

# TRANSLATION STRATEGIES OF IDIOMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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**Abstract.** *This article examines the strategies employed in translating English idioms into Uzbek and vice versa, drawing on established theoretical frameworks and empirical findings in translation studies and contrastive linguistics. The study identifies common translation difficulties, evaluates the effectiveness of frequently used strategies, and discusses their pedagogical implications for foreign language teaching. The findings indicate that equivalence-based translation, paraphrasing, cultural substitution, and dynamic equivalence are the most common strategies, though certain idioms necessitate creative adaptation to preserve their pragmatic effect.*

**Keywords:** *idioms, translation strategies, English Uzbek translation, dynamic equivalence, cultural substitution, contrastive linguistics.*

## INTRODUCTION.

Idioms—fixed expressions whose meaning cannot be deduced from the literal meanings of their components—pose a perennial challenge in translation. When translating between English and Uzbek, translators must grapple not only with lexical and syntactic non-equivalence but also with cultural nuances, connotative meanings, and pragmatic effects. In a lingvodidaktika (language didactics) context, understanding and teaching idiomatic translation is especially important: learners of English (or Uzbek) often struggle to interpret or produce idioms, and without effective strategy, meaning can be lost or misrepresented.

Translation theory offers several frameworks for handling idioms, from Eugene Nida’s dynamic vs. formal equivalence to sense-for-sense translation, paraphrase, and cultural substitution. But theory alone is insufficient: practical studies of English–Uzbek idiom translation reveal specific patterns, difficulties, and strategies tailored to these languages’ linguistic and cultural structures.

**Methodology and literature review.** This research is based on a qualitative literature review combined with contrastive analysis of empirical studies. Key sources include peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, and dissertations that focus on English–Uzbek idiom translation. For analysis, I selected studies that explicitly discuss strategies (e.g., paraphrase, equivalence, substitution) and challenges in translating idioms, such as: Shakhzod Turaev’s thesis on the difficulties and strategies in translating English idioms into Uzbek [5]. Ozoda Eshmurodova’s analysis of translation subtleties in English and Uzbek idioms [11]. Laylo Azimova’s contrastive study of idiomatic expressions in both languages [8]. Khursandoy Geldiyeva’s paper on adaptation and equivalence issues [3]. Comparative linguistic research by Guzal Djumaeva on semantic and cultural features of idioms [9]. Practical problems in equivalence from Go’zal Nurmatova & Doniyor Yusupov [10].

**Results:** From the literature, the following translation strategies emerge as commonly used and effective in the English–Uzbek idiom context:

- *Literal translation (word for word):* Some idioms are translated nearly literally when their components map reasonably well into Uzbek. However, this often fails when cultural meaning is essential;
- *Paraphrase / sense for sense translation:* Translators restate the meaning of the idiom rather than translating it directly, preserving semantic content at the cost of structural form. This is widely used;

- *Cultural (or pragmatic) substitution*: Idioms are replaced by an equivalent expression in the target language that carries similar connotative or cultural force.
- *Descriptive translation (explicitation)*: When no idiomatic equivalent exists in the target language, translators may describe the meaning, sometimes adding a short explanation.
- *Dynamic equivalence*: Inspired by Nida's theory, this strategy seeks functional equivalence, prioritizing response in the target-language audience.
- *Creative adaptation / metaphor mapping*: For highly figurative idioms, translators may recreate a metaphor or adapt it creatively to preserve effect, even if wording changes.
- *Omission or neutralization*: In cases where idiom meaning is too foreign or untranslatable, translators sometimes neutralize figurative force, using a more general phrase.

These strategies are not mutually exclusive; many translators combine them depending on context, audience, and purpose.

**Discussion and Analysis.** Translation of idioms between English and Uzbek demands a sensitive balancing act between fidelity to the source text and readability or acceptability in the target language. One of the most frequently used strategies, paraphrase or sense-for-sense translation, addresses exactly this tension. By restating the idiomatic meaning rather than slavishly translating each word, paraphrase preserves the semantic core while avoiding awkwardness or loss of intended sense in Uzbek [7].

Dynamic equivalence, rooted in Nida's translation theory, is especially valuable in idiomatic translation. Under this strategy, the goal is to evoke a similar response in the target audience as the original text would in its audience. Because idioms are emotionally or pragmatically charged, preserving their effect may be more important than preserving their formal structure. This aligns with findings in Shakhzod Turaev's thesis, where strategies such as paraphrasing, cultural substitution, and dynamic equivalence were shown to more successfully render English idioms into natural, meaningful Uzbek expressions [5].

However, one challenge of dynamic equivalence is that it may require cultural adaptation—or even substitution—when the idiomatic imagery is deeply rooted in the source culture. Cultural substitution involves replacing an English idiom with an Uzbek idiom that carries a similar conceptual or emotional weight. For instance, if an English idiom refers to a culturally specific animal, object, or phenomenon, a translator might substitute an Uzbek idiom invoking a culturally resonant metaphor.

Creative adaptation or metaphor mapping offers another route. Translators may reimagine the metaphor in the target language using different metaphoric imagery but preserving the idiom's expressive function. In some cases, this can produce a translation that is both idiomatic and culturally resonant. According to Turaev's thesis, metaphor mapping was among the successful strategies when literal equivalents were unavailable [5]. Creative adaptation, however, requires a high degree of linguistic creativity and cultural sensitivity; poor adaptation may distort the original intent or confuse the reader.

Theoretical frameworks such as sense-for-sense translation and dynamic equivalence have limitations. Pure sense-for-sense translation may strip the idiosyncratic flavor or metaphorical density of idioms. Dynamic equivalence may require heavy adaptation that risks departing too far from the source expression. There is no one-size-fits-all strategy: effective translation is context dependent.

In addition, practical challenges remain. Translators may not always have access to native-level cultural insight, and may struggle to find equivalent idioms in the target language. In pedagogical contexts, learners often lack the vocabulary and cultural knowledge to produce or interpret idiomatic substitutions. Therefore, blended teaching methods—combining translation exercises, metalinguistic discussion, and authentic input—are essential.

**Conclusion.** Idioms in English and Uzbek present unique challenges in translation due to their figurative nature, cultural embeddedness, and phraseological rigidity. From a pedagogical perspective, teaching these strategies in foreign language classes supports learners' ability to interpret and produce idiomatic expressions. A contrastive, functional, and context-aware approach—supported by modern digital

resources—is most effective. Specifically, language learners benefit from metalinguistic reflection, corpus-based exercises, and translation tasks that ask them to negotiate meaning across languages and cultures.

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