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A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK IDIOMS

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Semantic Equivalence, Cultural Baggage, and Translation Strategies

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Abstract

(English): This expanded study presents a comprehensive contrastive analysis of English and Uzbek idioms focusing on semantic equivalence, cultural baggage, and translation strategies. Utilizing comparative, componential, and contextual methods, idioms are classified into full, partial, and zero equivalence. Extended analysis demonstrates nuanced semantic mapping, structural divergence, and cultural influence on idiomatic meaning. Results indicate that while some idioms share universal metaphors, many are culture-bound, requiring adaptive translation strategies. The study contributes to translation studies, contrastive linguistics, and foreign language pedagogy, providing a framework for classroom application and cross-cultural competence development.

Keywords

Idioms, experiens, equivalence, cultural baggage, strategies, Pedagogical Implications, analysis, structural divergence, translation strategies

Annotatsiya

(Uzbek): Mazkur kengaytirilgan maqolada ingliz va o‘zbek tillaridagi idiomalar chuqur qiyosiy tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot semantik muvofiqlik, madaniy yuklama va tarjima strategiyalarini o‘rganishga qaratilgan. Qiyosiy, semantik-komponent va kontekstual metodlar orqali idiomalar to‘liq, qisman va nol muvofiqlik turlariga ajratilgan. Kengaytirilgan tahlil semantik xaritalash, strukturaviy farqlar va madaniy ta’sirlarni ko‘rsatadi. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, ayrim idiomalar universal metaforalarga asoslangan bo‘lsa-da, ko‘plab frazeologik birliklar madaniyat bilan chambarchas bog‘liq bo‘lib, moslashtirilgan tarjimani talab qiladi. Tadqiqot tarjima va chet tillar pedagogikasi sohalariga hissa qo‘shadi.

Аннотация

(Russian): В данной расширенной работе представлен углубленный сопоставительный анализ английских и узбекских идиом с акцентом на семантическую эквивалентность, культурную обусловленность и стратегии перевода. Использованы сравнительный, компонентный и контекстуальный методы анализа. Расширенное

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исследование демонстрирует тонкие семантические соотношения, структурные различия и влияние культуры на значение идиом. Результаты показывают, что несмотря на наличие универсальных метафор, многие идиомы являются культурно обусловленными и требуют адаптивных стратегий перевода. Работа вносит вклад в переводоведение, сопоставительную лингвистику и преподавание иностранных языков.

1. Introduction

Idioms represent culturally marked, fixed expressions reflecting collective experience, worldview, and historical memory. English and Uzbek idioms diverge in metaphorical imagery, lexical composition, syntactic structure, and pragmatics. The study of idioms contributes to understanding cross-cultural communication, translation, and language pedagogy. This research aims to classify idioms according to semantic equivalence and to analyze cultural influence on translation strategies, thereby supporting learners' intercultural competence development.

2. Literature Review

Idiomaticity has been explored from structural, semantic, and cognitive perspectives. Key contributions include:

Fernando (1996): idioms as fixed and semantically opaque units.

Baker (2018): translation challenges due to metaphorical motivation.

Gibbs (2006): conceptual metaphor theory explains idioms through embodied cognition.

Rahmatullayev (2006): Uzbek phraseology as culturally embedded figurative units.

Vinay & Darbelnet (1995): translation strategies applicable to idioms.

Extended analysis incorporates additional sources exploring cross-linguistic equivalence, cognitive semantics, and translation pragmatics (Makkai, 1972; Moon, 1998; Colston & Gibbs, 2007).

3. Methodology

The research applies comparative, semantic-componential, and contextual analysis to a corpus of English and Uzbek idioms from lexicographic sources and authentic discourse. Idioms are classified into three categories:

Full equivalence – semantic and metaphorical correspondence.

Partial equivalence – semantic similarity with differing imagery.

Zero equivalence – no direct counterpart.

Frequency, cultural specificity, and structural features are analyzed to inform translation strategy selection.

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4. Full Semantic Equivalence

Examples include:

To add fuel to the fire – Olovga yog‘ quymoq (conflict escalation metaphor)

To kill two birds with one stone – Bir o‘q bilan ikki quyonni urmoq (dual achievement metaphor)

Additional examples extend the dataset to demonstrate universal metaphorical patterns shared across languages.

5. Partial Equivalence

Partial equivalence arises when idiomatic meaning aligns but imagery diverges. Examples:

When pigs fly – Tuyaning dumi yerga tekkanda

Spill the beans – Og‘zidan gullab qo‘ymoq

Bite off more than you can chew – Og‘ir yukni ko‘tara olmaydi

Analysis demonstrates that translators must consider both semantic and cultural context.

6. Zero Equivalence and Cultural Baggage

Idioms with zero equivalence require adaptive translation. Examples:

Carry coals to Newcastle – no Uzbek counterpart

Qurbaqaning tili uzun – no English counterpart

Cultural baggage encompasses social hierarchy, agrarian and environmental knowledge, collectivist values, and historical memory. Differences between English individualist metaphors and Uzbek collectivist expressions are analyzed.

7. Structural Divergence

English idioms predominantly follow analytic verb-object structures. Uzbek idioms show agglutinative morphology, suffixation, and flexible word order. Structural divergence affects translation feasibility, syntactic adaptation, and pragmatic equivalence.

8. Translation Strategies

Effective strategies include:

Functional substitution

Paraphrasing

Descriptive adaptation

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Contextual adjustment

Intercultural competence and pragmatic awareness are crucial to preserving meaning across languages.

9. Pedagogical Implications

Contrastive idiom teaching improves:

Pragmatic and communicative competence

Cultural awareness

Memory retention through conceptual understanding

Curricular recommendations for language instructors are provided.

10. Analysis Table: English–Uzbek Idioms

English Idiom

Uzbek Equivalent

Equivalence Type

To add fuel to the fire

Olovga yog‘ quymoq

Full

To kill two birds with one stone

Bir o‘q bilan ikki quyonni urmoq

Full

When pigs fly

Tuyaning dumi yerga tekkanda

Partial

Spill the beans

Og‘zidan gullab qo‘ymoq

Partial

Bite off more than you can chew

Og‘ir yukni ko‘tara olmaydi

Partial

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Carry coals to Newcastle

Zero

Qurbaqaning tili uzun

Zero

Apple of one’s eye

Ko‘z o‘ngidagi olma

Full

To break the ice

Muzni sindirish

Partial

A blessing in disguise

Yashirin ne’mat

Partial

Let the cat out of the bag

Mushukni sumkadan chiqarish

Partial

The early bird catches the worm

Erta tongda uyg‘onmoq

Full

To burn bridges

Ko‘priklarni yoqmoq

Partial

Every cloud has a silver lining

Har bulutning kumush tomoni bor

Full

Hit the nail on the head

Tegishli joyini urmoq

Full

11. Results and Discussion

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Full equivalence remains limited but confirms universal metaphor patterns.

Partial equivalence predominates; translators must address imagery differences.

Zero equivalence illustrates culture-specific expressions and necessitates adaptive strategies.

12. Conclusion

English and Uzbek idioms exhibit a spectrum of semantic equivalence. Cultural baggage, structural divergence, and metaphorical specificity influence translation and teaching. Effective strategies require linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic literacy.

Future research may incorporate corpus-based and cognitive-pragmatic methodologies to enhance idiom translation and pedagogy.

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