

Loss of Connotative Meaning in the Translation of Somatic Phraseological Units (Based on English and Uzbek Lexicographic Materials)

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***Abstract:** This study explores the loss of connotative meaning in the translation of somatic phraseological units from English to Uzbek and vice versa, using lexicographic materials as the primary source of analysis. Phraseological units containing body-part terms, such as "face," "hand," or "heart," often carry deep cultural and emotional connotations that may not be fully conveyed in translation. The research investigates the semantic, pragmatic, and emotive losses that occur when translating these expressions and examines the factors contributing to these shifts, including cultural differences, linguistic structures, and translation strategies. By employing a comparative linguistic approach, this study classifies connotative meaning losses into semantic distortions, pragmatic omissions, and emotional weakening. The findings highlight the challenges of retaining connotative nuances in translation and provide practical insights into how translators can minimize such losses by employing more context-aware strategies.*

***Keywords:** Somatic phraseological units, connotative meaning, translation loss, phraseology, cognitive semantics, lexicographic analysis, intercultural communication, translation strategies, linguistic relativity, cultural linguistics.*

Introduction

Language is not merely a system of communication but a repository of cultural values, traditions, and worldviews. Among its most expressive elements are phraseological units, which often encode figurative meanings that go beyond their literal sense. Within this category, somatic phraseological units (idioms containing body-part terms) hold a unique cognitive and cultural significance, as they frequently symbolize human emotions, character traits, and social relationships. For example, the English idiom "to save face" and its Uzbek counterpart "yuzini yorug' qilmoq" both convey the idea of maintaining one's reputation, but their cultural implications and pragmatic functions differ.

The translation of phraseological units presents a significant challenge due to the loss of connotative meaning, which occurs when an expression's semantic, emotive, or cultural associations fail to transfer accurately between languages. This issue is

particularly evident in somatic phraseological units, where bodily imagery is deeply rooted in culture-specific perceptions. While some idioms have direct equivalents, many require adaptation, approximation, or reformulation to preserve their intended effect.

Despite the richness of phraseological expressions related to the human body in both English and Uzbek, comparative studies on the connotative meaning loss in translation remain scarce. This research aims to bridge this gap by:

1. Identifying somatic phraseological units in English and Uzbek through lexicographic analysis.
2. Classifying connotative meaning losses in translation based on semantic, pragmatic, and emotional distortions.
3. Analyzing cultural and linguistic factors influencing these shifts.
4. Providing translation strategies to minimize connotative loss while maintaining linguistic accuracy and cultural authenticity.

By investigating how and why connotative meanings are lost in translation, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of phraseological equivalence, cultural semantics, and the challenges faced by translators when dealing with idiomatic expressions. The insights from this research will be beneficial for linguists, translators, and scholars of intercultural communication, offering a structured framework for preserving connotative depth in cross-linguistic transfer.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study is built upon cognitive semantics, cultural linguistics, and translation studies, which collectively provide a structured lens through which the loss of connotative meaning in somatic phraseological units can be examined. Given that idiomatic expressions are not arbitrary but conceptually motivated (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), this research explores how somatic idioms reflect cognitive and cultural models and how these models impact their translation.

Cognitive semantics, particularly Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), suggests that idiomatic expressions are formed through systematic metaphorical mappings based on human experience. Many somatic phraseological units are rooted in bodily experiences, making them deeply embodied and culturally entrenched. For instance:

- The English phrase "keep a straight face" metaphorically associates the face with emotional restraint.
- The Uzbek equivalent "yuziga hech narsa bilintirmaslik" (literally: "not letting anything be seen on the face") reflects a similar concept but with a more socially embedded nuance related to emotional suppression.

In translation, such metaphorical mappings often do not align perfectly, leading to semantic distortions or cultural reinterpretations.

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (1956) proposes that language shapes human perception of reality, meaning that speakers of different languages categorize and interpret the world differently. This principle applies to phraseological units, as idioms are not just linguistic artifacts but expressions of cultural cognition.

Through this theoretical framework, this study systematically explores how somatic phraseological units in English and Uzbek encode cultural cognition, how connotative meaning is altered in translation, and what strategies can minimize semantic loss.

Methods

This study employs a comparative linguistic approach to analyze the connotative meaning loss in the translation of somatic phraseological units between English and Uzbek. Data was collected from lexicographic sources, linguistic corpora, and expert consultations to ensure accuracy. The phraseological units were selected based on frequency, cultural relevance, and semantic complexity from Cambridge Idioms Dictionary, Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms, and O‘zbek tilining frazeologik lug‘ati.

The study classifies connotative meaning loss into semantic distortion, pragmatic loss, and emotive weakening. Translation strategies were analyzed following Nida’s (1964) equivalence theory and Baker’s (2018) translation framework, evaluating direct equivalence, cultural substitution, descriptive translation, and literal translation. Data was assessed using quantitative analysis (tracking loss percentages) and qualitative analysis (case studies of idioms). Findings highlight translation challenges and effective adaptation strategies for retaining idiomatic meaning.

Results

The study identified significant connotative meaning loss in the translation of somatic phraseological units between English and Uzbek. Out of 105 English idioms analyzed, only 41% had direct equivalents in Uzbek, while the rest experienced semantic distortion, pragmatic loss, or emotive weakening.

1. Semantic Distortion (39%)

- English: *To turn a blind eye* → Uzbek: *Ko‘rmaganga olish*
 - The English phrase implies intentional ignorance, while the Uzbek equivalent suggests passive avoidance.
- English: *To keep a stiff upper lip* → Uzbek: *o‘zini yo‘qotmaslik*
 - The original idiom emphasizes emotional resilience, while the translation loses its figurative intensity.

2. Pragmatic Loss (27%)

- English: *To have a frog in one's throat* → Uzbek: *Bo'g'zidan ovoz chiqmaslik*
 - The English phrase is metaphorical, while the Uzbek equivalent explains the situation literally, losing idiomatic depth.
- English: *To pull someone's leg* → Uzbek: *Hazillashmoq*
 - The playful deception implied in English is neutralized in Uzbek, reducing the phrase's pragmatic effect.

3. Emotive Weakening (34%)

- English: *To wear one's heart on one's sleeve* → Uzbek: *O'z his-tuyg'ularini oshkor qilish*
 - The poetic imagery and emotional weight of the English idiom are weakened in translation.
- English: *To break someone's heart* → Uzbek: *Ko'nglini og'ritmoq*
 - The English version conveys deep emotional pain, while the Uzbek equivalent is less intense.

4. Translation Strategy Effectiveness

Translation Strategy	Effectiveness (Connotative Accuracy)
Direct Equivalence	85%
Cultural Substitution	76%
Descriptive Translation	62%
Literal Translation	40%

Findings indicate that direct equivalence and cultural substitution yielded the most accurate translations, while literal translations often resulted in meaning loss. The study highlights the importance of cultural adaptation to preserve idiomatic richness and emotional depth in translation.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the complex challenges involved in translating somatic phraseological units from English to Uzbek while preserving their connotative meanings. The frequency analysis revealed that only 41% of the analyzed idioms had direct equivalents, whereas the rest required cultural adaptation or semantic modification. The most common types of meaning loss included semantic distortion (39%), pragmatic loss (27%), and emotive weakening (34%), all of which impact the expressiveness and interpretability of idioms in translation.

One of the key factors influencing connotative meaning loss is cultural conceptualization. Many English idioms reflect individualistic cultural values, whereas Uzbek idioms emphasize collective social identity and moral values. For example, the

English idiom *"to turn a blind eye"* implies deliberate ignorance, whereas its Uzbek counterpart *"ko 'rmaganga olish"* suggests passive avoidance, shifting the focus from intentional neglect to social politeness. Similarly, *"to pull someone's leg"* in English conveys playful deception, while its Uzbek translation *"hazillashmoq"* lacks the same mischievous nuance, leading to pragmatic loss.

The translation strategies applied also played a crucial role in determining how well connotative meanings were preserved. The study found that direct equivalence (85%) and cultural substitution (76%) were the most effective approaches for retaining the intended meaning and emotional intensity. In contrast, descriptive translation (62%) often resulted in lengthy, less idiomatic expressions, while literal translation (40%) led to significant semantic distortions. This underscores the importance of context-aware adaptation, particularly in translating emotionally charged idioms.

Furthermore, socio-cultural implications were evident in cases where somatic idioms reflected different attitudes toward emotional expression. In English, idioms like *"to wear one's heart on one's sleeve"* emphasize openness in expressing emotions, while the Uzbek equivalent *"o 'z his-tuyg' ularini oshkor qilish"* conveys a more neutral tone, reducing its emotional intensity. This suggests that language and culture shape the way emotions are conceptualized and communicated, making connotative translation particularly complex.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that somatic phraseological units are highly culture-dependent, making their translation from English to Uzbek a challenging process due to connotative meaning loss. The research identified three main types of loss—semantic distortion, pragmatic omission, and emotive weakening—which collectively impact the accuracy, expressiveness, and cultural relevance of translated idioms.

The findings emphasize the need for context-sensitive translation strategies to preserve the figurative, emotional, and cultural aspects of idiomatic expressions. Direct equivalence and cultural substitution proved to be the most effective methods, while literal translation often resulted in distortions. Future translators and linguists must prioritize cognitive and cultural alignment when dealing with phraseological units to ensure natural and meaningful translations.

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