TRANSLATING ENGLISH PROVERBS INTO UZBEK

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https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14619229

Abstract: Translating English proverbs into Uzbek involves specific challenges due to linguistic and cultural differences. Uzbek, as a Turkic language, has a rich tradition of proverbs (maqollar) that are often used in daily communication. While many English proverbs have parallels in Uzbek, direct translations can face various challenges. Below are examples of English proverbs, their literal translations, and culturally appropriate Uzbek equivalents.

Key words: tradition, proverbs, linguistic and cultural differences, linguistic and cultural differences.

Translating English Proverbs into Uzbek: Challenges and Solutions

1. Cultural Differences: Proverbs often reflect the values, traditions, and daily experiences of a specific culture. For example, an English proverb like 'Don't count your chickens before they hatch' may not resonate in the same way in Uzbek culture, where the concept of future outcomes might be framed differently. A direct translation might not convey the intended meaning or impact.

2. Idiomatic Expressions: Proverbs are typically idiomatic, meaning their meaning is not literal. Translating idioms from English into Uzbek can be difficult because the structure or wording of the proverb might not exist in Uzbek. Translators often have to find equivalent idiomatic expressions that carry the same meaning but may differ in wording.

3. Linguistic Structure: English and Uzbek have different sentence structures and grammar rules. While English tends to follow a Subject-Verb-Object order, Uzbek sentence construction may vary, which could affect how a proverb is expressed. Translators must ensure that the translation sounds natural while preserving the meaning.

4. Emotional and Rhetorical Effects: Proverbs often have a certain rhythm or emotional weight, which can be hard to replicate in another language. The tone or rhetorical style may not have a direct equivalent in Uzbek, and sometimes a translation can lose the emotional impact of the original.

5. Wordplay and Sound: Some English proverbs rely on wordplay, rhyme, or alliteration (e.g., 'A stitch in time saves nine'). These linguistic features can be difficult to translate into Uzbek without losing their playful or mnemonic qualities.

Solutions: To overcome these issues, translators often use adaptation techniques, where they may modify the proverb to fit the cultural context while maintaining the core meaning. In some cases, an entirely different proverb in Uzbek may be used if it conveys the same lesson or moral.

Don't judge a book by its cover.

Literal Translation: Kitobni muqovasiga qarab baholamang.

Uzbek Equivalent: Tashqiga qarab odamni tanima.

Explanation: Don't judge a person by their appearance. Uzbeks also use this idea to stress that appearances can be deceiving.

The early bird catches the worm.

Literal Translation: Ertalabki qush chuvalchangni tutadi.

Uzbek Equivalent: Ertalabki havoning nafasini ol.

Explanation: Take the breath of the morning air. Uzbek culture values waking up early for productivity and good fortune, but the imagery might be adapted to something more familiar.

A friend in need is a friend indeed.

Literal Translation: Mushkul paytda yordam bergan do‘st chin do‘stdir.

Uzbek Equivalent: Do‘stingni dardda sinab bilasan.

Explanation: You recognize your friend in hardship. Both proverbs emphasize the idea that true friendship is proven in difficult times.

Better late than never.

Literal Translation: Hech qachon qilmagandan kechroq qilgan yaxshi.

Uzbek Equivalent: Kech bo‘lsa ham yaxshi.

Explanation: Even if it’s late, it’s good. This is a direct equivalent that works well in both cultures.

When in Rome, do as the Romans do.

Literal Translation: Rimda bo‘lsang, Rimliklar kabi harakat qil.

Uzbek Equivalent: Elingga qarab ish qil.

Explanation: Act according to your community’s customs. Uzbek culture places high importance on social harmony and adapting to local norms.

Two heads are better than one.

Literal Translation: Ikki bosh bir boshdan yaxshi.

Uzbek Equivalent: Ko‘p boshdan aqil chiqadi.

Explanation: Wisdom comes from many heads. The Uzbek version reflects the same collaborative mindset as the English one.

Where there’s a will, there’s a way.

Literal Translation: Istak bo‘lsa, yo‘l topiladi.

Uzbek Equivalent: Harakatda barakat.

Explanation: There is blessing in effort. Uzbek emphasizes persistence and hard work, aligning with the meaning of the English proverb.

Make hay while the sun shines.

Literal Translation: Quyosh chiqqanda pichanni qiling.

Uzbek Equivalent: Imkondan foydalan.

Explanation: Take advantage of the opportunity. The metaphor of haymaking might not resonate with Uzbek speakers, so a simpler equivalent is better.

Every cloud has a silver lining.

Literal Translation: Har bir bulutning oq cheti bor.

Uzbek Equivalent: Har bir yomon ishning bir yaxshi tomoni bor.

Explanation: Every bad situation has a good side. The Uzbek translation conveys the same optimism without the imagery of clouds.

You reap what you sow.

Literal Translation: Nimani eksang, shuni o‘rasan.

Uzbek Equivalent: Nima eksang, shuni o‘rasan.

Explanation: What you sow, you will reap. This is one of the few proverbs that translates almost directly into Uzbek because both languages use agricultural metaphors.

Summary:

1. Use Culturally Relevant Imagery: Replace unfamiliar metaphors (like worms or hay) with Uzbek cultural references.

2. Prioritize Meaning Over Words: Ensure the core message is retained, even if it requires rephrasing.

3. Adapt to Uzbek Proverbs: Where possible, replace English proverbs with existing Uzbek maqollar that convey similar meanings.

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