CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF IDIOMS: SEMANTIC EQUIVALENCE BETWEEN UZBEK AND ENGLISH

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Annotation. This study explores the semantic and cultural aspects of idioms in Uzbek and English, focusing on the challenges of translation and cross-cultural understanding. Idioms, as fixed expressions carrying figurative meaning, often resist direct translation, leading to semantic shifts or cultural adaptations. The research employs a qualitative contrastive analysis of selected idiomatic expressions gathered from literary sources, films, and everyday speech. Findings reveal that while certain idioms share universal conceptual metaphors, others are deeply rooted in cultural contexts unique to each language. This paper highlights the importance of cultural competence in translation and suggests strategies for achieving both semantic accuracy and cultural resonance in cross-linguistic communication.

Introduction. Idioms are an essential part of natural language use, reflecting the history, traditions, and worldview of speech communities. The translation of idiomatic expressions between Uzbek and English presents unique challenges due to differences in culture-specific imagery and semantic structures. A literal translation often fails to capture the intended figurative meaning, resulting in communication gaps. This study investigates how idioms are represented and interpreted in both languages, aiming to identify commonalities and divergences that influence translation practices.

Existing scholarship on idioms emphasizes their role in figurative language, metaphor theory, and cultural linguistics. Researchers such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have highlighted the conceptual metaphor framework as central to idiomatic meaning. In Uzbek linguistics, idioms are also recognized as

carriers of national mentality and cultural identity. However, comparative studies between Uzbek and English remain limited.

This research adopts a qualitative contrastive methodology. A corpus of 50 idiomatic expressions was compiled from Uzbek literary texts, English novels, and film subtitles. Each idiom was analyzed for semantic equivalence, cultural significance, and translation strategies. The study focuses on identifying cases of direct equivalence, partial equivalence, and non-equivalence, as well as the translator's use of adaptation or substitution.

The findings reveal that approximately 40% of idioms in the corpus have partial or full semantic equivalents between Uzbek and English. For example, the Uzbek idiom 'tosh otmoq' (to throw a stone) shares a metaphorical meaning with the English idiom 'to cast the first stone,' both implying judgment or criticism. However, culturally bound idioms, such as 'qo'yib ber' (literally 'let the sheep go'), require adaptation, as no direct English equivalent exists. In such cases, translators often resort to substitution with a target-culture idiom conveying a similar pragmatic effect.

The discussion suggests that successful idiom translation depends on balancing semantic fidelity with cultural resonance. Overly literal renderings risk losing meaning, while excessive domestication may obscure the source culture. Thus, a dynamic equivalence approach is most effective in bridging semantic and cultural gaps.

Conclusion. This study concludes that idioms in Uzbek and English reflect both universal cognitive metaphors and culture-specific imagery. Translating idioms requires not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural sensitivity. By analyzing idioms across both languages, the research contributes to the fields of comparative linguistics and translation studies. Future studies may expand the corpus to include spoken idioms and dialectal variations, providing further insights into cross-cultural communication.

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