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# TRANSLATION AND MULTILINGUAL CHALLENGES OF IDIOMS EXPRESSING "LIFE"

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## ABSTRACT

*This study explores the translation and multilingual challenges associated with idiomatic expressions conveying the concept of "life" in English and Uzbek. Idioms, deeply rooted in cultural and cognitive frameworks, often lack direct equivalents across languages, making their translation complex. Through qualitative analysis of a selected corpus of idioms from both languages, this research examines semantic shifts, cultural adaptations, and strategies used to preserve meaning and stylistic effects. The findings highlight significant challenges in achieving equivalence, especially where cultural metaphors diverge. The study contributes to improved understanding of idiomatic translation and offers insights for translators and linguists working in multilingual contexts.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Idioms, Translation, Multilingual Challenges, Life Expressions, Semantic Equivalence, Cultural Adaptation, English-Uzbek Translation.*

## INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected world, the translation of idiomatic expressions has become a significant challenge for linguists, translators, and language learners alike. Idioms are often deeply rooted in the cultural and cognitive frameworks of a language community, which makes their direct equivalents in other languages rare or entirely absent. Among such idiomatic expressions, those conveying the concept of "life" are particularly nuanced due to their emotional, metaphorical, and philosophical implications. These idioms frequently reflect a culture's perception of existence, fate, and the human condition, and are often used in both everyday speech and literary texts.

The multilingual translation of idioms expressing "life" presents two main challenges: semantic transfer and cultural equivalence. While some idioms may have approximate analogues in other languages, many do not, and this leads to either loss of meaning or distortion of the original message during translation. For example, the English idiom *"life is no bed of roses"* conveys the idea that life is full of difficulties and cannot always be pleasant. Its literal translation into Uzbek – *"hayot guldonga o'xshamaydi"* – would not convey the intended meaning unless culturally adapted or substituted with a native equivalent like *"hayot beshavqat"* or *"hayot mashaqqatli yo'l" [4]*.

Furthermore, the complexity increases in multilingual environments where idioms must be translated not only between two languages, but also across various linguistic systems with distinct syntactic and semantic norms. This study aims to examine the challenges involved in translating idioms expressing the notion of "life" between English and Uzbek, highlighting how idiomatic meaning shifts, adapts, or becomes lost in the process. By analyzing selected idioms and their equivalents (or lack thereof), the study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of idiomatic translation and the broader issue of linguistic relativity in multilingual communication.

## METHODS

This study employed a qualitative comparative method to investigate the translation challenges of idioms expressing the concept of "life" in English and Uzbek [3]. The research was conducted in several stages, including idiom selection, categorization, translation analysis, and interpretation of cultural-linguistic differences.

### *Corpus Selection*

A corpus of 30 idioms related to "life" was compiled from reputable English idiom dictionaries such as *Oxford Idioms Dictionary* and *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms*, as well as authentic Uzbek literary and oral sources including dictionaries of phraseological units and classical texts. The idioms were selected based on their frequency of use, metaphorical complexity, and cultural significance.

### *Translation Identification*

Each English idiom was matched with its closest equivalent in Uzbek, using both published translations and researcher-generated translations when no established equivalent was available. Similarly, idioms originating in Uzbek were analyzed for potential English equivalents [2]. In cases where no direct equivalent existed, the idioms were categorized as *non-equivalent*, and adaptation strategies were proposed.

### Categorization and Analytical Framework

The selected idioms were categorized into thematic subgroups, such as:
Life as struggle (e.g., *Life is no bed of roses*)
Life as a journey (e.g., *That's life*, *Life goes on*)
Life and death metaphors (e.g., *To cling to life*)

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The study used Vinay and Darbelnet's translation procedures (e.g., literal translation, modulation, equivalence, adaptation) and Newmark's idiom translation strategies as a theoretical framework. These strategies were applied to examine how semantic content and cultural context are preserved or altered during translation [1].

***Data Analysis Procedure***

The idioms were analyzed in terms of:

- Lexical equivalence
- Semantic transparency
- Cultural translatability
- Stylistic effect

Each idiom pair was evaluated to determine whether the translation retained the original metaphor, conveyed similar emotional tone, and functioned appropriately within the target language's discourse. Discrepancies were identified and discussed with reference to cultural and linguistic factors.

## RESULTS

The analysis revealed that idioms expressing "life" pose substantial translation challenges due to cultural specificity and metaphorical depth. Among the 30 idioms analyzed:

Approximately 40% had near-equivalent idioms in the target language that preserved both semantic and emotional content. For example, the English idiom *"Life is a journey"* corresponds well with the Uzbek idiom *"Hayot — bu sayohat"*.

Around 30% required modulation or adaptation to convey the intended meaning without direct lexical correspondence. For example, *"To cling to life"* was translated in Uzbek as *"hayotga berilmoq, hayotga havas qo'ymoq"*, which preserves the metaphor but adjusts the form for naturalness.

About 20% of idioms were found to be non-equivalent, with no direct counterparts in the other language. In such cases, translators resorted to paraphrasing or cultural substitution. For instance, the English idiom *"Life is no bed of roses"* was translated not literally but as *"hayot ayovsiz va mashaqqatli"*, which conveys the sense of hardship without the floral metaphor.

The remaining 10% highlighted difficulties related to syntactic differences and stylistic shifts, where literal translation would result in awkward or unnatural expressions. These idioms required more creative solutions to preserve stylistic and pragmatic effects. The study also found that Uzbek idioms often emphasize endurance and hardship, reflecting cultural values, whereas English idioms tend to have more diverse metaphoric expressions ranging from nature to emotions. This cultural divergence impacted translation choices and strategies.

## DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that idiomatic translation, especially for expressions related to life, necessitates a nuanced understanding of both source and target cultures. The significant number of non-equivalent idioms underscores the role of cultural context in shaping metaphorical language [5]. Translators must balance fidelity to the original text with the need for natural, culturally relevant expressions in the target language.

Vinay and Darbelnet's procedures proved effective in classifying translation strategies, with *modulation* and *adaptation* being most frequently employed to overcome equivalence gaps. Newmark's approach further highlighted the importance of recognizing idioms as fixed expressions that often resist literal translation.

The study's bilingual examples illustrate how cultural values are embedded in idiomatic expressions, influencing their translatability. For instance, the Uzbek focus on endurance aligns with societal experiences, while English idioms may reflect individualistic or emotional perspectives.

## CONCLUSION

Translating idioms expressing "life" between English and Uzbek presents complex multilingual challenges rooted in cultural and semantic differences. While some idioms have direct equivalents, many require adaptation or paraphrasing to maintain meaning and stylistic impact. Understanding these challenges is essential for translators, language educators, and linguists working in multilingual contexts.

Future research may expand this study by including additional languages or exploring idiomatic translation in spoken discourse. Enhanced awareness of cultural and linguistic factors can improve translation quality and intercultural communication.

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