

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN TRANSLATING IDIOMS FROM ENGLISH INTO UKRAINIAN

The research focuses on cultural differences, which make it difficult to translate idioms from English into Ukrainian. Most of the scholars (Stepanova, I. S., Nykyporets, S. S., Hadaichuk, N. M., Ibrahimova, L. V., & Slobodianiuk, A. A.) agree on the idea that translating idioms is one of the most challenging aspects of interlingual communication due to their figurative meaning, cultural specificity, and pragmatic function.[7, p. 49] This makes idioms resistant to literal translation and requires translators to engage in interpretive and creative processes rather than simple lexical substitution.[4]

The reviewed literature demonstrates that the success of idiom translation depends on the translator's ability to recognize the idiomatic meaning in its original cultural context. In such cases, the idiomatic meaning could be reproduced appropriately in the target language. For example, Olena Maliuta emphasizes that when translating English bird idioms into Ukrainian, literal translation often distorts meaning unless the translator understands the cultural associations behind the expression. She illustrates this with the idiom *"the early bird catches the worm"*, which cannot be rendered word-for-word but should be adapted through a culturally similar Ukrainian equivalent, such as *"хто рано встает, тому Бог дає"*, preserving both meaning and pragmatic force.[5, p. 495]

The most commonly discussed strategies for translating idioms include equivalent substitution, functional analogy, paraphrase, and descriptive translation. According to Tetiana Filchuk and others, each strategy is chosen based on the idiom's transparency, frequency, and cultural significance. Equivalent substitution is effective when an idiom in the target language conveys a similar image and meaning, as in English *"to kill two birds with one stone"* and Ukrainian *"убити двох зайців"*. However, when there is no direct equivalent, translators often resort to paraphrasing or descriptive methods to preserve meaning at the expense of imagery.[2, p. 40] As Tetiana Bondarenko and Viktoriia Velyka argue, the pragmatic force of idioms — especially those used to express politeness, irony, or emotion — requires translators to go beyond literal accuracy and consider the communicative intention of the speaker.[1, p. 34]

The reviewed studies collectively demonstrate that translating idioms is a creative act of intercultural mediation. It involves balancing the original author's stylistic intent with the reader's expectations in the target culture. Iryna Omelchenko emphasizes that the translator must comprehend how idioms convey cultural concepts such as "the world," "life," or "love," which vary across different linguistic systems.[6, p. 167] Similarly, Marianna Kotenko highlights the importance of preserving imagery whenever possible to maintain the expressiveness of the source text.[3, p. 149] Maintaining this conceptual balance ensures that the translation preserves not only semantic accuracy but also emotional and aesthetic resonance.

However, despite valuable insights provided by these studies, several areas remain insufficiently examined and need further investigation:

1. *Limited focus on idioms in contemporary fiction.*

Many studies of the authors (Filchuk, Sukhanova & Lazaryeva) analyse idioms within journalistic, educational, or general linguistic contexts, but few explore their function in modern literary texts. [2, p. 41]

2. *Lack of reader-oriented analysis.*

The majority of studies of Bondarenko & Velyka focus on the translator's perspective, leaving open the question of how readers perceive translated idioms [1, p. 35].

3. *Dynamic nature of idioms and cultural change.*

Idioms are not static — they evolve with social trends, globalization, and shifts in popular culture. Current research rarely addresses how contemporary idioms, slang-based expressions, or Internet-born phrases challenge traditional translation strategies.

Considering the gaps listed above, this research aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of idiom translation by focusing on cultural and emotional equivalence in Colleen Hoover's *Reminders of Him* (2023). Through a comparative analysis of English idioms and their Ukrainian renditions, the study seeks to identify the strategies that most effectively preserve semantic meaning, emotional depth, and cultural resonance. The research will also examine how context, character voice, and situational tone influence translation decisions.

In conclusion, the paper argues that idiom translation is an act of cultural interpretation rather than simple linguistic transfer. It demands from the translator both analytical precision and creative intuition. By addressing underexplored aspects such as translator agency, emotional expression, and reader perception, this study hopes to deepen the theoretical and practical understanding of how idioms function as cultural and emotional bridges between English and Ukrainian literary discourse.

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