

TRANSLATING ENGLISH IDIOMATIC, CULTURE-BOUND, AND SPECIALIZED UNITS INTO UZBEK: PERSISTENT PROBLEMS AND FUNCTIONAL SOLUTIONS

Ashirali S. Rashidov

Department of the English Language and Literature
Gulistan State University

E-mail: rashidov_ashirali@gmail.com

Abstract. This article examines the major problems of translating from English into Uzbek with particular attention to three areas that remain especially difficult in university-level translation practice: polysemous lexical items, idiomatic and culture-bound expressions, and specialized terminology. The topic is relevant because English–Uzbek translation involves not only interlingual transfer but also negotiation between different grammatical systems, discourse traditions, and cultural models. The aim of the article is to systematize these difficulties and to propose a functional framework for improving translation adequacy. The study uses qualitative comparative analysis and critical synthesis of published research. The results show that English–Uzbek translation problems are most acute when meaning depends heavily on context, when figurative or nationally marked expressions resist direct equivalence, and when professional terminology lacks full standardization in Uzbek. The article argues that effective translation into Uzbek requires a combination of contextual disambiguation, controlled transformation, and culturally informed adaptation rather than mechanical lexical substitution. The conclusion emphasizes the pedagogical importance of training future translators to move from word-level equivalence to discourse-level adequacy.

Keywords: English–Uzbek translation, translation problems, idioms, culture-bound expressions, terminology, lexical transformations, context, adequacy, equivalence, Uzbek translation studies.

I. INTRODUCTION

The general topic of “problems of translation from English into Uzbek” remains highly relevant, but in current translation studies it is more productive to formulate the problem more narrowly: the greatest resistance to adequate translation usually appears in idiomatic, culture-bound, and specialized units. In English–Uzbek translation, the difficulty is rarely limited to vocabulary alone. It is typically caused by the interaction of polysemy, contextual dependence, structural asymmetry, and cultural specificity. Recent Uzbek scholarship repeatedly shows that the translator’s main challenge is not to replace one word with another, but to identify the function of the unit in context and then reconstruct that function in Uzbek with acceptable semantic, stylistic, and pragmatic force (Yakubova, 2018; Alimova, 2019; Azizova, 2020).

The aim of this article is to analyze the most persistent English–Uzbek translation problems and to propose a functional model for solving them in higher education practice. The article addresses four tasks: to define the current research focus of English–Uzbek translation studies; to review major theoretical works in the field; to synthesize article-based evidence on lexical, idiomatic, and terminological difficulties; and to formulate practical implications for university teaching. The paper is written from the perspective of an English-language lecturer working in higher education, where translation is both a scholarly and pedagogical concern

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Foundational monographic work in translation studies has already provided the conceptual vocabulary necessary for analyzing English–Uzbek translation. Mona Baker’s *In Other Words* treats equivalence as a multi-level problem extending beyond isolated lexemes to phraseology, grammar, cohesion, and pragmatics. Jeremy Munday’s *Introducing Translation Studies* systematizes major theoretical schools and shows why translation analysis must move between linguistic, functional, and cultural approaches. Juliane House’s *Translation Quality Assessment* is particularly important for distinguishing between formal transfer and communicative adequacy. For the Uzbek context, recent dissertation work shows a growing shift toward transformation-based and linguacultural analysis, especially in English-to-Uzbek translation research. Raupova’s 2025 dissertation abstract, for example, foregrounds linguistic, pragmatic, and linguacultural transformations as central to translation from English into Uzbek.

At the same time, the literature reveals a methodological gap. General monographs offer robust theoretical tools, but English–Uzbek translation practice often develops through smaller-scale article studies devoted to idioms, literary transformations, terminology, or contextual choice. As a result, there is a need for a compact integrative model that connects classical translation theory with the actual recurrent difficulties observed in Uzbek scholarship and classroom practice. This article responds to that need by synthesizing article-based findings under one functional framework.

III. METHODS

This study is theoretical and analytical rather than experimental. It uses qualitative synthesis of published journal articles dealing with English–Uzbek translation problems, especially in idiomatic, literary, terminological, and specialized discourse. Only real published articles are used for in-text citation. The analysis is organized around three recurrent problem zones: contextual polysemy, culture-bound phraseology, and specialized terminology. In each zone, the study identifies the linguistic source of difficulty, the typical translation risk, and the most functional solution strategy.

The methodological basis combines contrastive analysis, functional interpretation, and descriptive synthesis. The article does not claim to offer a statistical corpus study; rather, it aims to build a pedagogically useful model from verified published findings. This approach is appropriate because English–Uzbek translation studies are still developing a consolidated research tradition, and synthesis of dispersed article-level observations is itself a necessary scholarly task.

IV. RESULTS

The first major problem is **contextual polysemy**. Yakubova shows that when translating from English into Uzbek, the same English lexical item may require different Uzbek equivalents depending on narrow syntactic context, broader textual context, or extra-linguistic situation. Her examples with verbs such as *burn*, *drive*, and nouns such as *chair* demonstrate that dictionary meaning alone is insufficient; contextual environment removes ambiguity and determines the appropriate Uzbek form (Yakubova, 2018). This finding is highly important for classroom translation, because student errors often arise when the first dictionary equivalent is accepted without checking argument structure, collocation, or discourse situation. In English–Uzbek translation, contextual analysis is therefore not an auxiliary step but the first condition of adequacy.

The second major problem is **idiomatic and culture-bound meaning**. Alimova’s study of floral idioms shows that English idioms cannot be translated literally into Uzbek without semantic loss, because they encode national imagery, historical associations, and culturally stabilized figurative patterns (Alimova, 2019). Azizova reaches a similar conclusion in her analysis of phraseological units, arguing that phraseological translation is among the most difficult types of translation transformation because the translator must preserve not only meaning but also cultural resonance and stylistic effect (Azizova, 2020). In practical terms, this means that English–Uzbek translation of idioms must move between four basic solutions: full equivalent, partial analogue, calque, and descriptive translation. Literal transfer is acceptable only

when the image remains intelligible and stylistically natural in Uzbek. Otherwise, descriptive or analogous translation is preferable.

The third major problem is **specialized terminology**, especially where English terminology has developed more rapidly than Uzbek standardization. Djumambetova's article on economic terms notes several typical obstacles: lack of full equivalents in Uzbek, conceptual mismatch, metaphorical terminology, and structural differences between the languages (Djumambetova, 2023). Khodjaeva's study of medical translation identifies a related problem in professional discourse: paronyms and formally similar terms can easily produce mistranslation if the translator lacks domain knowledge and terminological discipline (Khodjaeva, 2025). These findings suggest that specialized translation into Uzbek is not solved by bilingual competence alone. It also requires terminological consistency, subject-matter awareness, and careful handling of partially standardized vocabulary.

A fourth recurrent result concerns **translation transformations**. Normuratova and Kurbanova, analyzing the English-Uzbek translation of Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, show that lexical, grammatical, and lexical-grammatical transformations regularly interact rather than appearing in isolation (Normuratova & Kurbanova, 2025). Their discussion of transcription, transliteration, omission, addition, concretization, and generalization confirms that English-Uzbek translation cannot proceed by strict structural mirroring. Because the two languages differ significantly in grammatical organization and expressive habits, transformation is not a sign of failure; it is often the normal mechanism through which adequacy is achieved.

Taken together, these results make it possible to formulate a three-level functional model for English-Uzbek translation. At the first level, the translator must disambiguate lexical meaning through context. At the second, the translator must decide whether culture-bound meaning is better preserved through equivalence, analogy, calque, or explanation. At the third, the translator must standardize or normalize specialized terminology while respecting Uzbek discourse norms. This model shifts translation training away from isolated word substitution and toward informed functional choice

V. DISCUSSION

The results indicate that the central problem of English-Uzbek translation is not "untranslatability" in an absolute sense, but **insufficient functional matching** between the source unit and the target-language solution. In this respect, the English-Uzbek material aligns with broader translation-studies arguments that figurative and culturally loaded meaning requires interpretive reformulation rather than formal copying. Schäffner's discussion of metaphor translation is relevant here: when conceptual framing differs across languages, the translator must preserve communicative effect, not just lexical image (Schäffner, 2004). For English-Uzbek translation, this principle is especially important because Uzbek frequently prefers a more explicit or culturally adjusted rendering where English relies on condensed idiomatic or metaphorical expression.

The pedagogical implications are substantial. In university classrooms, students often treat translation as dictionary selection, whereas the reviewed studies show that three competencies are more decisive: contextual reading, awareness of linguacultural asymmetry, and command of transformation techniques. An English-language lecturer teaching translation should therefore organize instruction not around isolated grammar topics alone, but around translation problems: polysemy in context, idiom decoding, metaphor transfer, and domain terminology management. Such problem-based training would better reflect the actual profile of English-Uzbek translation practice described in the literature

VI. CONCLUSION

The study shows that current research on translation from English into Uzbek is best advanced through a focused analysis of difficult units rather than through overly general discussion. The most persistent problems arise in three areas: context-dependent lexical choice, idiomatic and culture-bound meaning, and specialized terminology. These problems are intensified by typological differences between English and Uzbek and by uneven terminological standardization in professional domains.

The article argues that adequate English–Uzbek translation depends on a functional combination of contextual disambiguation, controlled transformation, and culturally informed adaptation. For higher education, this means that translator training should foreground decision-making strategies rather than word-for-word replacement. Further research would benefit from corpus-based studies of English–Uzbek translations in academic, legal, media, and literary genres, where the same functional model could be tested more systematically

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AUTHOR(S)

Authro – Rashidov Ashirali Suyunovich, Department of the English Language and Literature, Gulistan State University, e-mail: rashidov_ashirali@gmail.com

Рецензент:

*Sibunrueang Pangglatorn,
Ph.D.,
Mahidol University (Thailand)*