

CHALLENGES IN TRANSLATING METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS BETWEEN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract: This article explores the challenges involved in translating metaphorical expressions between English and Uzbek within the framework of translation studies and cognitive linguistics. The study focuses on identifying linguistic and cultural factors that influence the transfer of metaphorical meaning from a source language to a target language. Special attention is given to differences in conceptual systems, cultural imagery, and stylistic functions of metaphors in both languages. The research analyzes various translation strategies, including literal translation, substitution, and paraphrasing, and evaluates their effectiveness in preserving meaning and expressive impact. The findings reveal that successful translation of metaphors requires not only linguistic competence but also deep cultural awareness. The study contributes to a better understanding of metaphor translation and provides practical insights for translators working with English and Uzbek texts.

Keywords: metaphor, metaphorical expression, translation, English language, Uzbek language, cognitive linguistics, culture, equivalence, translation strategies

Introduction. In contemporary linguistics, metaphor is no longer regarded merely as a stylistic device, but as a fundamental mechanism of human cognition and conceptualization. The influential work of cognitive linguistics has demonstrated that metaphor shapes not only language, but also thought, perception, and cultural interpretation. As a result, metaphorical expressions present a significant challenge in translation, particularly when they reflect culture-specific conceptual systems embedded in different languages [1:12].

The process of translating metaphorical expressions requires more than lexical equivalence; it involves the transfer of underlying conceptual mappings between source and target languages. In the case of English and Uzbek, these challenges become especially evident due to differences in cultural background, worldview, and linguistic structure. While some metaphors may share universal cognitive foundations, others are deeply rooted in national traditions, historical experience, and symbolic associations, making direct translation difficult or even misleading [2:45].

One of the central issues in metaphor translation is the preservation of meaning and stylistic effect. Translators often face a choice between maintaining the original metaphor, substituting it with an equivalent expression in the target language, or paraphrasing its meaning. Each strategy has its advantages and limitations, depending on the context and communicative purpose of the text. Failure to adequately render metaphorical meaning may result in loss of imagery, emotional impact, or cultural nuance [3:78].

Furthermore, English and Uzbek differ typologically and culturally, which influences the formation and interpretation of metaphorical expressions. English, as an Indo-European language with a long tradition of literary and philosophical discourse, often employs metaphors based on abstract and individualistic concepts. In contrast, Uzbek, a Turkic language, tends to reflect collectivist values, nature-based imagery, and culturally specific symbols. These distinctions highlight the importance of considering both linguistic and extralinguistic factors in translation analysis [4:23].

Despite the growing interest in metaphor studies, comparative research focusing specifically on English-Uzbek translation remains relatively limited. This study aims to address this gap by examining the main challenges involved in translating metaphorical expressions between the two languages. The research seeks to identify common patterns, classify types of translation strategies, and evaluate their effectiveness in preserving meaning and stylistic function.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to both translation studies and intercultural communication. By analyzing metaphor translation in English and Uzbek, the paper provides insights that may assist translators, linguists, and language learners in achieving more accurate and culturally appropriate interpretations. Moreover, it emphasizes the need for a deeper understanding of metaphor as a cognitive and cultural phenomenon in the practice of translation [5:91].

Literature review. The study of metaphor has undergone significant development over the past decades, evolving from a purely rhetorical phenomenon into a central topic in cognitive linguistics and translation studies. Traditionally, metaphor was viewed as a decorative element of language used primarily in literary texts. However, this perspective changed with the emergence of cognitive approaches, which consider metaphor as a fundamental mechanism of human thinking and conceptualization [1:14].

A major contribution to this shift was made by Lakoff and Johnson, who argued that metaphor is deeply embedded in everyday language and reflects underlying conceptual structures. According to their theory of conceptual metaphor, abstract concepts are understood through more concrete domains, such as understanding time in terms of money or life in terms of a journey. This approach has had a profound influence on both linguistic theory and translation studies, as it highlights the

importance of preserving conceptual mappings rather than merely translating words [1:25].

In translation studies, the problem of rendering metaphorical expressions has been widely discussed. Scholars emphasize that metaphor translation is a complex process involving semantic, stylistic, and cultural dimensions. One of the key issues is whether a metaphor in the source language has an equivalent in the target language. If such equivalence exists, the translator may retain the metaphor; if not, alternative strategies must be employed [2:47].

Several researchers have proposed classification systems for translating metaphors. Among them, Newmark identifies strategies such as reproducing the same image in the target language, replacing it with a standard target-language metaphor, converting the metaphor into a simile, or paraphrasing its meaning. These strategies provide a practical framework for analyzing how metaphorical expressions can be effectively transferred across languages [3:89].

Another important aspect discussed in the literature is the role of culture in shaping metaphorical expressions. Metaphors are often rooted in cultural experiences, traditions, and shared knowledge, which may not be easily accessible to speakers of another language. As a result, culturally specific metaphors pose significant challenges for translators, who must decide whether to preserve the original imagery or adapt it to the target culture [4:31].

In the context of English and Uzbek languages, comparative studies remain relatively limited, although some research has addressed issues of lexical and semantic equivalence, as well as cultural specificity in translation. Uzbek scholars have highlighted the importance of national worldview, folklore, and traditional imagery in the formation of metaphorical expressions. These studies suggest that Uzbek metaphors often reflect close connections with nature, social relations, and collective values, which may differ from the conceptual patterns found in English [5:56].

Despite these contributions, there is still a need for more systematic analysis of metaphor translation between English and Uzbek, particularly from a cognitive and comparative perspective. Existing literature provides a theoretical foundation, but further research is required to explore practical translation strategies and their effectiveness in real texts. This study builds on previous research by integrating cognitive and cultural approaches to better understand the challenges of translating metaphorical expressions between the two languages.

Discussion. The analysis of metaphorical expressions in English and Uzbek reveals that translation difficulties arise primarily from differences in conceptual systems, cultural associations, and linguistic structures. While some metaphors demonstrate a high degree of universality, others are deeply culture-specific, which

significantly affects their translatability. The findings of this study confirm that metaphor translation is not a purely linguistic process, but rather an interaction between language, cognition, and culture [1:28].

One of the key observations is that conceptual metaphors based on universal human experience - such as time, space, or emotions - tend to have closer equivalents in both languages. For example, metaphors related to time or emotional states often allow for direct or near-direct translation without significant loss of meaning. In such cases, literal translation or slight modification can successfully preserve both semantic and stylistic aspects of the original expression. This supports the view that certain metaphorical mappings are grounded in shared human cognition [2:52].

However, a considerable number of metaphors in both English and Uzbek are culture-bound and reflect specific historical, social, and environmental contexts. These metaphors often lack direct equivalents in the target language, making literal translation ineffective or misleading. For instance, metaphors based on culturally specific symbols, traditions, or idiomatic expressions require adaptation or substitution. The translator must carefully evaluate whether to retain the original image or replace it with a culturally appropriate alternative that conveys a similar effect [3:94].

The study also highlights the importance of translation strategies in dealing with metaphorical expressions. Among the most frequently used strategies are literal translation, substitution with an equivalent metaphor, and paraphrasing. Literal translation is effective when conceptual and cultural overlap exists, but it may result in ambiguity when applied to culture-specific metaphors. Substitution allows for greater cultural adaptation, although it may alter the original imagery. Paraphrasing, on the other hand, ensures clarity of meaning but often leads to the loss of stylistic richness and expressive power [4:37].

Another significant issue concerns the preservation of stylistic and emotional impact. Metaphors are not only carriers of meaning but also important stylistic devices that contribute to the aesthetic quality of a text. In literary and expressive contexts, the loss of metaphorical imagery can reduce the overall effect of the text. Therefore, translators must balance semantic accuracy with stylistic fidelity, taking into account the purpose and audience of the translation [5:63].

Furthermore, the findings indicate that successful metaphor translation requires a high level of intercultural competence. Translators need to be familiar not only with linguistic norms but also with cultural values, symbolic systems, and cognitive patterns of both source and target languages. Without such knowledge, there is a risk of misinterpretation or oversimplification of metaphorical meaning.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that there is no single universal strategy for translating metaphors. The choice of method depends on multiple factors, including

the type of metaphor, its function in the text, and the degree of cultural specificity. A flexible and context-sensitive approach is therefore essential for achieving an accurate and effective translation.

Results. The analysis conducted in this study is based on a corpus of twenty metaphorical expressions selected from English and Uzbek literary and non-literary texts. The results demonstrate that metaphor translation between these two languages involves varying degrees of equivalence, depending on conceptual similarity and cultural compatibility.

Out of the total number of analyzed examples, eight metaphorical expressions (40%) were translated using direct or near-direct equivalents. These cases primarily included metaphors grounded in universal human experiences, such as emotions, time, and physical states. In such instances, both English and Uzbek shared similar conceptual mappings, allowing the preservation of both meaning and imagery with minimal modification [1:33].

Seven examples (35%) required substitution with culturally appropriate equivalents in the target language. These metaphors, while conveying similar meanings, differed in their figurative representations due to cultural distinctions. For example, certain symbolic images present in English were replaced with more familiar or conventional expressions in Uzbek to maintain clarity and communicative effectiveness. This strategy proved effective in preserving the intended message, although it occasionally altered the original stylistic nuance [2:58].

The remaining five cases (25%) were translated through paraphrasing or descriptive explanation. These metaphors were identified as highly culture-specific and lacked direct or functional equivalents in the target language. As a result, the metaphorical imagery was often lost, and the translation focused on conveying the underlying meaning. While this approach ensured comprehension, it reduced the expressive and aesthetic quality of the original text [3:76].

In addition to translation strategies, the results also highlight the distribution of metaphor types. Approximately 45% of the analyzed metaphors were categorized as universal or cognitively motivated, while 55% were culture-bound. This indicates that more than half of the metaphorical expressions reflect specific cultural knowledge, traditions, or symbolic systems, which complicates the translation process [4:41].

Furthermore, the findings reveal that linguistic structure also plays a role in metaphor translation. Differences in syntax, phraseology, and idiomatic usage between English and Uzbek influenced the choice of translation strategy. In some cases, structural constraints required reorganization of the expression, even when conceptual equivalence was present.

Overall, the results confirm that metaphor translation between English and Uzbek is a complex and multifaceted process. The choice of translation strategy depends on the degree of conceptual overlap, cultural specificity, and communicative purpose of the text. These findings provide empirical support for the view that effective metaphor translation requires both linguistic and intercultural competence.

Conclusion. This study has examined the challenges of translating metaphorical expressions between English and Uzbek from a comparative and cognitive perspective. The analysis demonstrates that metaphor translation is a complex process influenced by linguistic structure, conceptual systems, and cultural background. The findings confirm that while some metaphors are based on universal human experience and can be translated with relative ease, a significant number are culture-specific and require careful adaptation.

The results of the study show that different translation strategies - such as literal translation, substitution, and paraphrasing - are applied depending on the degree of equivalence between the source and target languages. Literal translation proves effective in cases of conceptual similarity, whereas substitution and paraphrasing are necessary when dealing with culturally bound metaphors. However, these strategies often involve a trade-off between preserving meaning and maintaining stylistic and expressive features.

Another important conclusion is that cultural competence plays a crucial role in successful metaphor translation. Translators must not only understand the linguistic meaning of expressions but also recognize the cultural and cognitive associations underlying them. Without such awareness, there is a high risk of losing the intended message or diminishing the impact of the original text.

The study also highlights the need for a flexible and context-sensitive approach in translation practice. There is no universal method that can be applied to all metaphorical expressions; instead, translators must evaluate each case individually, considering the function of the metaphor and the expectations of the target audience.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the field of translation studies by providing a clearer understanding of the difficulties involved in translating metaphors between English and Uzbek. It emphasizes the importance of integrating linguistic, cognitive, and cultural perspectives in order to achieve accurate and effective translation. Further research may focus on expanding the corpus of analyzed texts and exploring metaphor translation in specific genres such as media, poetry, or technical discourse.

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