

THE TRANSLATION OF SOMATIC PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract

The present article explores the challenges and strategies involved in translating somatic phraseological units (SPUs) between English and Uzbek. SPUs are idiomatic expressions involving body parts such as “head,” “eye,” “heart,” and “hand,” which reflect figurative meanings rooted in culture and cognition. This study analyzes linguistic, cultural, and semantic features of SPUs and examines equivalence, adaptation, and loss of meaning in translation. Comparative examples are provided to highlight translation difficulties and propose solutions for effective cross-linguistic rendering. The article presents theoretical ideas in this regard and proves them with examples.

Keywords: Somatic idioms, phraseology, translation, equivalence, English, Uzbek, figurative language, cultural linguistics.

Introduction

Translation of idiomatic expressions remains one of the most complex aspects of cross-cultural communication, particularly when dealing with somatic phraseological units (SPUs)—idioms that incorporate human body parts as metaphorical elements. These expressions often carry deep cultural significance, making their direct translation problematic.

In both English and Uzbek, SPUs are frequently used in daily speech and literature, expressing emotional, psychological, or social states metaphorically. The goal of this article is to analyze how such expressions are translated between English and Uzbek, what problems arise in preserving their meaning, and which strategies are most effective in idiomatic translation.

The Nature of Somatic Phraseological Units

Somatic phraseological units are combinations of words that involve a part of the human body and convey a figurative meaning that goes beyond the literal. For example:

English: to lose one's head – to act irrationally.

Uzbek: boshini yo'qotmoq – to become confused or overwhelmed.

Such idioms exist in almost every language, though their forms and meanings are not always equivalent. This is due to differences in cultural metaphor, historical context, and conceptual worldview.

Translation Challenges of SPUs

Translating SPUs presents several key challenges:



Lack of Direct Equivalents

Many SPUs in one language do not have precise equivalents in the other.

English: to get cold feet – to suddenly become afraid or hesitant.

Uzbek: No direct equivalent; closest paraphrase: qo‘rqib qolmoq, jur’ati yetmaslik.

Cultural Mismatch

SPUs may carry cultural connotations unfamiliar to the target audience.

Uzbek: bosh egmoq (to bow one’s head in respect or submission) — lacks a common English idiomatic equivalent.

Semantic Loss

Literal translation often leads to a loss of figurative meaning or may sound odd:

Literal: He got cold feet → Uning oyoqlari sovuq bo‘ldi (nonsensical in Uzbek).

Proper: U oxirgi daqiqada cho‘chib qoldi.

Strategies for Translating SPUs

To overcome translation challenges, several strategies are recommended:

Using Equivalent Idioms

Where available, semantic equivalents should be used.

English	Uzbek	Meaning
to lose one’s temper	jahlini yo‘qotmoq	become angry
to open one’s heart	yuragini ochmoq	to share feelings

Paraphrasing

If no idiomatic equivalent exists, the idea can be paraphrased.

to pull someone’s leg → hazillashmoq, hazil qilib aldamoq.

Literal Translation + Explanation

In academic or literary translation, idioms may be translated literally and then explained in a footnote or glossary.

to wash one’s hands of something → qo‘lini yuvdi (metaphorically) – needs explanation: distancing oneself from responsibility.

Domestication or Adaptation

Adapting the idiom to fit cultural norms of the target language.

English: to bury the hatchet → Uzbek: yarashmoq, or dushmanchilikni unutmoq.

Comparative Examples and Analysis

Let us examine some SPUs in both languages, illustrating challenges and translation solutions:

English Idiom	Literal Meaning	Uzbek Equivalent	Strategy
to bite one’s tongue	to remain silent	tilini tishlab turmoq	equivalent
heart of stone	no empathy	yuragi tosh	equivalent
to keep an eye on	to watch closely	ko‘z-quloq bo‘lmoq	close equivalent
to have a big mouth	talk too much	og‘zi bo‘sh	equivalent
to stick one’s nose into	to interfere	burnini suqmoq	equivalent
cold feet	sudden fear	jur’ati yetmaslik	paraphrase

These examples reveal that while many SPUs can be translated idiomatically, others require modification to retain meaning and stylistic nuance.

Implications for Translation Practice and Language Learning

In Translation Practice



Professional translators must:

Recognize idioms as fixed expressions;

Understand cultural context;

Apply the right strategy depending on text type (literary, journalistic, conversational).

In Language Teaching

For Uzbek learners of English (and vice versa):

Idioms should be taught with context and visual/metaphorical support;

Bilingual idiom dictionaries and contrastive studies are essential;

Teachers should raise awareness of cultural metaphor.

Conclusion

Translating somatic phraseological units between English and Uzbek is a complex but enriching linguistic task. It requires not only lexical competence but also cultural sensitivity and metaphorical thinking. A successful translation preserves both the semantic essence and the cultural flavor of the original idiom. Understanding SPUs and their translation contributes to deeper intercultural communication and enhanced linguistic fluency in both languages.

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