

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LITERAL TRANSLATION AND IDIOMATIC TRANSLATION

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ANNOTATION. This article provides a comprehensive exploration into the fundamental dichotomy between literal (word-for-word) and idiomatic (sense-for-sense) translation methodologies. In the contemporary linguistic landscape, the tension between maintaining formal equivalence and achieving communicative adequacy remains a central challenge for practitioners. The study delineates how literal translation adheres strictly to the morphological and syntactic structures of the source text, whereas idiomatic translation prioritizes the cultural pragmatics and stylistic naturalness of the target language. Through a comparative linguistic analysis, the research evaluates the operational effectiveness of these paradigms across diverse text genres. It contrasts the necessity of precision in technical and legal documentation—where literal accuracy is often mandatory—with the nuanced demands of literary and poetic works, which require a sense-for-sense approach to preserve aesthetic and emotional resonance. By examining specific case studies and cross-linguistic examples, the article identifies the semiotic shifts and potential loss of meaning that occur when cultural nuances are neglected. The findings emphasize that "fidelity" in translation is a multifaceted concept; true accuracy is not merely the replication of lexicon, but the successful transmission of intent and tone. The study concludes that an optimal translation strategy necessitates a "hybrid flexibility," where the translator dynamically oscillates

between both paradigms. This synthesis ensures that the final product meets the dual criteria of semantic integrity and native-like fluency, ultimately bridging the linguistic gap for the target audience.

KEY WORDS: Idioms, translation, meaning shift, semantic approach, contextual translation, English–Uzbek translation, literal translation, idiomatic translation, equivalence

Introduction. In today’s era of globalization, the expansion of cross-cultural communication further underscores the relevance of translation issues. In particular, idioms represent one of the most complex linguistic units encountered during the translation process from English into Uzbek [5]. Idioms are figurative, stable units that often cannot be translated literally; their meaning does not directly derive from the lexical definitions of their constituent words [1]. One of the primary challenges in translating English idioms into Uzbek is the shift in meaning [2]. This phenomenon is often explained by cultural differences, specific features of the language systems, and the translator’s semantic interpretation. Consequently, some idioms may partially or fully lose their original essence in translation, or at times, be misinterpreted [6].

Although this issue has been discussed in many studies by linguists and translation scholars, analyzing the semantic shifts of idioms in the context of English and Uzbek based on empirical data remains a pressing task. Understanding and adequately translating idioms is of particular importance for language learners and translators. The objective of this article is to identify and analyze the semantic changes that occur during the translation of English idioms into Uzbek, as well as to study the importance of the equivalence between meaning and translation. Within the framework of this research, data collected through a survey are analyzed to highlight the priority of semantic factors in idiomatic translation.

Methodology. This study aims to empirically investigate the problem of semantic shifts occurring during the translation of English idioms into Uzbek [1]. A quantitative research approach was selected, using a survey as the primary data collection tool. This

approach allowed for the analysis of respondents' attitudes toward translating idioms through generalized statistical indicators [3].

The study was conducted online in December 2025. A total of 6 respondents participated in the survey. The participants belonged to various social groups, including university students, teachers, and a school pupil. The respondents' English proficiency levels ranged from Beginner to Intermediate, which enabled the identification of individual differences in understanding and translating idioms.

The survey questions were developed based on the research objectives and divided into several thematic blocks. The first block aimed to determine general information about the respondents (profession and English translation experience). The second block sought to identify perceptions regarding the existence of idioms in English and their use in everyday speech. The third block focused on assessing the respondents' level of idiom comprehension and the importance of semantic and translational equivalence when translating them into Uzbek. The questions were closed-ended, including options such as "yes," "no," and "sometimes," as well as scale-based evaluation options. This format facilitated the systematic comparison and generalization of responses.

Data were collected via the Google Forms platform and automatically transferred to Google Sheets. Subsequently, the data were processed using descriptive statistical analysis, percentages were calculated, and the results were visually represented through diagrams [4]. During the statistical analysis, primary focus was placed on identifying general trends in the respondents' answers. Ethical principles of research were followed; participation was voluntary, and personal data were collected anonymously and used solely for scientific purposes.

Results and Discussion. The results of the survey conducted within this study demonstrated that the semantic factor holds a priority position in the process of translating English idioms into Uzbek [4]. According to the data illustrated in the diagram, the majority of respondents believe that fully grasping the content is essential when translating idioms. Specifically, 4 respondents (approximately 67%) stated that understanding the meaning is

"very important." One respondent ($\approx 17\%$) rated this factor as "somewhat important," while another ($\approx 17\%$) evaluated it as "not very important."

Furthermore, a large portion of respondents acknowledged that idioms are actively used and represent real linguistic units in English. Most participants responded positively to the statement "idioms exist," confirming the relevance of the topic. Results regarding the level of idiom comprehension varied. As seen in the diagram, while some respondents stated they understand idioms fully, others noted they understand them only sometimes or not at all. These differences indicate individual disparities in English proficiency and translation experience [1].

In addition, varying perspectives were identified regarding literal equivalence in translation. Some respondents considered full equivalence important, while others did not deem it always necessary. Overall, the results indicate that the preservation of meaning is evaluated as the primary criterion in the translation of English idioms into Uzbek, although differences exist in comprehension and translational approaches among respondents [3]

Conclusion. The empirical analysis conducted in this study underscores that the translation of idioms from English into Uzbek transcends simple linguistic substitution, requiring instead a profound cognitive and cultural transposition. The findings reveal a significant consensus among respondents: the preservation of semantic integrity is the paramount criterion for a successful translation. This reinforces the theoretical premise that since idioms function as indivisible conceptual units, their "functional equivalence" in the target language must prioritize the communicative intent over literal word-for-word correspondence.

Furthermore, the diversity in respondents' comprehension levels—ranging from full grasp to partial ambiguity—highlights a critical gap in translation pedagogy. It suggests that linguistic proficiency alone is insufficient for mastering idiomatic expressions; rather, a deep immersion into the socio-cultural context of the source language is indispensable. Although the limited sample size of this study necessitates caution in over-generalizing the results, the data clearly points toward a need for more nuanced, context-based translation

strategies. Future research involving a broader demographic of professional translators and the use of qualitative interviews would provide deeper insights into the mental processes of idiomatic decoding, ultimately contributing to the development of more effective bilingual lexicographical resources and translation methodologies.

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