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PHRASEOLOGICAL IMAGERY AND EMOTIONAL LOSS IN THE ARABIC TRANSLATION OF ABDULLA QODIRIY'S O'TKAN KUNLAR (BYGONE DAYS)

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Abstract: Phraseological units constitute one of the most challenging areas of literary translation because their meaning is created not only through denotation but also through figurative imagery, cultural connotation, emotional intensity, and pragmatic function. The present article examines the translation of emotionally marked phraseological expressions in the Arabic version of Abdulla Qodiriy's O'tkan kunlar, published as Al-Ayyām al-Khawālī in 2024. The study focuses on the relationship between semantic preservation and the reproduction of phraseological imagery. Using comparative, componential-semantic, contextual, and linguopragmatic methods, Uzbek phraseological units are compared with their Arabic renderings according to five parameters: semantic nucleus, figurative image, emotional intensity, connotation, and pragmatic function. The analysis reveals that semantic preservation does not necessarily ensure figurative-emotional equivalence. Several translation patterns are identified, including figurative preservation, image modification, descriptive explicitation, figurative neutralization, emotional attenuation, and functional compensation. Particular attention is paid to somatic phraseology involving ko'ngil 'heart/inner self', qalb 'heart', ko'z 'eye', bag'ir 'bosom', and yurak 'heart'. The findings demonstrate that Arabic frequently possesses resources capable of reconstructing Uzbek somatic imagery, whereas some culturally or contextually specific images undergo restructuring or reduction. The article therefore proposes distinguishing semantic preservation, image preservation, and emotional-pragmatic preservation as separate but interrelated dimensions of phraseological translation.

Keywords: phraseological translation, emotional phraseology, figurative imagery, O'tkan kunlar, Arabic translation, linguopragmatics, somatic phraseology, emotional loss, functional compensation.

1. Introduction

Phraseological units occupy a special position in literary discourse because their communicative value usually exceeds the sum of the lexical meanings of their individual components. An idiomatic or figurative expression may simultaneously nominate a situation, construct an image, encode cultural experience, intensify emotion, and reveal the speaker's attitude. For this reason, the translation of phraseological units is not simply a problem of identifying an equivalent meaning in another language.

The problem becomes particularly complex in literary translation. When a translator replaces a source-language phraseological image with a neutral lexical item, the reader may still understand what has happened and what a character feels. Nevertheless, the manner in which that emotion is aesthetically and culturally conceptualised may disappear. Conversely, a translator may replace the original image with another image natural to the target language and thereby preserve the communicative and emotional function despite formal non-correspondence.

This distinction requires a reconsideration of what constitutes "loss" in phraseological translation. Loss should not automatically be identified with every change of lexical components. If a different target-language image performs approximately the same semantic and emotional-pragmatic function, the transformation may more appropriately be described as image substitution

or functional compensation. Genuine loss becomes more evident when semantic meaning is retained but imagery, intensity, connotation, or stylistic markedness is substantially reduced.

This problem is particularly relevant to Abdulla Qodiriy's O'tkan kunlar. The novel contains numerous expressions in which emotional and psychological states are conceptualised through body parts, physical movement, space, light and darkness, fire, containment, and other concrete images. The characters do not merely experience suspicion, anger, joy, grief, or anxiety; these emotions enter the ko'ngil, burn in the yurak, become visible in the ko'z, constrict the chest, or appear as something too large to remain within the human body.

The Arabic translation of the novel, Al-Ayyām al-Khawālī (الأيام الخوالي), translated by Mohamed Nasr El-Gebaly and published by Dar Al Maaref in 2024, provides valuable material for examining what happens to such imagery when Uzbek phraseological-emotional structures are transferred into Arabic.

The central research problem of the article can therefore be formulated as follows: **Does the preservation of the semantic meaning of a phraseological unit necessarily ensure the preservation of its figurative and emotional-pragmatic potential?**

The study proceeds from the hypothesis that these forms of correspondence are related but not identical:

semantic preservation ≠ image preservation ≠ emotional-pragmatic preservation.

Accordingly, the purpose of the article is to identify the major transformations affecting phraseological imagery in the Arabic translation of O'tkan kunlar and to determine which components of the original expression are preserved, modified, strengthened, or reduced.

2. Theoretical Background

The difficulty of translating phraseological units has long been recognised in Translation Studies. Baker treats idioms and fixed expressions as a specific problem of equivalence above word level and points to such difficulties as recognising idiomatic meaning, finding corresponding target-language expressions, and reconciling meaning with differences in form and context[1]. Phraseological translation therefore requires decisions extending beyond lexical replacement.

From a functional perspective, the preservation of identical lexical components is not always essential. Nida's distinction between formal correspondence and dynamic equivalence established the broader principle that the effect and communicative value of a translated expression may sometimes require formal restructuring[2]. Newmark similarly recognised the significance of metaphor and figurative meaning in literary translation and discussed the possibility of reproducing, replacing, or reducing source-text images according to their function[3].

These principles become particularly significant when phraseology carries emotion. An emotionally marked phraseological unit has at least two interacting dimensions: it refers to a psychological state or evaluative situation while simultaneously presenting that state through an image. Thus, translating the emotional meaning without the image may preserve the informational content but modify the aesthetic and pragmatic experience of the reader.

For the purposes of the present research, phraseological equivalence is therefore examined through five interrelated components:

semantic nucleus → figurative image → emotional intensity → connotation → pragmatic function.

[1] Baker, M. In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation. 2nd ed. London–New York: Routledge, 2011, pp. 67–84.

[2] Nida, E.A. *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1964, pp. 159–171.

[3] Newmark, P. *A Textbook of Translation*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1988, pp. 104–113.

The distinction makes it possible to avoid treating all transformations as equivalent types of "loss". A translation may preserve the semantic nucleus and image but modify intensity; preserve meaning and intensity while replacing the image; or preserve only the general informational content while neutralising the figurative and emotional structure.

3. Materials and Methods

The empirical material was selected from a parallel phraseological card index compiled from the Uzbek text of O'tkan kunlar and its 2024 Arabic translation. The examples employed in this article constitute a separate sample from the broader dissertation corpus and were selected to test the proposed model on additional phraseological material.

The Uzbek examples are referenced according to the source edition used in the research, while the Arabic page numbers refer to the 2024 Arabic edition. The card index contains, among others, the correspondences ko'nglim chopmaydi (53/92), ko'zi yondi (71/122), ko'ngliga shubha soldi (96/153), ko'ngli toraydi (122/190), qalbi qorong'ulashdi (125/194), ko'z o'ngida dunyo qorong'ulashdi (139/213), bag'rini chok etasiz (157/120), dunyoga sig'maslik (158/121), g'azabini ichiga yutdi (208/309), vujudi zir etdi (217/321), yuragi qinidan chiqar (219/323), and yuragining yonishi (224/331).

Comparative, contextual, componential-semantic and linguopragmatic methods were employed. Each pair was evaluated according to: (1) preservation of semantic meaning; (2) preservation of the source image; (3) change in emotional intensity; (4) preservation or reduction of connotation; and (5) preservation of pragmatic function.

4. Results and Discussion

An important result of the analysis is that Uzbek and Arabic share a number of somatic metaphorical models. Consequently, phraseological translation does not always require neutralization. Consider: Uzbek: Xabarni eshitgach, ko'ngli toraydi va taskin topmadi. p. 122 Arabic: حين سمع الخبر ضاق صدره ولم يجد راحة p. 190. The Uzbek ko'ngli toraydi conceptualises psychological distress through spatial constriction of the inner self. The abstract emotional state is therefore represented as a physical reduction of internal space.

Arabic reconstructs the state through ضاق صدره — literally, "his chest became constricted". Although ko'ngil and صدر are not formally identical body concepts, both constructions employ the same underlying conceptual structure: emotional distress is internal physical constriction.

The image has therefore changed at the level of the specific somatic component, but not at the level of conceptual metaphor. The accompanying taskin topmadi is similarly reflected in لم يجد راحة, reinforcing the psychological discomfort.

This is better classified as somatic image substitution with functional preservation than as phraseological loss. The translator replaces one culturally conventional body-centred expression with another natural Arabic somatic model while preserving the emotional effect.

An even closer correspondence occurs in: Uzbek: Go'yo uning qalbi birdan qorong'ulashgandek bo'ldi. p. 125 Arabic: كأن قلبه قد أظلم فجأة p. 194. Here both languages conceptualise the negative psychological change through heart + darkness. The Uzbek qalbi qorong'ulashdi and Arabic قلبه أظلم preserve the same body component, spatial locus, and metaphorical contrast between psychological well-being and darkness. This represents a high degree of semantic, figurative and emotional-pragmatic correspondence.

The comparison is important because it demonstrates that cultural difference does not automatically create phraseological loss. Uzbek and Arabic may activate similar embodied metaphors and thereby permit close figurative transfer.

Another representative example involves ko‘ngil: Uzbek: O‘xshamag‘an yerda bir xotinning arzga kelishi qo‘rboshining ko‘ngliga shubha soldi. p. 96 Arabic: أثارت هذه الزيارة المفاجئة لهذه المرأة الغريبة التي جاءت تقدم شكواها الشك والريبة في قلب رئيس الشرطة p. 153

The Uzbek phrase ko‘ngliga shubha soldi conceptualises suspicion as an entity introduced into the inner psychological space of a person.

The Arabic version retains the somatic locus through في قلب رئيس الشرطة and explicitly names two related states, الشك والريبة (“doubt and suspicion”). Thus, the source expression is not neutralised.

However, a transformation does occur. Uzbek soldi constructs the metaphor of putting something into the heart, whereas Arabic أثارت conceptualises the event more as arousing/causing suspicion.

The relation can therefore be represented as: **putting suspicion into the inner self → arousing suspicion in the heart.**

The semantic nucleus and emotional orientation are preserved, while the event structure of the metaphor is modified. At the same time, الشك والريبة produces a degree of lexical expansion.

This case illustrates figurative restructuring with semantic-pragmatic preservation, rather than loss.

A closely related metaphor appears in: Uzbek: Bu so‘zlardan so‘ng uning ko‘z o‘ngida dunyo qorong‘ulashdi. p. 139 Arabic: بعد تلك الكلمات، أظلمت الدنيا في عينيه p. 213

The source expression conceptualises sudden psychological shock or despair as the darkening of the external world before the eyes. Arabic reproduces virtually the same conceptual organisation: أظلمت الدنيا في عينيه — “the world became dark in his eyes.”

The correspondence preserves the principal components:

world + darkness + eyes + negative psychological experience.

This example demonstrates that phraseological imagery may cross linguistic boundaries with minimal restructuring when both languages possess comparable metaphorical mappings. It also supports a broader methodological conclusion: the presence of figurative language in the source does not itself predict translation difficulty. What matters is whether the target language possesses a conventional or comprehensible conceptual model capable of accommodating the source image.

One of the strongest examples of phraseological equivalence occurs in the representation of suppressed anger: Uzbek: Otabek g‘azabini ichiga yutdi. p. 208 Arabic: كظم عاتبك غيظه p. 309.

The Uzbek expression conceptualises suppressed anger as something that is swallowed and retained inside the body. The image combines emotion, containment, and deliberate control. The Arabic كظم غيظه is a conventional expression referring to restraining or suppressing anger. The lexical image is not a literal reproduction of “swallowing”, but the underlying pragmatic scenario remains:

anger arises → the person prevents its outward expression → anger remains internally controlled.

The semantic nucleus, emotional intensity, and behavioural function are consequently preserved to a high degree.

This example demonstrates why literal image identity should not be made an absolute requirement of phraseological equivalence. The Arabic expression is natural within the target language and recreates the essential emotional-pragmatic situation. It therefore represents functional phraseological equivalence.

The card index also contains the expression: Uning vujudi zirr etdi. p. 217 Arabic: حتى شعر برجفة كامل جسده p. 321 The Uzbek vujudi zirr etdi is highly compressed. A brief physiological image communicates an abrupt emotional reaction through the body. The Arabic version explicates this sensation as a tremor affecting كامل جسده — “his entire body”. Thus: compressed bodily reaction → explicitly described whole-body reaction.

The source image is not lost, but its linguistic form changes from phraseological compression to descriptive somatic representation. The addition of "the whole body" may even increase the perceived physiological scale of the reaction. The example is therefore better described as descriptive explicitation with preservation of emotional intensity.

This finding is significant because descriptivisation is often automatically associated with stylistic weakening. The present material shows that this is not always the case. A phraseological unit may lose compactness while retaining — or potentially strengthening — the reader's perception of emotional intensity.

A more complex transformation occurs in: Uzbek: Yuragi qinidan chiqar. p. 219, Arabic: وأخذ قلبه يدق بقوة p. 323. The Uzbek expression creates a hyperbolic spatial image: the heart is imagined as becoming so violently agitated that it is about to leave its enclosure. The emotional experience is not merely described physiologically; it is exaggerated through an impossible bodily movement. The Arabic version, أخذ قلبه يدق بقوة, explicitly states that "his heart began to beat strongly". The physiological basis remains: **intense emotion → accelerated/violent heartbeat.**

However, the hyperbolic image of the heart leaving its "sheath" disappears. The target text moves from figurative hyperbole towards physiological description. This represents a clear case of figurative reduction without semantic loss.

The reader of the Arabic version understands the character's intense agitation, but the unusual and culturally marked figurative form through which Qodiriy conveys that agitation becomes less prominent. Here semantic and emotional information is substantially preserved, while image preservation is weaker. This example directly supports the central hypothesis of the article: semantic preservation does not automatically entail preservation of phraseological imagery.

A contrasting result occurs with the image of burning: Uzbek: Yuragining yonishi bosilurliq emas edi. p. 224 Arabic: كان قلبه لا يزال مشتعلاً p. 331

The Uzbek expression represents continuing emotional suffering through the image of a burning heart. Arabic reconstructs the same model through قلبه ... مشتعلاً, "his heart was still burning." Both expressions activate the conceptual metaphor: intense emotion is fire.

The Arabic لا يزال additionally preserves the durative aspect: the emotional burning continues rather than occurring momentarily.

The example therefore achieves correspondence at several levels simultaneously:

semantic nucleus + image + somatic locus + duration + emotional intensity.

This constitutes one of the strongest cases of phraseological-emotional equivalence in the analysed sample.

The expression bag'rini chok etmoq provides another instructive example: Uzbek: Siz bayovlar bag'rini chok etasiz. p. 157 Arabic: إنكم بمظالمكم تمزقون قلوب المساكين p. 120. The Uzbek construction presents emotional suffering as the physical tearing of the bag'ir. Arabic similarly employs تمزقون قلوب — "you tear the hearts". The specific body term changes: bag'ir → قلب, but the underlying metaphor remains: causing emotional pain is tearing an internal organ.

The target expression consequently preserves not only the negative semantic content but also the violent physical image through which the emotional effect is intensified.

This is an example of somatic substitution without figurative loss. The lexical components are different, yet the conceptual and pragmatic structure is highly comparable.

Positive emotion also appears through phraseological hyperbole: Uzbek: Shodligidan go'yo dunyoga sig'mas edi. p. 158 Arabic: كان من الفرح بحيث لا يسعه الكون p. 121

The Uzbek expression represents extreme joy through the impossibility of being contained by the world. Arabic preserves the same hyperbolic spatial model: لا يسعه الكون — "the universe could not contain him". Indeed, the Arabic الكون ("the universe") may even broaden the spatial scale of the image compared with dunyo. The basic metaphor is fully recognisable: extreme emotion exceeds spatial containment.

Here formal lexical differences do not produce stylistic loss. Instead, semantic meaning, hyperbole, imagery, intensity, and pragmatic function are jointly reconstructed.

This example is especially valuable because it prevents the analysis from becoming one-sided. Phraseological transformation in the Arabic translation cannot be characterised solely through "loss". There are also instances of strong figurative correspondence and functional recreation.

The preceding examples reveal an important distinction between image loss and phraseological-form loss.

In vujudi zirr etdi → شعر برجفة كامل جسده, the bodily-emotional reaction remains vivid, but the compact Uzbek phrase becomes more descriptive. In yuragi qinidan chiqar → أخذ قلبه يدق بقوة, by contrast, the physiological meaning remains while the source hyperbole is substantially neutralised.

These cases should not be assigned to the same category. The first primarily involves:

phraseological compression → descriptive explicitation,

whereas the second involves:

figurative hyperbole → literalised physiological description.

Thus, stylistic loss in phraseological translation is itself multidimensional. It may affect compactness, imagery, intensity, cultural connotation, or several of these simultaneously.

5. General Discussion

The analysis demonstrates that phraseological-emotional translation in Al-Ayyām al-Khawālī cannot be adequately evaluated through the simple opposition equivalent/non-equivalent.

The examined material reveals at least three major levels of preservation.

The first is semantic preservation: the target text communicates the central psychological state or situation represented by the source expression.

The second is figurative preservation: the target expression maintains the source conceptual image or reconstructs a closely corresponding target-language image.

The third is emotional-pragmatic preservation: the target expression performs a comparable function in terms of intensity, characterisation, interpersonal positioning, and reader-oriented emotional effect.

These levels may coincide. Qalbi qorong'ulashdi → قلبه قد أظلم, ko'z o'ngida dunyo qorong'ulashdi → أظلمت الدنيا في عينيه, and yuragining yonishi → مشتعلاً ... قلبه demonstrate strong correspondence across all three dimensions.

They may also diverge. Yuragi qinidan chiqar → أخذ قلبه يدق بقوة preserves the emotional situation but reduces the hyperbolic source image.

A third possibility is image substitution with functional compensation. Ko'ngli toraydi → ضاق صدره changes the concrete somatic component while preserving the conceptual metaphor of emotional constriction. Likewise, bag'rini chok etmoq → تمزقون قلوب changes bag'ir to "heart" but maintains the violent bodily metaphor of emotional injury.

These findings allow the following model to be proposed:

Source phraseological unit
→ semantic nucleus
→ figurative model
→ emotional intensity
→ cultural/connotative value
→ pragmatic function
→ Arabic reconstruction

On this basis, the main transformations observed in the analysed sample can be classified as:

full figurative-emotional preservation;

somatic image substitution;

figurative restructuring;
descriptive explicitation;
figurative reduction;
functional compensation.

This classification also clarifies the concept of emotional loss. Loss should be claimed only after identifying what exactly has been reduced. If the concrete source image changes but an equivalent target-language image preserves the same semantic and pragmatic function, the phenomenon is more accurately described as substitution or compensation. If, however, the target version preserves only the emotional situation while eliminating hyperbole, imagery, stylistic compactness, or culturally significant connotation, the grounds for identifying stylistic-emotional loss become considerably stronger. The results consequently support the formula:

semantic preservation ≠ image preservation ≠ emotional-pragmatic preservation.

The three categories interact, but none can automatically substitute for the others.

Another noteworthy finding concerns somatic phraseology. The material indicates substantial metaphorical compatibility between Uzbek and Arabic in conceptualising emotional experience through the heart, chest, eyes, and body. This compatibility enables several Uzbek expressions to be reconstructed in Arabic without complete figurative neutralisation. At the same time, the concrete somatic locus may shift — for example, from ko‘ngil to صدر, or from bag‘ir to قلب — while the broader conceptual metaphor remains intact.

This suggests that phraseological equivalence should sometimes be assessed at the level of conceptual image, rather than requiring identity of individual body-part lexemes.

6. Conclusion

The comparative analysis of emotionally marked phraseological units in Abdulla Qodiriy’s O‘tkan kunlar and its Arabic translation revealed that the transfer of phraseological emotion involves several distinct forms of transformation rather than a uniform process of preservation or loss.

The study established that semantic preservation does not necessarily guarantee preservation of phraseological imagery. In several cases, the Arabic translation successfully communicates the psychological state represented in the Uzbek source while modifying or reducing the figurative mechanism through which that state is expressed.

At the same time, the analysis confirmed that a change in the concrete source image should not automatically be interpreted as stylistic loss. The correspondences ko‘ngli toraydi → ضاق صدره and bag‘rini chok etmoq → تمزقون قلوب demonstrate that somatic components may change while the conceptual metaphor, emotional intensity, and pragmatic function remain substantially preserved.

The analysis further showed that Uzbek and Arabic display notable compatibility in the metaphorical conceptualisation of emotion through darkness, fire, bodily constriction, the heart, the eyes, and spatial containment. This compatibility facilitates the reconstruction of several source images in forms that remain natural in Arabic.

Conversely, the correspondence yuragi qinidan chiqar → أخذ قلبه يدق بقوة demonstrated that the semantic and physiological basis of an emotional expression may survive while its hyperbolic imagery is neutralised. Such cases provide direct evidence that semantic equivalence and figurative-emotional equivalence are not identical.

The findings therefore support a three-level approach to phraseological translation:

semantic preservation → figurative preservation → emotional-pragmatic preservation.

The proposed distinction allows translation loss to be identified more precisely. Rather than stating simply that “the phraseological unit was lost”, analysis should determine whether the

reduction affects imagery, emotional intensity, connotation, stylistic compactness, cultural markedness, or pragmatic effect.

Thus, the principal conclusion of the study is that successful phraseological translation should not be evaluated exclusively through the preservation of denotative meaning. The decisive issue is the extent to which the target text reconstructs the interaction between meaning, image, emotion, and pragmatic function.

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