHRASEOLOGICAL EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATION BETWEEN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract: Phraseological equivalence is a complex problem of translation because fixed expressions combine denotative meaning with conventional imagery, pragmatic force, cultural associations, and stylistic value. This article investigates the role of lexical, grammatical, semantic, and stylistic transformations in English-Uzbek phraseological translation and evaluates the effectiveness of combined translation procedures. The research is based on comparative, contextual, semantic, and functional analysis of selected English phraseological units and proverbs together with their Uzbek correspondences. The findings show that formal similarity is not a sufficient criterion of adequacy. Effective phraseological translation depends on preservation of contextual meaning, conformity with Uzbek grammatical and phraseological norms, pragmatic correspondence, and stylistic appropriateness.

Lexical and semantic transformations are especially productive where the two languages conventionalize comparable meanings through different lexical components or figurative images, whereas grammatical transformations are required by structural differences between English and Uzbek. Combined procedures become necessary when several types of asymmetry occur simultaneously. The study concludes that transformation is not a departure from equivalence but a systematic means of achieving it when direct correspondence is linguistically or culturally inadequate.

Keywords: phraseological equivalence, translation transformation, lexical transformation, grammatical transformation, semantic transformation, stylistic transformation, combined translation procedures, proverb, English, Uzbek.

Introduction

Phraseological units constitute a particularly demanding area of translation because their meaning is often conventionalized above the level of the individual word. Baker treats idioms and fixed expressions within equivalence above word level and emphasizes that their lexical restrictions and non-compositional meanings may prevent direct substitution of separate components [1]. This observation is central to English-Uzbek translation: an expression may be grammatically interpretable after literal transfer and still fail to function as an idiomatic Uzbek unit.



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Translation theory provides several complementary explanations for the transformations required in such cases. Vinay and Darbelnet distinguish procedures including transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation, thereby showing that changes in grammatical category, conceptual perspective, and conventional expression can be systematic translation solutions [2]. Newmark likewise describes functional and descriptive procedures as legitimate means of transferring meaning when direct lexical or cultural correspondence is unavailable [3]. Nida and Taber emphasize restructuring and receptor-oriented equivalence, which shifts attention from formal replication to communicative effectiveness [4].

Structural differences between languages also explain why formal correspondence cannot always be maintained. Catford's theory of translation shifts describes departures from formal correspondence that occur when equivalent relations must be expressed through different linguistic structures [5]. For English and Uzbek, this issue is especially relevant because English is predominantly analytic, whereas Uzbek is agglutinative and organizes grammatical relations through a different system of suffixation and word order. Phraseological translation therefore involves not only lexical choice but also structural accommodation.

A functional perspective further requires attention to context and register. House relates translation quality to textual function and situational parameters rather than to isolated lexical matching [6]. Munday, Ramos Pinto, and Blakesley present equivalence, shifts, functional approaches, discourse, and cultural factors as interconnected dimensions of translation analysis [7]. Taken together, these approaches support the view that phraseological equivalence is multidimensional: semantic content, idiomatic conventionality, pragmatic effect, grammatical acceptability, and stylistic value must be considered jointly.

Phraseological translation between English and Uzbek involves a complex interaction of linguistic form, figurative meaning, contextual function, and cultural convention. Structural differences between the two languages may influence the grammatical organization of an expression, while differences in lexical compatibility and figurative representation may require modification at the semantic or stylistic level. Consequently, phraseological equivalence cannot be evaluated solely through formal correspondence. Greater attention should be given to whether the translated unit preserves the intended meaning, communicative function, idiomatic character, and stylistic value of the original expression.

Materials and Methods

The research material consists of selected English phraseological units and proverbs together with their conventional or contextually appropriate Uzbek correspondences. The selected units represent different degrees of phraseological equivalence, including expressions with closely corresponding imagery, expressions requiring lexical or grammatical modification, and expressions whose Uzbek equivalents convey the same communicative meaning through different figurative images. The analysis is limited to English-Uzbek phraseological correspondences and focuses on the linguistic transformations required to preserve their semantic, structural, and pragmatic features.

Four complementary methods are applied. The comparative method identifies similarities and differences in lexical composition, grammatical structure, figurative organization, and communicative function. Contextual analysis determines the meaning activated by an expression in discourse and prevents the selection of an equivalent on the basis of an isolated dictionary gloss. Semantic analysis establishes the invariant or contextually relevant meaning that must be preserved. Functional analysis evaluates whether the Uzbek rendering performs a comparable pragmatic and stylistic role.

The analytical procedure follows three stages. First, the semantic nucleus and pragmatic function of the English unit are identified. Second, the Uzbek correspondence is examined for lexical, grammatical, figurative, and stylistic compatibility. Third, the operation required to account for the difference is classified as lexical, grammatical, semantic, stylistic, or combined. A transformation is considered effective when it preserves the contextually relevant meaning, conforms to Uzbek linguistic norms, maintains an appropriate pragmatic effect, and does not introduce unjustified stylistic amplification. Translation transformations may occur separately or in combination. When lexical replacement is accompanied by grammatical restructuring, semantic modification, or stylistic adaptation, the translation is analyzed as a combined procedure [2].

Results and Discussion

The analysis demonstrates that lexical transformation is necessary when the direct dictionary equivalent of a source component does not participate in the conventional Uzbek phraseological pattern. English “to add fuel to the fire” is naturally rendered as Uzbek “olovga moy sepmoq.” The replacement of fuel by moy is phraseologically motivated: the lexical component changes, but the metaphor of intensifying an already problematic situation and its negative evaluation are retained. This supports Baker's observation that an idiom may be translated by an idiom of similar meaning but different form when target-language phraseology requires another lexical realization [1].

A more extensive lexical and cultural replacement occurs in “when pigs fly” → “tuyaning dumi yerga tekkanda.” The two expressions share no corresponding lexical components, yet both conventionally express practical impossibility. The Uzbek rendering is therefore not a lexical equivalent in the narrow sense; it is a functional phraseological equivalent. Its effectiveness results from preserving the semantic and pragmatic function while replacing the source image with a conventional target-language image.

Grammatical transformation is required where English phraseological syntax cannot be transferred naturally into Uzbek. In “to keep an eye on somebody” → “ko‘z-quloq bo‘lib turmoq,” the English verb-object construction is replaced by an Uzbek structure containing a paired nominal component and an auxiliary verbal complex. The transformation changes grammatical organization while retaining the function of continued supervision or attention. Such restructuring corresponds to the general concept of translation shift [5].

The expression “My hands are tied” can be rendered as “qo‘lim bog‘liq” when the restriction metaphor remains relevant. In a context that foregrounds inability to act, “qo‘limdan hech narsa kelmaydi” may be more appropriate. The latter solution combines grammatical restructuring with semantic explicitation. The two Uzbek forms are therefore not interchangeable in every context: the first preserves figurative structure more closely, whereas the second makes the practical implication explicit.

Semantic transformation becomes necessary when English and Uzbek encode a comparable evaluation through different figurative models. English “a storm in a teacup” may correspond functionally to Uzbek “pashshadan fil yasamoq” in contexts referring to disproportionate exaggeration. The English image represents a large disturbance within a small space; the Uzbek image represents the enlargement of something insignificant. The conceptual scenes differ, but the evaluative relation is comparable. This is a case of modulation and functional phraseological substitution rather than literal equivalence [2].

Where an established idiomatic equivalent is unavailable or contextually unsuitable, descriptive rendering can preserve the situational meaning. Thus, “to break the ice” may be explicated as “suhbatni boshlab, noqulaylikni yo‘qotmoq” in a neutral context. The solution is semantically transparent but reduces figurative compactness. Newmark's account of descriptive and functional procedures explains why such a rendering can be justified when direct phraseological correspondence is absent [3]. Its effectiveness, however, depends on genre: in expressive literary discourse the loss of imagery may require compensation.

Stylistic transformation is required when an expression carries a marked register or expressive force. The colloquial “spill the beans” can be rendered as “sirni ochib qo‘ymoq.” Although the source metaphor is not retained, the target expression preserves the act of disclosing concealed information and remains less formal than a purely explanatory equivalent. Translation quality in such cases depends on the relation between linguistic choice and contextual function [6].

The expression “once in a blue moon” may be translated as “onda-sonda” or “juda kamdan-kam.” Both renderings preserve the semantic feature of rarity but neutralize the unusual source image. In informational discourse this stylistic reduction may be acceptable, whereas a literary context may require a more expressive solution or compensation. The result confirms that semantic correspondence alone is insufficient when phraseology contributes materially to voice or rhetorical texture.

Combined procedures are especially productive where several kinds of asymmetry overlap. “To kill two birds with one stone” → “bir o‘q bilan ikki quyonni urmoq” retains the numerical relation and basic conceptual structure but changes the animal component and adapts the expression morphologically and syntactically to Uzbek. The result involves lexical substitution together with grammatical adjustment. Because the central metaphorical logic remains recognizable, a complete reformulation is unnecessary.

The proverb data reveal a similar continuum of correspondence. “Better late than never” → “Hechdan ko‘ra kech yaxshi” and “Strike while the iron is hot” →

“Temirni qizig‘ida bos” display a high degree of semantic and figurative similarity. In the latter pair, the main differences are morphological and syntactic, while the conceptual image and communicative instruction remain stable. This shows that typological difference between the languages does not always require radical transformation.

“Speech is silver, but silence is gold” → “So‘z kumush, sukut oltin” preserves the metaphor and evaluative hierarchy while becoming structurally more compact in Uzbek. The overt copular relation of English need not be expressed in the same way in Uzbek. The resulting omission is grammatical rather than semantic and illustrates how structural economy can strengthen target-language naturalness without reducing proverbial meaning.

A greater degree of restructuring occurs in “Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today” → “Bugungi ishni ertaga qo‘yma.” The English proverb explicitly contains a subordinate construction referring to what can be done today, whereas the Uzbek proverb condenses the same instruction into a shorter imperative. The translation therefore combines grammatical compression with semantic condensation while preserving the didactic function.

Functional equivalence is particularly evident in “If you run after two hares, you will catch neither” → “Ikki kemanding boshini tutgan g‘arq bo‘ladi.” The English proverb conceptualizes divided effort through pursuit of two animals, while the Uzbek proverb uses the image of attempting to hold two boats. Both warn against pursuing incompatible aims simultaneously. The correspondence requires lexical replacement, semantic modulation, and cultural adaptation; it is therefore a clear combined procedure.

Taken together, the results show that the appropriate transformation is determined by the location of non-equivalence. Lexical mismatch calls for conventional substitution; structural mismatch requires grammatical restructuring; divergence in figurative conceptualization motivates semantic modulation; and differences in register require stylistic adjustment. When these factors coincide, combined procedures provide the most economical adequate solution. Literal translation remains valid where conventional structure and imagery correspond, but it becomes ineffective when it produces a non-idiomatic or pragmatically misleading target expression.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study confirms that transformations are not secondary corrections applied after translation; they are systematic mechanisms for establishing phraseological equivalence between English and Uzbek. Lexical transformations resolve differences in conventional component selection, grammatical transformations accommodate structural asymmetry, semantic transformations reconstruct meaning where figurative models diverge, and stylistic transformations preserve register and expressive value. Combined procedures are required when several levels of non-equivalence interact within the same unit.

The findings also demonstrate that phraseological equivalence should be evaluated functionally. Formal similarity is valuable only when it produces an

idiomatic and contextually appropriate Uzbek expression. A formally distant target unit may provide stronger equivalence if it preserves the semantic nucleus, pragmatic purpose, conventionality, and stylistic level of the source. Conversely, unnecessary transformation should be avoided when a close and natural correspondence already exists.

For translation practice, it is recommended that the translator first establish the contextual meaning and discourse function of the complete phraseological unit, then verify whether Uzbek has a conventional equivalent, and only afterward determine the minimum transformation required. Full or close equivalents should be preferred when they are natural; functional substitution should be used when conventional images differ; descriptive rendering should be reserved for cases in which an idiomatic counterpart is unavailable or unsuitable. Further research can strengthen these conclusions through corpus-based analysis of published English-Uzbek translations across literary, journalistic, and audiovisual genres.

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