

PAPER

THE USE OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN LITERATURE AND WAYS OF TRANSLATING THEM

Akhrorova Diyorakhon^{1,*}

¹2nd year Master's student of TSUULL

*akhrorova@gmail.com

Abstract

This article examines the significance of phraseological units in literature and the challenges of translating them. Idioms, proverbs, and set phrases enhance literary texts but often carry culture-specific meanings that are difficult to translate. The article reviews key translation strategies, such as functional equivalence and cultural adaptation, highlighting the need to preserve both meaning and style in translation.

Key words: phraseological units, idioms, literary translation, cultural adaptation, functional equivalence, translation strategies.

Introduction

Phraseological units are fixed expressions with idiomatic meanings, such as idioms, phrasal verbs and set phrases. They have semantic meanings as a whole and their meanings cannot be derived by words' individual meanings. They cannot be analyzed like free combinations or parts of a sentence. The field that studies phraseological units is called phraseology. A. V. Koonin describes phraseologisms as: "a phraseological unit is a stable combination of words with a completely or partially reinterpreted meaning".

What makes phraseological units different than other language units is their idiomatic nature. Their meaning is usually not predictable from the literal meanings of the words they contain. For example, when someone says "break a leg," they are not referring to physically splitting or cracking a leg, but rather using a well-known idiom for wishing a good luck. This non-literal quality means that phraseological units cannot be understood simply by analyzing each word in isolation. Instead, they must be recognized and interpreted as a whole.

The academic study of these special expressions is called phraseology, a branch of linguistics devoted to understanding how such combinations function within a language. Renowned linguist A. V. Koonin describes a phraseologism, stating that "a phraseological unit is a stable combination of words with a completely or partially reinterpreted meaning." This stability is key—phraseological units are typically fixed in their wording and structure, making them easily recognizable to native speakers.

Over time, linguists have developed different ways to classify these units. They are often grouped according to their meanings,

lexical features, and grammatical properties. The most common types include:

1. **Idioms**, which are highly figurative and usually have meanings that cannot be guessed from the words themselves;
2. **Proverbs**, which are traditional sayings expressing general truths or advice;
3. **Phrasal verbs**, combinations of verbs with prepositions or adverbs that take on new meanings;
4. **Sayings**, which are short, commonly used expressions that convey specific ideas or sentiments.

Ultimately, phraseological units are not just linguistic ornaments, but they also reflect the unique history, humor, and worldview of a language community. Their use adds depth and color to speech and writing, helping speakers convey meaning with efficiency and style. For anyone interested in language, literature, or translation, understanding phraseological units is essential to grasping the true spirit of communication.

Materials and Methods

Phraseological units hold a very important cultural and lingual significance. Because phraseologisms go beyond their literal meanings and they convey unique and culturally rich ideas. They add colorfulness and depth to a language, that's why they play a significant role in literary works, in literature as whole, enriching the language and deepening the expressions. They have subtle meanings that literal language can't fully express or explain. Learning one nation's phraseology helps you understand their

culture and traditions better. And translating them helps you understand the language and culture. And also, they enable speakers and writers to express ideas in an imaginative and concise ways. These phrases often serve as mirrors to the history, value and humor of a language community. Moreover, they are tools for stylistic expressions. They can be used in literature to evoke a humor, convey sarcasm, enhance the meaning of the words and to deepen emotional effect of narrative voice. They also serve to enhance coherence of the message.

The American linguist and translation theorist, Eugene A. Nida described about the importance of connection between language and the culture saying: “words only have meaning in terms of the culture of which they are a part”. By this, we can understand that each word in every culture might mean different things, express different emotions and convey different messages. Especially, phraseologisms are more deeply interwoven with the culture.

Phraseological units make the literature more beautiful and writers don't use them only for decorative purposes, they also use them to enrich the narrative and stylistic quality of their work. Through idioms and other set expressions, they can reflect cultural realities. Phraseologisms in every language reflect cultural beliefs and uniqueness. Authors can also use them to stimulate emotional engagement in the reader. Phraseologisms evoke more emotions in people than simple words, they convey meanings which no simple words ever could. That's why by using them in their works writers can engage the readers more to the plot of the story. They can also contribute literary tone and pacing, creating the emotional atmosphere and helping to establish a character's voice and personality.

Senior teacher at International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, Amir Abushaev explains the importance of phraseological units in language saying: “Phraseological units play an important role in the lexical structure of the language, because they convey the idea figuratively and clearly, and reflect different aspects of reality. Phraseologisms in most cases not only express a certain phenomenon of reality, but also characterize it and give it a certain value.”

While they make the language beautiful, their presence in literary works is considerably difficult during translation. The meanings and messages they carry are often closely related to cultural and contextual factors, making them a fascinating and at the same time, demanding aspect of the language. Translating phraseological units from one language to another is one of the most challenging tasks in literary translation.

First of all, many idioms and set expressions are rooted in specific cultural experiences that might not exist in the target language. Literal translation in such cases might stir confusion or misunderstanding in readers. For example, in English there is an idiom “Bury the Hatchet” and it means making peace with someone or resolve a conflict. This idiom is derived from Native American practice where chiefs would bury their weapons to show they want peace. It was a symbolic gesture of peace. If we were to translate it word by word as “Boltani ko'mib qo'yish” in Uzbek, we would lose the intended message and meaning of the phrase. Since these expressions cannot be interpreted word by word, translators need to understand the idiom's function and find an equivalent that can convey its meaning.

However, sometimes idioms and phrases don't have direct equivalences that can correspond expression in the target language. This forces translators to choose between using an expression with similar meaning or rephrasing the phrase entirely. Phraseological units often carry humorous, ironic or sarcastic tone, which can be considered as stylistic weight given to them. While translating them translators need to consider these factors and be able to translate them not losing or changing their tones. Not translating them correctly might result them to become plain or lose the stylistic purpose they were used for.

Besides, there are other types of phraseological units that

can be called “fictional phraseologisms”. In their fictional works, authors often use made-up idioms or change existing idioms matching them to their literary works. For example, J. K. Rowling, the author of “Harry Potter” series often used this kind of phraseologisms. She, in her book “Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire” used an idiom ‘memory like a leaky cauldron’. The original idiom was ‘memory like a sieve’ but author changed the word sieve with leaky cauldron as it is used often in Harry Potter series.

Another example can be ‘to cry over spilled potion’. Original idiom is ‘to cry over spilled milk’, but by changing it to ‘potion’ author kept both meaning and the message, but by changing one word with another author gave uniqueness to it and improved the style of her work at the same time. It is fascinating for readers, but for translators, it creates serious challenges. Now, translator should not only find proper equivalent, but also should preserve its originality. Those kind of phraseologisms, idioms are only used specifically for this literary work, and they are what makes it more unique and more original. And translating them while keeping all these aspects without changing much can be a difficult challenge. But that's where a translators responsibility lies. Phraseologisms show the author's style, author's way of saying or showing things, words, situations. So, it's really important to keep the style of the source as much as possible.

Results and Discussion

Many different types of scientists have worked on the problem of translating phraseological units, such as idioms and set expressions. Linguists who study phraseology, like Kunin and Vinogradov, have classified these expressions and explored their unique features. Translation theorists such as Nida, Newmark, and Baker have developed practical methods and strategies for translating idioms from one language to another. Some scientists, called comparative linguists, compare different languages to find similarities and differences in how idioms are used and translated. There are also applied linguists and lexicographers who focus on how idioms are explained in dictionaries and used in language teaching. Finally, cultural linguists and ethnolinguists look at how cultural differences influence the meaning and translation of these expressions. All of these experts together have helped to create a deeper understanding of the challenges and solutions in translating phraseological units.

To handle these challenges translators can apply various methods to translate them professionally. One of the ways would be finding the functional equivalent of the phraseologisms. The ways of expressing things in phraseologisms or the words used to make them might not be the same, but most of the times there are equivalents in target language that can serve the same meaning as intended in source language. For instance, in English the phrase “Out of the frying pan into the fire” can be translated into Uzbek with its equivalent “Yomg'irdan qochib do'lga tutilmoq”. The words used to express these two phraseologisms and the way they are given is different. But the function they serve for is the same: they both mean going from a bad situation to even worse one. As we can see, they have the same meaning though expressed differently.

However, there are phraseological units that do not have any equivalent in target language and they are related to the culture which they are a part of. So, when we need to translate them, we can use cultural adaptation method. Using this method, we can modify the idiom to match with the target culture. For example, in English there is a phrase “to carry coals to Newcastle”. Newcastle was historically famous place for its coal mining. So, carrying coal to that place is considered totally useless, unnecessary. Translating it into Uzbek with cultural adaptation can be given with “Musson bozoriga guruch olib borish”. In Uzbek culture, Musson is a big market where you can buy literally everything, let alone things like

rice. In both languages the meaning is given with places which are familiar to their own culture.

Nevertheless, there are other phraseological units that can be translated literally and they still do not lose their meanings. For the phraseologisms like this, we can just translate them word for word if it's impossible to translate them as phraseologisms. For example, the phrase "to bite more than one can chew" can be translated into Uzbek word for word as "Chaynay oladiganidan ko'p tishlamoq", because the meaning of the phraseologism can be understood by the words used to make it. But unfortunately, this method cannot be used as often, because phraseological units don't usually keep the individual meanings of their parts.

Conclusion

Phraseological units are deeply related to the history and culture of the language. They are often used as valuable tools in literary writing. They enrich texts with cultural meaning, stylistic uniqueness and emotional depth. Yet their translation rarely makes it easy for translators requiring skill and contextual understanding. By thoughtfully navigating these challenges, translators can preserve the message and the beauty of the original text, making it enjoyable almost in the same way as the original does, across different languages and cultures.

References

1. Kunin, A. V. (1996). Kurs frazeologii sovremennogo angliiskogo yazyka [Course of Phraseology of Modern English] (2nd ed., revised and enlarged). Moscow: Vysshaya shkola.
2. Nida, E. (2003). *Fascinated by languages*. Amsterdam. John Benjamins.
3. Abushaev, A. (2023). Phraseological units' impact on the English language.
4. J. K. Rowling. "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire". 2000.
5. J. K. Rowling. "Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix". 2003.