

LINGUAPRAGMATIC PROBLEMS IN FINDING EQUIVALENTS AND TRANSLATING FRENCH PROVERBS INTO UZBEK

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Abstract: *The translation of proverbs is one of the most formidable challenges in cross-cultural communication, extending far beyond simple lexical substitution. This article investigates the linguapragmatic problems inherent in translating French proverbs into Uzbek. Proverbs are culturally-embedded, pragmatic units whose meaning is derived not only from their semantics but also from their illocutionary force and traditional usage. This study analyzes the primary challenges faced by translators, including the lack of full equivalence, cultural voids in imagery, and mismatches in pragmatic function. Drawing on translation theories, particularly the concepts of dynamic and pragmatic equivalence, this paper examines various translation strategies: literal translation, finding a cultural substitute, and paraphrasing. Through a comparative analysis of specific examples, the study demonstrates that a successful translation must prioritize the recreation of the proverb's intended effect (pragmatic force) over a literal transfer of its form. The research concludes that effective proverb translation requires profound bicultural competence and a shift from seeking formal equivalence to achieving functional, pragmatic correspondence.*

Keywords: *proverb translation, translation studies, linguapragmatics, French language, Uzbek language, equivalence, untranslatability, cultural adaptation, pragmatic force.*

1. Introduction. Proverbs are the distilled wisdom of a culture, concise, and memorable phrases that encapsulate its values, experiences, and worldview. However, these very characteristics—their cultural specificity, metaphorical nature, and fixed form—make them notoriously difficult to translate. A proverb is not just a sentence; it is a "pre-fabricated" speech act with a specific pragmatic goal, such as to advise, warn, or moralize. Consequently, translating a proverb is not merely a linguistic task but a complex act of cross-cultural mediation.

This article explores the linguapragmatic problems encountered when translating French proverbs into Uzbek. The term 'linguapragmatics' refers to the study of language use in context, focusing on the speaker's intention and the hearer's interpretation. In translation, this means ensuring that the target text produces a similar effect on its audience as the source text did on its original audience. The central challenge, as stated by translation scholar Mona Baker (1992), is to find an equivalent that preserves the "pragmatic meaning" of the original utterance.

This paper will identify the main types of equivalence problems between French and Uzbek paremiology and analyze the strategies translators can employ to overcome them, arguing that a focus on functional and pragmatic equivalence is paramount.

2. Theoretical Framework: The Quest for Equivalence. The concept of 'equivalence' is central to translation theory. Early theories focused on formal equivalence, a direct, word-for-word translation. However, for culturally rich texts like proverbs, this approach is often inadequate. Eugene Nida's (1964) concept of dynamic equivalence revolutionized the field by proposing that the goal should be to produce an equivalent effect in the target reader. The message should be tailored to the target language's linguistic and cultural framework to elicit a similar response.

Building on this, pragmatic equivalence focuses on recreating the function or illocutionary force of the source text. A French proverb that functions as a warning should be translated into an Uzbek expression that also functions as a warning, even if the literal words and images are completely different. The main strategies a translator can use are:

1. Using an equivalent of similar meaning and form: The ideal but rarest case.
2. Using an equivalent of similar meaning but dissimilar form: A common strategy where a target language proverb with different imagery conveys the same core message.
3. Translation by paraphrase: Sacrificing the proverbial form to explain the meaning.
4. Translation by omission: Deleting the proverb if it is not crucial and has no close equivalent.

3. Analysis of Translation Problems and Strategies. Let us analyze specific examples to illustrate the pragmatic challenges of translating French proverbs into Uzbek.

Case 1: Different Metaphorical Worlds

French Proverb: *Il ne faut pas vendre la peau de l'ours avant de l'avoir tué.*

Literal Translation: "One must not sell the bear's skin before having killed it."

Pragmatic Problem: While the meaning is comprehensible, the imagery of bear hunting is alien to mainstream Uzbek culture and folklore. A literal translation would sound like a bizarre piece of advice, lacking the natural, self-evident feel of a genuine proverb. It loses its pragmatic force as a traditional warning.

Strategy and Equivalent: The most effective strategy is to find a cultural substitute that serves the same pragmatic function. The Uzbek proverb "*Jo'jani kuzda sanaydilar*" (They count the chickens in autumn) is a perfect functional equivalent.

Pragmatic Analysis: Both proverbs warn against premature celebration or counting on an outcome that is not yet secured. The French proverb uses a metaphor of hunting, while the Uzbek one uses a metaphor from an agrarian context (raising poultry). By using the Uzbek proverb, the translator sacrifices the French imagery but successfully preserves the illocutionary force (the act of warning) and ensures the expression is received as natural, traditional wisdom by the Uzbek audience.

Case 2: Shared Concept, Different Lexicalization

French Proverb: *C'est en forgeant qu'on devient forgeron.*

Literal Translation: "It is by smithing that one becomes a blacksmith."

Pragmatic Problem: A literal translation is grammatically possible and understandable in Uzbek. However, while blacksmithing (*temirchilik*) exists in Uzbek culture, it does not hold the same archetypal status as a symbol for "learning by doing" as it does in many European languages. The expression would feel slightly archaic or overly specific.

Strategy and Equivalent: A better strategy is to use an Uzbek expression that, while less metaphorical, is more common and pragmatically direct. A suitable phrase would be "*Ish ishtaha ochar, g'ayrat g'ayratga qo'shar*" (Work whets the appetite, effort adds to effort) or simply the widely understood principle "*Amaliyot orqali o'rganish*" (learning through practice). For a more proverbial feel, "*Usta ko'rmagan shogird har maqomga yo'rg'alar*" (An apprentice who hasn't seen a master will stumble at every turn) could be used, which emphasizes the same theme from a different angle.

Pragmatic Analysis: The French proverb emphasizes that skill comes from the act of practicing. The Uzbek equivalents also promote learning through action and experience. By choosing a more common Uzbek expression, the translator ensures the message is immediately recognized not just as a fact, but as a piece of collective wisdom about acquiring skills.

Case 3: Cultural Voids

French Proverb: *Chacun voit midi à sa porte.*

Literal Translation: "Everyone sees noon at his own door."

Pragmatic Problem: This is a deeply cultural idiom. It means that everyone judges things from their own selfish perspective or viewpoint. The imagery is based on a time when one would judge the time (midday) by the sun's position relative to one's own house. A literal translation into Uzbek is completely opaque and meaningless.

Strategy and Equivalent: Here, translation by paraphrase is the only viable option, as a direct proverbial equivalent is likely non-existent. The translator must convey the meaning: "*Har kim o'z manfaatini ko'zlaydi*" (Everyone looks out for their own interests) or "*Har kim masalaga o'z nuqtai nazaridan yondashadi*" (Everyone approaches the issue from their own point of view).

Pragmatic Analysis: In this case, the proverbial form and its poetic imagery must be sacrificed to preserve the core meaning. The pragmatic function—to comment cynically on human subjectivity and selfishness—is maintained, but the cultural flavor is lost. This highlights a limit of translatability, where the translator must choose between form and function, with function being the priority for effective communication.

4. Conclusion. The translation of proverbs from French into Uzbek is a complex process fraught with linguapragmatic difficulties. The analysis demonstrates that a successful translation rarely involves a one-to-one mapping. The vast differences in cultural history, environment, and social norms mean that images and metaphors are seldom shared.

Therefore, the translator's primary goal must be to achieve pragmatic equivalence. They must act as a bicultural mediator, first decoding the illocutionary force and cultural context of the French proverb, and then finding the most appropriate strategy to re-encode that function for an Uzbek audience. This often means choosing a native Uzbek proverb with entirely different imagery (*jo'jani kuzda sanaydilar*) or resorting to a non-proverbial paraphrase (*har kim o'z manfaatini ko'zlaydi*). The ultimate measure of success is not whether the words are the same, but whether the warning, advice, or moral resonates with the same traditional authority in the target culture.

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