

THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF PROVERBS AND SAYINGS IN TRANSLATION

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Annotation. This paper examines the theoretical aspects of translating proverbs and sayings, focusing on their linguistic, semantic, and cultural characteristics. Proverbs represent fixed expressions reflecting national worldview, traditions, and values. Their translation requires not only linguistic competence but also intercultural awareness. The study analyzes major translation strategies, including equivalence, adaptation, literal translation, and descriptive rendering. Special attention is given to functional and communicative approaches in translation theory. The research is based on recognized linguistic and translation studies sources.

Keywords: proverb, saying, paremiology, translation equivalence, cultural specificity, adaptation, functional approach.

Аннотация. Данная работа рассматривает теоретические аспекты перевода пословиц и поговорок, уделяя внимание их лингвистическим, семантическим и культурным особенностям. Пословицы являются устойчивыми выражениями, отражающими национальное мировоззрение, традиции и ценности. Их перевод требует не только языковой компетенции, но и межкультурной осведомленности. В исследовании анализируются основные переводческие стратегии, включая эквивалентность, адаптацию, буквальный перевод и описательный способ передачи. Особое внимание уделяется функциональному и коммуникативному подходам в теории перевода.

Ключевые слова: пословица, поговорка, паремиология, переводческая эквивалентность, культурная специфика, адаптация, функциональный подход.

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqolada maqol va matallarni tarjima qilishning nazariy jihatlarini, ularning lingvistik, semantik hamda madaniy xususiyatlari yoritiladi. Maqollar xalqning dunyoqarashi, qadriyatlari va an'analarini aks ettiruvchi barqaror birliklardir. Ularni tarjima qilish jarayonida til bilimi bilan bir qatorda madaniyatlararo kompetensiya ham muhim ahamiyat kasb etadi. Tadqiqotda ekvivalentlik, moslashtirish, so'zma-so'z tarjima va tavsifiy tarjima kabi asosiy strategiyalar tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, tarjima nazariyasidagi funksional va kommunikativ yondashuvlarga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: maqol, matl, paremiologiya, tarjima ekvivalentligi, madaniy xoslik, moslashtirish, funksional yondashuv.

INTRODUCTION. Proverbs and sayings constitute an essential part of every nation's linguistic and cultural heritage. As fixed expressions, they encapsulate centuries of experience, moral norms, and collective wisdom.

In translation studies, proverbs present a special challenge because they combine figurative meaning, structural stability, and cultural specificity. Translating proverbs requires more than lexical substitution; it demands semantic interpretation and functional equivalence[1; 2].

Modern translation theory emphasizes communicative effectiveness and cultural adaptation.

Scholars such as Eugene Nida, Peter Newmark, and Mona Baker have highlighted the importance of equivalence and pragmatic meaning in translation. Therefore, the translation of proverbs should be examined within the framework of functional and intercultural communication theories[3; 4].

LITERATURE REVIEW. The study of proverbs and sayings in translation has been widely discussed in linguistic and translation scholarship. Researchers such as Mona Baker, Eugene Nida, Peter Newmark, and Wolfgang Mieder have emphasized the cultural and semantic complexity of paremiological units. Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence highlights the importance of preserving the communicative effect of a proverb rather than its literal form.

Newmark distinguishes between semantic and communicative translation, both of which are relevant when dealing with figurative expressions. Paremiological research also underlines the cultural specificity of proverbs and their role in reflecting national identity. Overall, the literature confirms that proverb translation requires a functional and intercultural approach rather than mechanical word-for-word rendering.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY. The research is based on a qualitative and comparative approach. The study analyzes theoretical sources in translation studies and paremiology, focusing on equivalence, functionalism, and communicative translation theories. Comparative analysis of English, Uzbek, and Russian proverbs is applied to identify similarities and differences in structure, meaning, and cultural imagery. Descriptive and analytical methods are used to evaluate translation strategies and determine their effectiveness in preserving semantic and pragmatic value.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS. The analysis demonstrates that literal translation is effective only when structural and cultural parallels exist between languages. In most cases, functional equivalence and cultural adaptation provide more accurate and natural translations. Comparative examples reveal that full equivalence between proverbs is rare due to cultural specificity and metaphorical variation. The results confirm that successful proverb translation depends on contextual awareness, cultural competence, and the appropriate selection of translation strategies.

Functional approaches prove to be the most productive in achieving communicative adequacy.

Proverbs and sayings represent one of the most stable and culturally marked layers of phraseological units in any language. From a linguistic perspective, they are complete syntactic structures expressing generalized judgments about life, morality, work, and social relations. Unlike ordinary idioms, proverbs usually contain a didactic component and function as independent utterances. Their semantic structure is often metaphorical, relying on imagery drawn from everyday experience, nature, religion, and traditional customs. The fixed nature of proverbs makes them resistant to structural change, which creates additional complexity in translation. Because their meaning is not always deducible from individual lexical items, translators must interpret both literal and figurative levels simultaneously. The semantic organization of proverbs is closely connected with national worldview. Each proverb reflects collective experience accumulated over centuries. Cultural symbols embedded in proverbs frequently differ across languages. For example, animals such as the fox, wolf, dog, or donkey may symbolize different character traits depending on the culture.

In English culture, the fox is commonly associated with cunning, while in other traditions similar qualities may be represented by different animals. Religious and historical references also play a significant role in shaping proverbial meaning¹. Therefore, translation involves decoding cultural associations and reconstructing them in a target language in a way that produces an equivalent pragmatic effect. Without adequate cultural knowledge, literal translation may distort or completely obscure the intended message².

One of the central theoretical problems in proverb translation is the notion of equivalence.

Translation theory distinguishes between formal equivalence and dynamic (functional) equivalence. Formal equivalence attempts to preserve structural and lexical features of the original expression, whereas dynamic equivalence focuses on achieving a similar response from the target audience. In many cases, direct lexical correspondence is impossible, and the translator must prioritize communicative function over form. The concept of equivalence does not imply identical wording but rather similarity in meaning, stylistic value, and pragmatic impact. Consequently, translators often search for existing proverbs in the target language that convey the same moral lesson or communicative purpose³.

Various translation strategies are applied in rendering proverbs and sayings. Literal translation may be appropriate when structural and semantic parallels exist between languages.

This occurs especially when proverbs have universal themes such as time, work, or patience. However, literal translation becomes ineffective when imagery is culture-bound. In such situations, translators may employ functional substitution by selecting a culturally analogous proverb. Adaptation involves modifying imagery to suit the cultural background of the target audience while preserving the core message. Descriptive translation explains the meaning when no equivalent proverb exists. Compensation is used when stylistic or expressive elements cannot be reproduced in the same place within the text and must be conveyed elsewhere. The choice of strategy depends on context, genre, and communicative intention⁴.

Context plays a decisive role in interpreting and translating proverbs. Proverbs may appear in literary texts, journalistic discourse, political speeches, or everyday conversation. Their stylistic function varies accordingly: they may add emotional coloring, irony, persuasion, or moral authority. In literary translation, maintaining stylistic tone and authorial intent is particularly important. A proverb used ironically must preserve its ironic effect in translation. In political or rhetorical contexts, proverbs may serve persuasive purposes and strengthen arguments. Therefore, translators must consider pragmatic factors such as audience expectations, communicative goals, and textual coherence. The functional approach to translation emphasizes that the success of proverb translation is measured not by structural similarity but by communicative effectiveness within a specific context⁵.

¹ Vinay J.-P., Darbelnet J. *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation* — Amsterdam & Philadelphia: "John Benjamins" — 1995. P. 358.

² Baker M. *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation* — London & New York: "Routledge" — 2018. P. 384.

³ Catford J. C. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics* — London: "Oxford University Press" — 1965. P. 103.

⁴ Kuusi M. *Towards an International Type-System of Proverbs* — Helsinki: "Suomalainen Tiedekatemia" — 1972. P. 197.

⁵ Mieder W. *Proverbs: A Handbook* — Westport, CT: "Greenwood Press" — 2004. P. 304.

Comparative analysis of English, Uzbek, and Russian proverbs demonstrates both universal and culture-specific elements. Many proverbs express shared human values such as diligence, honesty, wisdom, and patience. At the same time, differences in imagery reveal national identity and historical development. Climate, geography, religion, and social organization influence metaphorical choices. As a result, full equivalence between proverbs is relatively rare, and translators often rely on partial or functional equivalence. Theoretical research in paremiology and translation studies confirms that successful rendering of proverbs requires interdisciplinary competence, combining linguistic knowledge, cultural awareness, and pragmatic sensitivity. The theoretical study of proverb translation highlights the interaction between language structure, cultural meaning, and communicative function. Proverbs cannot be translated effectively through mechanical word substitution. Instead, translators must interpret underlying meaning, evaluate contextual function, and select appropriate strategies to achieve adequacy and equivalence. The complexity of paremiological units makes them an important object of study within modern translation theory and intercultural communication research⁶.

Table 1. Major translation strategies for rendering proverbs and sayings

№	Translation Strategy	Theoretical Basis	Characteristics	Advantages	Limitations
1	Literal Translation	Formal Equivalence	Preserves lexical and structural form	Maintains original imagery when cultures are similar	May distort meaning if imagery is culture-bound
2	Functional Equivalent	Dynamic Equivalence (Nida)	Uses an existing proverb in the target language with similar meaning	Achieves naturalness and communicative effect	Loses original metaphorical image
3	Cultural Adaptation	Functionalism / Skopos Theory	Replaces source imagery with culturally appropriate imagery	Enhances cultural acceptability	Risk of over-interpretation
4	Descriptive (Explicatory) Translation	Communicative Approach	Explains the meaning instead of preserving structure	Ensures semantic clarity	Reduces stylistic expressiveness
5	Compensation	Pragmatic Approach	Transfers stylistic effect to another part of the text	Maintains overall artistic balance	Not always structurally parallel

⁶ Munday J. *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* — London & New York: "Routledge" — 2016. P. 376.

Presents the principal translation strategies applied in rendering proverbs and sayings from one language into another. The classification is based on widely recognized translation theories, including formal and dynamic equivalence, communicative translation, and functionalist approaches. Each strategy reflects a different priority in the translation process: structural preservation, semantic accuracy, cultural adaptation, or pragmatic effectiveness⁷.

Literal translation is most appropriate when the source and target languages share similar metaphorical imagery and structural patterns. In such cases, equivalence can be achieved without major transformation. However, because proverbs are often culturally specific, literal translation may lead to semantic distortion or loss of figurative meaning.

Therefore, this strategy has limited applicability. Functional equivalence is generally considered the most effective approach in proverb translation. By selecting a proverb in the target language that conveys the same moral lesson or communicative intention, the translator ensures naturalness and readability. Although the original imagery may be replaced, the pragmatic effect remains intact. This strategy aligns with the dynamic equivalence principle, which emphasizes audience response⁸.

Cultural adaptation becomes necessary when direct equivalents are absent. In this case, culturally specific symbols, metaphors, or references are replaced with analogous elements familiar to the target audience. While this enhances comprehension and cultural relevance, excessive adaptation may distance the translation from the original text. Descriptive translation is applied when neither structural nor functional equivalents exist. The proverb's meaning is explained in neutral language to preserve semantic content⁹.

Although this guarantees clarity, it weakens stylistic and expressive qualities, since the concise and metaphorical nature of proverbs is lost. Compensation is a pragmatic technique used to preserve stylistic or emotional impact when it cannot be maintained in the same structural position. This strategy is particularly relevant in literary translation, where expressive balance is crucial. Demonstrates that no single strategy can be universally applied in proverb translation. The translator's task is to evaluate context, communicative purpose, and cultural compatibility in order to select the most appropriate method. Functional and culturally sensitive approaches remain the most productive in achieving translation adequacy and equivalence¹⁰.

CONCLUSION. The translation of proverbs and sayings represents a complex interaction between language, culture, and communication. Theoretical approaches such as equivalence theory, functionalism, and communicative translation provide a framework for analyzing proverb translation. Successful translation depends on preserving meaning, stylistic value, and pragmatic effect. Functional equivalence and cultural adaptation remain the most effective strategies in translating paremiological units.

RECOMMENDATIONS. It is recommended that translators apply a functional and culturally sensitive approach when translating proverbs and sayings. Literal translation should be used only when semantic and structural equivalence is possible.

⁷ Newmark P. *A Textbook of Translation* — London: "Prentice Hall International" — 1988. P. 292.

⁸ Nida E. A. *Toward a Science of Translating* — Leiden: "E. J. Brill" — 1964. P. 331.

⁹ Vermeer H. J. *Skopos and Commission in Translational Action* — Helsinki: "Oy Finn Lectura Ab" — 1989. P. 187.

¹⁰ Nida E. A., Taber C. R. *The Theory and Practice of Translation* — Leiden: "E. J. Brill" — 1982. P. 218.

Greater attention should be given to intercultural competence in translator training programs, as cultural knowledge plays a crucial role in interpreting figurative language.

Comparative studies of proverbs across languages should be further developed to enrich bilingual and multilingual dictionaries. Additionally, future research may focus on corpus-based analysis of proverb usage in modern discourse to improve practical translation strategies.

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