

TRANSLATION OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS THROUGH THE PRINCIPLE OF
COMPENSATION: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This paper explores the principle of compensation as a pivotal strategy in the translation of phraseological units, emphasizing its theoretical foundations and practical application. Using materials drawn from Uzbek and German mass media, the study investigates how semantic integrity, imagery, cultural adaptation, and pragmatic functions are preserved in cases where direct equivalents are unavailable. The analysis provides comparative examples demonstrating the use of equivalence, adaptation, and especially compensation strategies, highlighting their effectiveness in maintaining both semantic content and emotional impact.

Keywords: *phraseological unit, translation principle, compensation, equivalence, adaptation, cultural conformity, translation strategy.*

1. Introduction

Phraseological units constitute a significant component of a language's national and cultural heritage, embedding historical, social, and emotional nuances. These units enrich texts by adding expressiveness, emotional resonance, and stylistic diversity. Translating phraseological units goes beyond linguistic substitution; it requires intercultural competence and cultural awareness to convey intended meanings effectively.

This study focuses on phraseological units extracted from Uzbek and German mass media sources. The principal objective is to analyze the linguistic and pragmatic potential of the compensation principle in translation and to illustrate its practical application, particularly when direct equivalents are unattainable.

2. Theoretical Framework

Translation of phraseological units generally involves the following key principles:

1. **Preserving Semantic Integrity** – conveying the unit's overall meaning as a whole rather than translating individual components literally.
2. **Maintaining or Adapting Imagery** – employing a direct equivalent if available; otherwise, creating a culturally relevant analogous image.
3. **Ensuring Cultural Conformity** – modifying culture-specific references to align with the target audience's cultural context.
4. **Retaining Pragmatic Function** – preserving the communicative intent (e.g., humor, criticism, emphasis) within the translation.

While equivalence and adaptation often suffice, the principle of **compensation** becomes essential when direct equivalence is absent. Compensation involves offsetting the loss of semantic or stylistic features in one part of the text by restoring them elsewhere, thereby achieving a comparable overall effect in the target language [1.78].

3. Compensation in Practice

3.1 German → Uzbek Examples

- **Die Flinte ins Korn werfen** (lit. “to throw the rifle into the grain”) → *ishga qo‘l siltamoq* or *taslim bo‘lmoq*. The original military imagery is lost, but the pragmatic meaning of “giving up” is preserved through a culturally natural equivalent.

Example in context: *Nach mehreren gescheiterten Verhandlungen mit den Investoren war das Start-up-Team völlig demotiviert. Schließlich warf der Geschäftsführer die Flinte ins Korn und beendete das Projekt.*

[Die Zeit. 19.04.2025]

Uchinchi muvaffaqiyatsiz muzokaralardan so‘ng, startap jamoasi butunlay ruhiy tushkunlikka tushdi. Oxir-oqibat direktor ishga qo‘l siltadi va loyihani yakunladi.

- **Jemandem Steine in den Weg legen** (lit. “kimningdir yo‘liga tosh qo‘yish”) → *to‘sqinlik qilmoq*, *qiyinchilik yaratmoq*. The literal image of “placing stones in someone’s way” is preserved, symbolizing obstruction. However, in Uzbek the phrase is conveyed by culturally appropriate expressions such as *to‘sqinlik qilmoq* or *qiyinchilik yaratmoq*, which transmit the pragmatic meaning of deliberately causing difficulties or hindrances.

Example in context: *Die Opposition warf der Regierung vor, den Reformprozess absichtlich zu verzögern und der Wirtschaft Steine in den Weg zu legen.*

[Die Zeit. 19.04.2025]

Opozitsiya hukumatni islohotlarni ataylab sekinlashtirishda va iqtisodiyotga to‘sqinlik qilishda aybladi.

3.2 Uzbek → German Examples

- **Oshig‘i olchi bo‘ldi** (literally, “he became very lucky”) → *er hatte Glück im Übermaß* (“he was extremely lucky”). The original gambling-related imagery is altered, but the concept of having overwhelming luck is preserved.

Example in context:

Yilning oxirida kompaniya yangi mahsulotining bozorga chiqishi kutilyapti. O‘tgan yilgi muvaffaqiyatlar bilan solishtirganda, ularning o‘sha paytdagi rahbari oshig‘i olchi bo‘ldi — bir necha katta shartnomalarni yutib, kompaniya daromadini sezilarli darajada oshirdi. [Yangi O‘zbekiston. Ijtimoiy-siyosiy gazeta. 21.06.2025]

Am Jahresende wird die Markteinführung des neuen Produkts erwartet. Im Vergleich zum letzten Jahr hatte der damalige Leiter übermäßiges Glück — er gewann mehrere große Verträge und steigerte den Gewinn des Unternehmens erheblich.

3.3 Combined Compensation

In some cases, partial imagery retention is combined with pragmatic compensation:

- **Otning kallasiday** (literally, “as big as a horse’s head”) → *überteuert / unverschämt teuer* (“outrageously expensive”).

The literal imagery of a horse’s head is lost, but the intended meaning — that something is extremely overpriced — is preserved in the translation.

Context example:

Bozorda tarvuzning narxi otning kallasiday bo‘libdi — odatda uch baravar arzon bo‘ladigan meva bu yil cho‘ntagimizga jiddiy ta‘sir qilmoqda.

[Yangi O‘zbekiston. Ijtimoiy-siyosiy gazeta. 14.08.2022]

Auf dem Markt sind die Wassermelonen dieses Jahr extrem teuer — eine Frucht, die sonst nur ein Drittel kostet, schlägt diesmal richtig ins Geld.

4. Findings and Discussion

The comparative analysis of Uzbek and German media materials reveals that:

- **Equivalence** is most effective when metaphors or idioms share cultural or semantic similarity.
- **Adaptation** is favored when the phraseological unit contains strong culture-specific elements.
- **Compensation** is indispensable when both imagery and cultural references lack direct matches.

The compensation principle acts as a creative strategy, enabling translators to preserve the overall effect and pragmatic function of phraseological units despite linguistic and cultural gaps. Its success depends on the translator's cultural semiotic awareness and narrative sensitivity [2, 97].

5. Conclusion. The principle of compensation plays a crucial role in translating phraseological units between linguistically and culturally distant languages such as Uzbek and German. It allows for the preservation of semantic meaning, emotional tone, and stylistic nuances when direct equivalents are unavailable. This research highlights the necessity of cultural competence and creative problem-solving in translation and suggests future exploration of automated compensation mechanisms in machine translation and corpus-based approaches.

References

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