

TRANSLATION CHALLENGES OF MYTHOLOGICAL PHRASEOLOGISMS FROM ENGLISH INTO UZBEK

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ABSTRACT

The article explores the translation problems of mythological phraseologisms from English into Uzbek. Mythological phraseologisms express cultural memory, collective beliefs, and ancient worldview embedded in language. Due to cultural, semantic and structural differences between English and Uzbek, translating such units needs more than literal equivalence. The analysis applies comparative, semantic, and linguacultural exploration to identify major translation complexity and strategy. The results demonstrate that the main challenges arise from cultural lacunae, metaphorical opacity, and structural non-equivalence. Effective translation strategies involve descriptive translation, functional equivalence, and cultural substitution.

Keywords: *mythologisms, phraseological units, translation strategies, linguacultural analysis, intercultural communication, semantic transformation, pragmatic adaptation, idiomatic equivalence, cultural symbolism, equivalence, cultural lacuna.*

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье рассматриваются проблемы перевода мифологической фразеологии с английского на узбекский язык. Мифологические фразеологизмы выражают культурную память, коллективные верования и древнее мировоззрение, заложенные в языке. Из-за культурных, семантических и структурных различий между английским и узбекским языками перевод таких единиц требует большего, чем просто буквальная эквивалентность. В анализе применяются сравнительный, семантический и лингвистический культурный подходы для выявления основных сложностей перевода и стратегий. Результаты показывают, что основные проблемы возникают из-за культурных пробелов, метафорической непрозрачности и структурной неэквивалентности. Эффективные стратегии перевода включают описательный перевод, функциональную эквивалентность и культурную замену.

ANNOTATSIYA

Maqolada mifologik frazeologizmlarni ingliz tilidan o‘zbek tiliga tarjima qilish muammolari yoritilgan. Mifologik frazeologizmlar tilga singib ketgan madaniy xotira,

jamoaviy e‘tiqod va qadimgi dunyoqarashni ifodalaydi. Ingliz va o‘zbek tillari o‘rtasidagi madaniy, semantik va strukturaviy tafovutlar tufayli bunday birliklarni tarjima qilish tom ma‘nodagi ekvivalentlikdan ko‘ra ko‘proq narsani talab qiladi. Tahlil tarjimaning asosiy murakkabligi va strategiyasini aniqlash uchun qiyosiy, semantik va lingvistik tadqiqotlarni qo‘llaydi. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, asosiy muammolar madaniy bo‘shliqlar, metaforik noaniqlik va strukturaviy ekvivalentlikdan kelib chiqadi. Samarali tarjima strategiyalari tavsifiy tarjima, funktsional ekvivalentlik va madaniy almashtirishni o‘z ichiga oladi.

INTRODUCTION

Phraseological units involving mythological components express an essential layer of national-cultural semantics. In English, many idioms emerged from ancient Greek and Roman mythology, Biblical narratives, and medieval legends. For instance, expressions such as “Achilles’ heel”, “Pandora’s box”, and “Herculean task” are deeply emerged in classical mythology. In contrast, Uzbek phraseology is largely influenced by eastern mythology, Islamic traditions, and folklore. This cultural divergence creates significant translation problems when English mythological phrases are rendered into Uzbek. The research aims to identify the main types of mythological units in English, the linguistic and cultural challenges in translating them into Uzbek, and effective translation strategies to preserve semantic and pragmatic meaning.

METHODS

The research employs comparative linguistic analysis to compare structural and semantic features of English and Uzbek phraseological units. The componential analysis examines mythological elements within idioms and semantic components embedded in each unit. Linguacultural method identifies cultural markers, symbolic meaning, national-specific connotations, and background knowledge. Descriptive translation analysis evaluates existing translation solutions, classifying translation strategies such as literal translation, functional equivalence, descriptive rendering, and cultural substitution. Contextual analysis evaluates how phraseological units perform in authentic discourse. Comparative linguistic analysis identifies structural and semantic similarities and differences between English and Uzbek phraseological units. The data were analyzed by categorizing translation cases according to types of equivalence and identifying recurring translation problems. This approach allowed the study to determine the most effective strategies for preserving semantic meaning and pragmatic impact in the target language. The research material involves English idioms emerged from classical mythology and Uzbek translations found in bilingual dictionaries and literary texts.

RESULTS

The exploration expressed three major categories of translation challenges such as cultural lacunae. Many English mythological idioms express ancient Greek mythology, which has no explicit equivalent in Uzbek culture. For example, “Achilles’ heel” refers to a hidden weakness. Uzbek readers may not immediately recognize the myth of Achilles. Therefore, literal translation “Axillesning tovoni” may not transfer meaning unless explanatory context is provided. Another challenge is metaphorical opacity that some idioms have metaphorical meanings, which are not transparent without mythological knowledge, such as “Pandora’s box”, refers to a source of unforeseen troubles. Literal translation may obscure the figurative meaning unless adapted descriptively, such as “Kutilmagan balolar manbai”. Structural non-equivalence is another major challenge, that English phraseological units apply possessive or attributive patterns (“Herculean task”), while Uzbek may need descriptive structures (“nihoyatda og‘ir vazifa”), which is structural non-equivalence and cultural unfamiliarity. “Sisyphus labor”, expressing endless, futile work (“behuda va tugamaydigan mehnat”) requires interpretative translation for clarity. “Midas touch”, referring ability to make money easily (“har ishni foydaga aylantira olish qobiliyati”), its symbolic meaning must be explicated. The results show that in 72% of cases including Greek mythology, descriptive or functional translation were preferred over literal rendering.

Biblical expressions form another productive layer in English phraseology. Such as “Forbidden fruit”, referring something attractive but prohibited, (“ta‘qiqlangan meva”) exists near-equivalence due to shared religious knowledge. “Prodigal son” expresses someone who returns after wasteful behavior, (“adashgan o‘g‘il”). “David and Goliath” expresses unequal struggle (“Kuchsiz va kuchli o‘rtasidagi kurash”). In Biblical units, partial equivalence is more frequent around 60%, since religious narratives are more widely recognized in Uzbek society than Greek myths. Overall, the findings show that mythological phraseologisms need a lingua culturally informed translation method associating semantic and pragmatic adaptation.

DISCUSSION

The findings show that translation of mythological phraseologism needs linguacultural competence rather than simple lexical substitution. Several translation strategies prove effective, such as functional equivalence, replacing the English idiom with culturally equivalent Uzbek expression transferring similar pragmatic meaning. Descriptive translation explains the meaning rather than preserving the mythological name. Furthermore, cultural substitution, replacing the original mythological references with a culturally familiar image from Uzbek folklore. However, excessive domestication may result in the loss of intercultural

value. Therefore, a balanced method associating semantic clarity and cultural preservation is recommended.

According to cognitive metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), idioms and phraseological units are conceptual metaphors that map one domain of practice onto another. Mythological idioms in English like “Achilles’ heel” and “Pandora’s box” rely on culturally distributed knowledge of myths to activate their metaphorical meaning. When these myth-based phraseologisms are translated into Uzbek, the source conceptual domain is often unfamiliar to the target readers. Translators must reconstruct the metaphor in a way that preserves its conceptual mapping. For instance, “Pandora’s box” is metaphorically a source of unforeseen problems. In Uzbek, “kutilmagan balolar manbai” preserves the cognitive structure even though the mythological referent is lost. Cognitive metaphor theory explains why literal translation fails, and descriptive or functional translation becomes necessary to highlight cognitive and conceptual integrity.

From lingua pragmatic perspective, myth-based phraseological units transfer not only semantic content, but also pragmatic functions like evaluative or emphatic meaning. “Herculean task” carries both difficulty and admiration for effort. A direct literal interpretation may fail to trigger the same pragmatic effect, as the figure of Hercules is not universally recognized.

Translation of mythological phraseologisms needs cultural mediation, because proper names perform as symbolic anchors of shared knowledge. For instance, “Midas touch” symbolizes financial success, “Sword of Damocles” symbolizes constant threat. In the Uzbek language, these idioms are adapted as “har ishni foydaga aylantira olish qobiliyati” and “doimiy xavf ostida bo’lish” respectively. The result shows that translation is not only linguistic substitution but also cross-cultural negotiation that the translator rebuilds meaning while compensating for gaps in cultural literacy.

CONCLUSION

The translation of mythological phraseological units from English into Uzbek presents significant linguistic and cultural challenges. The prior problems originate from cultural lacunae, metaphorical opacity, and structural differences. Successful translation needs deep knowledge of source mythology, awareness of target cultural background, application of appropriate translation strategies. The analysis demonstrates that the primary translation difficulties originate from cultural lacunae caused by differences in mythological traditions, the symbolic density of proper names functioning as conceptual markers, structural and typological discrepancies between English and Uzbek, divergences in metaphorical conceptualization and background knowledge. The research contributes to translation studies by showing that myth-based phraseologisms express linguistic structures and cognitive-

cultural constructs. Their translation needs an integrative method associating semantic accuracy, cultural awareness, and pragmatic adaptation. The translation of mythological phraseologisms from English into Uzbek is multidimensional process demanding linguistic, cultural, and cognitive sensitivity. A balanced strategy which preserves both meaning and communicative function ensures the most effective cross-cultural transfer.

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