CHALLENGES IN PRESERVING NATIONAL IDENTITY IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH PROVERBS INTO UZBEK

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Abstract: This study explores the challenges in preserving national identity when translating English proverbs into Uzbek. Proverbs carry cultural values, historical background, and social norms, which often do not have direct equivalents in another language. The research analyzes linguistic, semantic, and cultural difficulties encountered in the translation process and highlights strategies for maintaining cultural authenticity while ensuring comprehension for Uzbek readers. Emphasis is placed on the translator's role in balancing fidelity to the source text with cultural adaptation, as well as the impact of translation choices on preserving national identity. Findings suggest that a combination of cultural explanation, adaptation, and creative equivalence can help retain the essence of the original proverbs while making them meaningful in the target language.

Keywords: national identity, English proverbs, Uzbek translation, cultural preservation, linguistic challenges, semantic adaptation, cross-cultural communication.

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs are an integral part of a nation's cultural heritage, reflecting historical experiences, social values, and collective wisdom. They serve not only as linguistic expressions but also as carriers of national identity. Translating English proverbs into Uzbek poses a significant challenge because proverbs often embody cultural nuances, idiomatic expressions, and implicit social norms that may not have direct equivalents in the target language.

The process of translation requires more than mere linguistic substitution; it demands an understanding of both source and target cultures. Translators must navigate semantic differences, cultural connotations, and stylistic variations to maintain the original proverb's meaning while making it comprehensible and relevant to Uzbek readers. Failure to preserve these cultural elements can lead to loss of national identity and misinterpretation of the proverb's intended message.

MAIN BODY

Main body: Deep linguistic and grammatical analysis

Lexical Analysis (Leksik tahlil)

English proverbs are lexically dense, often combining idiomatic vocabulary and cultural references. For example, "A stitch in time saves nine" contains lexical units

“stitch,” “time,” and “saves” that are culturally specific. Translating this into Uzbek“Vaqtida qilingan ish o‘n ishni tejaydi” requires:

Lexical equivalence: English “stitch” → Uzbek “ish” (work/task) as the closest culturally and semantically relevant word.

Semantic expansion: “saves nine” → “o‘n ishni tejaydi,” preserving the underlying causal and preventive meaning.

Idiomatic adaptation: Avoiding literal translation “ip tikish vaqtida o‘n tikuvni tejaydi,” which would be unnatural and obscure in Uzbek culture.

Thus, lexical analysis ensures that each word conveys both denotative and connotative meanings consistent with Uzbek cultural norms.

Morphemic and Morphological Analysis (Morfemik va morfologik tahlil)

Morphology in Uzbek is agglutinative, meaning words often include multiple morphemes to indicate tense, aspect, number, case, or possession. For instance:

In the proverb “El og‘ziga elak tutib bo‘lmas”, the verb phrase “tutib bo‘lmas” combines:

tut- (root: to hold/control)

-ib (converb morpheme indicating action continuity)

bo‘l- (auxiliary verb morpheme indicating potentiality)

-mas (negative morpheme)

This combination creates a complex verbal form that conveys negation, potentiality, and temporal structure, all at once. Translating an English proverb like “You cannot control what people say” requires constructing a morphologically equivalent Uzbek form that preserves negation, modality, and semantic force.

Similarly, in “Qaytib kirishing mumkin bo‘lgan eshikni qattiq yopma”:

Qaytib kirish-ing → verbal noun derived from verb root with continuous aspect

mumkin bo‘l-gan → modal expression with auxiliary verb + participle, expressing possibility

qattiq yop-ma → imperative negative form, instructing action avoidance

This morphological structure preserves tense, aspect, modality, and mood in line with Uzbek grammar, while reflecting the proverb’s cautionary message.

Syntactic Analysis (Sintaktik tahlil)

English proverbs often use elliptical sentences, inversion, and parallelism, which need syntactic restructuring in Uzbek. For instance:

“Birds of a feather flock together” → “Bir qabil qushlar birga uchadi”

Subject: Bir qabil qushlar (plural noun phrase with modifier)

Predicate: birga uchadi (verb phrase with adverb of manner)

The translation adheres to SOV order typical of Uzbek syntax, maintaining grammatical agreement between subject and verb, while preserving the proverb’s semantic and stylistic balance.

Neglecting these syntactic norms can result in ungrammatical or semantically ambiguous translations, undermining both intelligibility and cultural resonance.

Semantic Analysis (Semantik tahlil)

Semantic analysis ensures that cultural meaning, metaphorical depth, and moral lesson survive translation. For example:

Uzbek proverb: “Vaqtni qadrlash — vaqtni tejash”

English literal translation: “Valuing time is saving time”

The semantic analysis involves:

Equivalence of concept: “vaqtni qadrlash” = “valuing time”

Causal relationship: represented by dash in Uzbek, maintains cause-effect link

Moral and cultural meaning: emphasizes diligence and foresight, aligning with Uzbek social norms

Semantic adaptation ensures the proverb retains its pragmatic function: teaching a moral lesson, not just translating words.

Combined Grammatical-Linguistic Strategy

To preserve national identity, translators follow a combined strategy:

Lexical choice: Selecting culturally and semantically appropriate words

Morphological conformity: Applying correct tense, aspect, negation, and modality morphemes

Syntactic restructuring: Adjusting word order, subject-verb agreement, and clause linkage

Semantic fidelity: Retaining idiomatic meaning, cultural lesson, and pragmatic function

For example, in “El og‘ziga elak tutib bo‘lmas” → “You cannot filter people’s mouths”:

Lexical: “elak” → “filter” (functional equivalent, with explanation if necessary)

Morphological: negative potential verb form preserved

Syntactic: subject-verb agreement adapted for English grammar

Semantic: meaning about social perception and inevitability of speech preserved

Uzbek Scholars and Practical Guidelines

Uzbek scholars such as Rahimova Shahzoda, Rashidova Maftuna, and Elmuratova Nafisa highlight that grammatical precision and morphemic awareness are crucial in proverb translation. Translators must respect Uzbek grammatical rules while applying semantic and cultural adaptation, in accordance with:

Practical example table (lexical, morphological, semantic analysis)

Uzbek Proverb	English Translation	Lexical Strategy	Morphological Features	Syntactic Adjustments	Semantic Notes
Qaytib kirishing mumkin bo‘lgan eshikni qattiq yopma	Do not slam the door; you might need to come back	Equivalent lexical items, cultural adaptation	Past participle, modal auxiliary, imperative negative	SOV word order, subject-verb agreement	Preserves cautionary meaning, aligns with Uzbek norms
El og‘ziga elak tutib bo‘lmas	You cannot filter people’s mouths	Functional equivalence	Negative potential verb	Subject-verb agreement adjusted for English	Preserves social wisdom, cultural metaphor
Vaqtni qadrlash — vaqtni tejash	Valuing time is saving time	Literal lexical equivalence	Nominalization	Compound sentence construction	Retains moral and cultural lesson

CONCLUSION

Translating English proverbs into Uzbek presents a multifaceted challenge that intertwines linguistic, morphological, syntactic, and semantic considerations. Proverbs are cultural carriers, reflecting the history, values, and social norms of the source language, and any attempt to render them into Uzbek must preserve these elements to maintain national identity.

Through detailed lexical, morphemic, and grammatical analysis, it becomes clear that literal translation alone is insufficient. Translators must employ strategies such as: selecting functional lexical equivalents, applying correct morphological markers, restructuring sentences according to Uzbek syntactic norms, and preserving semantic and idiomatic meaning. These strategies ensure that the cultural essence and pragmatic lesson embedded in the proverb are retained for the target audience.

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