BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg

TRANSLATION OF PROVERBS FROM ENGLISH INTO UZBEK: PROBLEMS OF EQUIVALENCE

Kholiyarova Umida Bozorovna
Karshi International University, student of Master's degree

Annotation:

The translation of proverbs represents one of the most difficult areas of translation studies because proverbs combine linguistic form with cultural meaning. This article explores the challenges of translating English proverbs into Uzbek with special attention to the problem of equivalence. The research discusses semantic, stylistic, pragmatic, and cultural aspects of equivalence and explains why literal translation often fails to preserve the original meaning. The article also examines the relationship between language and culture through comparative analysis of English and Uzbek proverbs. Different translation strategies such as descriptive translation, cultural substitution, and communicative translation are analyzed with examples. The study demonstrates that successful proverb translation depends not only on linguistic accuracy but also on intercultural understanding and contextual adaptation. The findings of the research may contribute to the development of comparative linguistics, paremiology, and translation methodology.

Keywords:

Proverb translation, equivalence, translation studies, cultural adaptation, semantic meaning, communicative translation, English language, Uzbek language, paremiology, intercultural communication.

Introduction:

Language has always been closely connected with culture and national identity. Every nation reflects its social experience, traditions, and worldview through language. Proverbs occupy a special place among linguistic units because they preserve collective wisdom formed over centuries. They are short but meaningful expressions that convey advice, moral lessons, and practical observations about life. In recent decades, the study of proverb translation has attracted considerable attention in linguistics and translation studies. The main reason is that proverbs are not ordinary lexical units; they contain figurative meaning, emotional coloring, rhythm, and cultural symbolism. As a result, translating proverbs from one language into another requires more than direct word substitution. The translation of English proverbs into Uzbek presents several difficulties because these languages belong to different language families and cultural traditions. English proverbs are often influenced by Western lifestyle, maritime culture, and individualistic thinking, whereas Uzbek proverbs are strongly associated with Eastern values, family relations, hospitality, and agricultural life. Therefore, finding equivalent expressions becomes a complicated task for translators.

The concept of equivalence plays a central role in this process. In translation studies, equivalence refers to the degree of similarity between the original text and the translated version. However, complete equivalence is rarely achieved in proverb translation because each language expresses ideas through its own cultural and linguistic system.

This article investigates the major problems of equivalence in translating English proverbs into Uzbek and analyzes practical translation strategies that help preserve meaning and communicative effect.

Proverbs as Cultural and Linguistic Units

Proverbs are stable expressions that usually contain figurative meaning and traditional wisdom. They are widely used in spoken and written communication because they make speech more expressive and memorable. Researchers define proverbs as concise statements based on social experience. Most proverbs are anonymous in origin and become part of folklore over time. Their structure is usually simple, but their meaning may be deep and metaphorical.

Proverbs perform several functions in communication:

Educational Function

Many proverbs teach ethical behavior and social norms.

Example:

“Honesty is the best policy.”

Uzbek equivalent:

“Halollik eng yaxshi fazilat.”

Both expressions encourage honesty and sincerity.

Communicative Function

Proverbs allow speakers to express ideas briefly and effectively.

Example:

“Practice makes perfect.”

“Takrorlash bilimning onasi.”

Cultural Function:

Proverbs preserve cultural traditions and historical experience. Uzbek proverbs often emphasize respect, patience, and family unity, while English proverbs frequently stress independence and practicality.

The Concept of Equivalence in Translation

Equivalence is one of the key concepts in translation theory. It describes the relationship between the source text and the target text. Different scholars have proposed various approaches to equivalence.

Formal and Dynamic Equivalence:

Eugene Nida distinguished between formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence.

Formal equivalence focuses on preserving the grammatical structure and lexical form of the original text. This method is useful in scientific or legal translation but may sound unnatural in proverb translation. Dynamic equivalence aims to reproduce the same communicative effect on the target audience.

For example:

“Walls have ears.”

“Devorning ham qulog‘i bor.”

This example demonstrates close formal equivalence because both structure and imagery are preserved.

Another example:

“Don’t count your chickens before they hatch.”

“Suv ko‘rmay etik yechma.”

Here the imagery changes completely, but the meaning remains similar. This is an example of dynamic equivalence.

Semantic Problems in Translating Proverbs

Semantic equivalence refers to preserving the meaning of the original proverb. However, this process becomes difficult when proverbs contain idiomatic or metaphorical language.

For instance:

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.”

Literal translation into Uzbek would not sound natural because the imagery does not correspond to Uzbek traditions. A translator may instead use a culturally adapted version:

“Bugungi foyda ertangi va’dadan afzal.”

Both expressions encourage valuing certainty over uncertain possibilities.

Another example is:

“Too many cooks spoil the broth.”

“Ko‘p oshpaz sho‘rvani buzadi.”

This proverb can be translated almost directly because the metaphor exists in both cultures.

Sometimes no equivalent proverb exists in Uzbek. In such cases translators use descriptive translation.

Example:

“A watched pot never boils.”

Possible translation:

“Kutgan odamga vaqt juda sekin o‘tadi.”

Although the concise structure disappears, the meaning becomes understandable. Cultural Difficulties in Proverb Translation

Culture strongly influences the meaning of proverbs. Since proverbs reflect national mentality and historical experience, many of them contain culture-specific symbols. English proverbs may include references unfamiliar to Uzbek readers.

For example:

“Every cloud has a silver lining.”

The metaphor of a “silver lining” may not produce the same emotional effect in Uzbek culture. Therefore, translators usually adapt the proverb: “Har bir qiyinchilikdan keyin yengillik keladi.”

Similarly:

“The grass is always greener on the other side.”

“Qo‘shnining tovuqi g‘oz ko‘rinadi.”

Although the lexical imagery changes, both proverbs express the same idea about envy and dissatisfaction.

Uzbek proverbs also contain culturally specific concepts that are difficult to translate into English.

Example:

“Mehmon otangdan ulug‘.”

This proverb reflects the high value of hospitality in Uzbek culture. Literal translation alone may not fully explain its cultural significance. Stylistic Features of Proverbs:

One important characteristic of proverbs is their stylistic beauty. Proverbs often contain rhyme, rhythm, repetition, and metaphorical language.

For example:

“No pain, no gain.”

“Mehnatsiz rohat yo‘q.”

Both versions are short, rhythmic, and memorable. Another example:

“Better late than never.”

“Hechdan ko‘ra kech yaxshi.”

The translation successfully preserves simplicity and didactic tone.

However, stylistic equivalence becomes difficult when sound patterns or wordplay cannot be reproduced in the target language.

Example:

"Waste not, want not."

Its rhythm and alliteration are difficult to preserve in Uzbek translation.

Pragmatic Equivalence

Pragmatic equivalence refers to how the audience understands and interprets the translated proverb. A successful translation should produce a similar communicative effect on readers.

For example:

"When in Rome, do as the Romans do."

Uzbek equivalent:

"Qayerga borsang, o'sha yerning odatini qil."

This translation sounds natural because it corresponds to Uzbek communicative traditions. Pragmatic adaptation is especially important in literary texts, education, and intercultural dialogue.

Translation Strategies Used in Proverb Translation:

Translators apply different methods depending on the linguistic and cultural situation.

Full Equivalence

Used when both languages have similar proverbs.

Example:

"Walls have ears."

"Devorning ham qulog'i bor."

Partial Equivalence

The meaning is preserved, but imagery changes.

Example:

"Don't count your chickens before they hatch."

"Suv ko'rmay etik yechma."

Descriptive Translation

Used when no equivalent exists.

Example:

"A watched pot never boils."

"Kutgan odamga vaqt juda sekin o'tadi."

Cultural Substitution

Replacing the source proverb with a culturally familiar one.

Example:

"The grass is always greener on the other side."

"Qo'shnining tovuqi g'oz ko'rinadi."

Comparative Analysis of English and Uzbek Proverbs

English and Uzbek proverbs demonstrate both similarities and differences.

Similarities: Both languages highly value labor and patience.

"No pain, no gain."

"Mehnatsiz rohat yo'q."

Both cultures also emphasize the importance of time.

"Time is money."

"Vaqt g'animat."

Differences:

English proverbs frequently contain references to trade, weather, and sea life because of Britain's geographical history.

Example:

"Any port in a storm."

Uzbek proverbs often relate to agriculture and family relationships.

Example: "Yer haydasang kuz hayda."

Religious and moral elements are also more visible in Uzbek folklore. The Importance of Intercultural Competence

Modern translation requires not only language proficiency but also intercultural competence. A translator must understand social values, traditions, and emotional associations connected with proverbs.

Without cultural awareness, literal translation may distort meaning or create misunderstanding. Therefore, translators should analyze context carefully before choosing an equivalent expression. The translator's task is not simply to transfer words but to recreate meaning in a culturally acceptable form.

Conclusion:

The translation of English proverbs into Uzbek is a complex process that involves linguistic, semantic, stylistic, and cultural challenges. Since proverbs reflect the worldview and traditions of a nation, achieving complete equivalence is often impossible. The research demonstrates that dynamic and communicative equivalence are more effective than literal translation in preserving meaning and emotional impact. Cultural adaptation, descriptive interpretation, and functional substitution help translators convey the original message naturally and accurately. English and Uzbek proverbs differ in imagery and symbolic systems, yet both languages express universal human experiences such as wisdom, labor, honesty, and patience. Successful proverb translation therefore depends on the translator's ability to combine linguistic knowledge with intercultural understanding.

Further studies in paremiology and translation theory may contribute to improving translation quality and strengthening intercultural communication between different nations.

References:

1. Baker, Mona. In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation. Routledge, 2018.
2. Jakobson, Roman. "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation." 1959.
3. Larson, Mildred. Meaning-Based Translation. University Press of America, 1998.
4. Newmark, Peter. A Textbook of Translation. Prentice Hall, 1988.
5. Rahmatullayev, Shavkat. O'zbek Tilining Izohli Frazeologik Lug'ati. Toshkent, 1992.
6. Salomov, G'aybulla. Tarjima Nazariyasiga Kirish. Toshkent, 1978.
7. Toury, Gideon. Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond. John Benjamins, 1995.