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THE PRAGMATIC AND LINGUACULTURAL PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATING PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS CONTAINING SOMATISMS (IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK)

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ABSTRAC: This article explores the intricate interrelation between language, culture, and translation, focusing on the pragmatic and linguacultural challenges of translating phraseological units containing somatisms (body-part terms) from English into Uzbek and vice versa. Somatisms represent one of the oldest and most culturally saturated layers of the lexicon in any language, serving as a primary tool for conceptualizing the human experience. However, because body parts acquire metaphorical and idiomatic meanings that are strictly unique to specific linguistic communities, their literal translation often leads to pragmatic failure and semantic distortion. Through a comparative and contrastive analysis, this study examines how concepts of the eye, heart, head, and hand function within the phraseological systems of both languages. The findings reveal that achieving pragmatic equivalence requires a deep understanding of the source culture's conceptual worldview and the employment of translation strategies such as idiomatic replacement, analogical substitution, and descriptive paraphrasing.

Keywords: somatisms, phraseological units, pragmatics, linguaculturology, translation equivalence, conceptual worldview, pragmatic failure.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is not merely a tool for information exchange; it is a repository of cultural heritage, historical memory, and national psychology. Within the modern anthropocentric paradigm of linguistics, the fields of linguaculturology and pragmatics have gained immense prominence, emphasizing the role of the human factor in language evolution. One of the most expressive indicators of this human factor is phraseology. Phraseological units (PUs) capture the collective wisdom, traditions, and values of a nation, acting as cultural metaphors that are highly resistant to direct linguistic decoding [4].

Among the vast corpus of phraseology, expressions incorporating somatisms (body-part terms) constitute a fundamental, highly productive, and universally present sub-system. Because the human body is the primary tool through which mankind perceives and interacts with the physical world, it serves as the foundational metaphor for psychological, emotional, and social realities [5]. For instance, emotions are frequently mapped onto internal organs (the heart, the liver, the gut), while intellectual capacities are attributed to the head or brain.

Despite the biological universality of the human body, the linguistic mapping of these organs varies drastically across cultures. A phrase that evokes a positive pragmatic reaction in an English speaker might puzzle or offend an Uzbek reader if translated literally [2]. Therefore, the translation of somatisms is not a superficial task of word-matching; it is a complex process of negotiating pragmatic meaning across distinct cultural worldviews. This article aims to identify, classify, and analyze the pragmatic and linguacultural challenges encountered during the translation of somatisms between English and Uzbek.

2. METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This study adopts a qualitative, comparative-contrastive method, supported by pragmatic and linguacultural analysis. The research analyzes phraseological data extracted from authoritative lexicographical sources, including Kunin's Course of Modern English Phraseology [8] and Rahmatullayev's Explanatory Phraseological Dictionary of the Uzbek Language [9].

The theoretical framework relies heavily on the works of Apresyan regarding the «linguistic picture of the world» [1], Wierzbicka's cross-cultural semantics [5], and Maslova's foundational views on linguaculturology [4]. In the realm of translation studies, the research incorporates Baker's typology of idiomatic translation [2] and Venuti's concepts of translation strategies [3], analyzing how «domestication» and «foreignization» affect the pragmatic impact of the text.

Numerous scholars have pointed out that idioms do not possess a simple denotative meaning; instead, they operate on a connotative level where emotional evaluation, stylistic coloring, and cultural background merge to form a complex pragmatic meaning [7]. When dealing with somatisms, the translator must distinguish between the physical organ (denotation) and its culturally assigned behavioral or emotional symbol (connotation).

3. MAIN PART AND RESULTS

3.1. Cultural Mappings of the «Heart» and «Liver»

In Western European cultures, including Anglo-Saxon tradition, the heart (heart) is universally regarded as the seat of deep emotion, affection, love, and courage [5]. Phrases like «to have a big heart» (generous) or «to break someone's heart» translate relatively well because both English and Uzbek share a partial conceptual overlap regarding the heart (yurak).

However, a distinctive linguacultural deviation occurs when we compare this to the Uzbek concept of the liver (jigar). In the Uzbek linguistic worldview, the liver is deeply associated with kinship, profound sibling affection, and inner sorrow. While an English speaker says «my flesh and blood» to denote close relatives, an Uzbek speaker says «jigarim» (literally: my liver). Similarly, severe grief or empathy in Uzbek is expressed through expressions like «bag'rimni qon qildi» or «jigari ezildi» (his liver was crushed) [9]. Translating «he is my liver» literally into English yields a bizarre, un-idiomatic phrase that lacks any pragmatic or emotional equivalent for an English reader [2].

3.2. The Multi-layered Semantics of the «Eye»

The eye (eye / ko'z) is another highly productive somatism, yet its pragmatic applications in English and Uzbek diverge significantly. In English, the eye often denotes attention, judgment, or suspicion (e.g., «to keep an eye on», «to catch someone's eye») [8].

In Uzbek culture, the phraseology surrounding ko'z is intensely tied to mystical beliefs (such as the evil eye – ko'z tegishi) and deep interpersonal dynamics. Consider the phrase «Green with envy». Its literal translation into Uzbek as «Hasaddan yasharib ketmoq» leads to pragmatic failure and makes no sense. The Uzbek pragmatic/cultural equivalent is «Ichikmoq» or «Ko'zi qizimoq» (literally: his eye grew hot / red with envy) [9]. Conversely, the Uzbek idiom «ko'zini boylamoq» literally means «to tie someone's eyes», but its pragmatic meaning is to deceive or hypnotize. The English equivalent is not physical, but animalistic: «to pull the wool over someone's eyes» [8].

3.3. Table of Somatistic Phraseology and Translation Challenges

Source Idiom (English/Uzbek)	Component Somatism	Literal Meaning (Denotative)	Pragmatic / Cultural Meaning	Recommended Translation Strategy
«To lose one's head»	Head (Bosh)	To misplace one's skull	To panic; to lose self-control	Idiomatic Analogy: O‘zini yo‘qotib qo‘ymoq / Aqli shoshmoq
«Kallasi ishlamoq»	Head (Kalla)	For the skull to function	To be highly intelligent or sharp	Idiomatic Replacement: To be sharp-witted / To have brains
«To wash one's hands of»	Hand (Qo‘l)	To clean one's upper limbs	To refuse further responsibility	Pragmatic Equivalence: Qo‘lini yuvib, qo‘ltig‘iga urmoq / Etagini qoqqan bo‘lmoq
«Qo‘li uzun»	Hand (Qo‘l)	Having long physical arms	Having immense power, influence, or wealth	Descriptive Paraphrase: To have a long reach / To be influential and wealthy
«To be all ears»	Ear (Quloq)	Consisting entirely of ears	Listening with undivided attention	Analogical Substitution: Muloqotga tayyor bo‘lmoq / Qulog‘i senda bo‘lmoq
«Yuragi orqasiga tortib ketdi»	Heart (Yurak)	His heart pulled to his back	To be suddenly terrified	Idiomatic Replacement: His heart sank / To have one's heart in one's mouth

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The empirical evidence indicates that when somatisms are translated literally, they trigger pragmatic failure. Pragmatic failure occurs when the target text reader decodes the literal message but completely misses the intended emotional, evaluative, or cultural context [6]. For instance, if an English translator encounters the Uzbek phrase «boshi ko‘kka yetdi» (literally: his head reached the sky) and translates it as «his head touched the sky», the Western reader might interpret it as a surrealist or mythological event rather than a simple expression of extreme happiness (to be over the moon or to be on cloud nine).

Baker notes that a language may have a specific idiom for a situation, but another language may express that exact same meaning through a different lexical component [2]. In the case of somatisms, this is known as somatistic shift. For example, the English phrase «To talk behind someone's back» (incorporating back) corresponds to the Uzbek phrase «G‘iybat qilmoq» or «Ortidan gapirmoq» (utilizing the concept of behind). Furthermore, the stylistic registers of somatisms differ. In Uzbek, the word kalla (head) is slightly colloquial compared to bosh (head), yet in phraseology, kallasi bor represents high praise for intellect. In English, brain or head carries similar dualities (e.g., «brainy», «headstrong»). The translator must carefully balance these registers during the domestication or foreignization process [3].

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the translation of phraseological units containing somatisms from English into Uzbek and vice versa exposes the deep-seated cultural differences between the Anglo-Saxon and Turkic linguistic worldviews. The human body is a universal canvas, but the cultural ink applied to it varies immensely.

The study demonstrates that:
1. Denotative translation is ineffective: A literal rendering of body-part idioms leads to an immediate loss of pragmatic force and results in cognitive dissonance for the target reader [6].
2. Cultural analogies are essential: The translator must prioritize the pragmatic effect over the linguistic components. If the English idiom uses the heart, but the Uzbek emotional equivalent relies on the liver or gut, the somatistic component must be sacrificed to preserve the cultural meaning [5].
3. Contextual selection of strategies: Translators should adopt a systematic approach, choosing idiomatic analogy when available, descriptive paraphrasing when a cultural gap (lacuna) exists, and lexical adjustment to preserve the stylistic tone [2].

Ultimately, mastering the pragmatic translation of somatisms enhances intercultural communication and prevents cultural misunderstandings, making it a critical asset for modern translators.

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