

A Comparative Analysis of Phraseological Units in English, Uzbek, And Karakalpak And Translation Strategies

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Abstract: This background surveys the theoretical and empirical study of phraseological units (PUs) in English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak, together with the strategies proposed for their translation. It draws on research conducted at the international, CIS, Uzbekistan, and Karakalpakstan levels, tracing the field from classical Russian and English phraseological theory to recent comparative and translation-oriented studies, and identifies the specific research gap regarding Karakalpak phraseology that motivates further investigation.

Keywords: Phraseological unit, idiom, phraseology, comparative linguistics, translation strategy, equivalence, somatic idiom, linguoculturology, Karakalpak language.

Introduction: Phraseological units — idioms, proverbs, and other fixed, reproducible word combinations — constitute one of the most culturally saturated layers of any language. As V.N. Telia observed, phraseology functions as "the mirror in which a nation's linguistic and cultural identity is reflected," and this observation applies with particular force to typologically distant languages such as English, on the one hand, and the Turkic languages Uzbek and Karakalpak, on the other. Because phraseological meaning is rarely derivable from the sum of a unit's components, translating PUs between languages that differ in grammar, cultural background, and figurative thinking poses a persistent and well-documented challenge for translation studies. The purpose of this background is to establish the scientific foundation for a comparative analysis of phraseological units in English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak and the translation strategies applied to them. Its tasks are: to outline the classical theoretical frameworks developed for phraseology and translation; to review empirical comparative studies conducted

internationally; to examine the contribution of the CIS (primarily Russian and Kazakh) phraseological school; to analyze research carried out in Uzbekistan on English-Uzbek phraseological correspondence; and to identify the specific body of research addressing Karakalpak phraseology, including the gaps that remain.

Theoretical Foundations of Phraseology

The systematic study of phraseology as an independent linguistic discipline began with V.V. Vinogradov, who in his foundational work classified Russian phraseological units into three categories — phraseological fusions (сращения), unities (единства), and combinations (сочетания) — based on the degree of semantic motivation of their components; a fourth category, phraseological expressions, was added subsequently. Because Vinogradov's model was developed specifically for Russian, A.V. Kunin later argued that English phraseology could not be adequately described by the same three-way division and proposed an expanded classification that introduced the categories

of idiophraseomatics and phraseomatic units, better suited to the structural properties of English fixed expressions.

For Uzbek, Sh. Rahmatullayev's phraseological dictionary (1992) provided the first systematic semantic-structural classification of Uzbek

phraseological units, and it continues to serve as a primary reference in comparative Uzbek-English phraseological research. In Western scholarship, C. Fernando distinguished pure, semi-idiomatic, and literal idioms according to their degree of transparency, while A.P. Cowie proposed functional-semantic criteria for separating idioms from ordinary collocations.

Table 1 summarizes these complementary classificatory traditions.

Author / theory	Language focus	Main classificatory principles
V.V. Vinogradov (1946, 1977)	Russian	Phraseological fusions (сращения), unities (единства), and combinations (сочетания); a fourth category, phraseological expressions, was added later
A.V. Kunin (1970, 1996)	English	Extended Vinogradov's model for English phraseology; introduced idiophraseomatics and phraseomatic units
Sh. Rakhmatullayev (1992)	Uzbek	First systematic semantic-structural classification of Uzbek phraseological units, based on his phraseological dictionary
C. Fernando (1996)	English / general theory	Division of idioms into pure, semi-idiomatic, and literal, based on degree of transparency
A.P. Cowie (1998)	English	Functional-semantic criteria distinguishing idioms from ordinary collocations

Source: compiled by the author based on the theoretical works cited above.

Theories of Translation Strategy for Phraseological Units

Translation-oriented phraseology has drawn heavily on the strategic typologies proposed by M. Baker and P. Newmark. Baker's widely cited framework identifies a hierarchy of strategies available to the translator when a source-language idiom lacks a ready-made target-language counterpart: finding an idiom of similar

meaning and form, finding one of similar meaning but different form, translation by paraphrase, translation by omission, and compensation elsewhere in the text. Newmark's earlier taxonomy similarly emphasizes literal translation (calque), functional equivalence, and paraphrase as the principal options, while stressing that the translator's choice depends on the balance between semantic accuracy and the preservation of stylistic and cultural connotation.

Translation strategy	Description	Author
Idiom of similar meaning and form	Finding a target-language PU with the same meaning and a comparable lexical/structural form	Baker
Idiom of similar meaning, different form	Using a target-language PU that conveys the same meaning through different lexical components	Baker
Borrowing / calque	Rendering the source PU's components word-for-word into the target language	Newmark
Paraphrase	Explaining the meaning of the PU through a free combination of words rather than a fixed target-language equivalent	Baker; Newmark
Compensation	Recovering stylistic or expressive coloring lost at one	Baker

	point in the text elsewhere in the translation	
Omission	Leaving untranslated a PU for which no adequate equivalent exists or which is stylistically redundant in context	Baker

Source: compiled by the author based on Baker (2018) and Newmark (1988).

These strategic categories recur, with local terminological variation, across virtually all of the comparative studies discussed below, which suggests that despite differences in the specific language pairs examined, the underlying set of translation choices available to translators of phraseology is remarkably stable across languages.

International (English-Uzbek) Comparative Studies

A substantial body of recent research has been devoted specifically to comparing English and Uzbek phraseological units. A comparative semantic study published via CyberLeninka examined the origins, meanings, and cultural implications of English and Uzbek idioms and proverbs, concluding that while both languages encode universal themes such as nature, emotion, and human behavior, the specific idiomatic forms chosen to express them reflect distinct cultural, historical, and linguistic traditions; the study further documented recurrent translation errors, particularly literal renderings that fail to convey the intended figurative meaning.

A contrastive and functional analysis of phraseological units in English and Uzbek fiction, based on examples drawn from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and its Uzbek translations, categorized the translation methods actually employed into full equivalence, partial equivalence, functional substitution, paraphrasing, and compensation, and found that Uzbek translations generally preserve the core propositional meaning of source-text idioms while occasionally losing or transforming finer emotional and stylistic nuances. Complementary studies have examined narrower subclasses of phraseology: somatic (body-part) idioms, whose direct translation frequently produces semantic distortion because of differing metaphorical conventions; and color-coded phraseological units, where researchers identified both universal and culture-specific connotations and proposed functional equivalence and pragmatic awareness as the decisive factors for successful translation. Further studies have addressed the

etymology of English and Uzbek idioms and the grammatical structure of comparative phraseological units and their rendering into Uzbek and Russian, underscoring equivalence, functional correspondence, and contextual substitution as central translation strategies.

The CIS (Russian and Kazakh) Research Tradition

Within the CIS space, the Russian phraseological school founded by Vinogradov and developed by Kunin, V.P. Zhukov, A.I. Smirnitsky, and N.M. Shansky remains the principal theoretical reference point for comparative phraseological research across the region. This school's central achievement was the structural-semantic differentiation of phraseological units, as fixed, reproducible word combinations, from both free word combinations and single lexical items — a distinction that subsequent Turkic-language phraseological research, including work on Uzbek and Karakalpak, has consistently adopted as its starting point.

Comparative research extending beyond Russian itself is also active in the wider CIS region: a historical survey of the study of phraseological units in Kazakh and English linguistics traced four successive research stages and reviewed dissertations by Kazakh scholars — among them T.Zh. Myktybayeva, Sh.B. Argyngazina, and R.B. Zhusupova — devoted to comparative-contrastive folklore are embedded in fixed expressions, while research on gender stereotypes in Turkic phraseology, again based on Uzbek, Kazakh, and Karakalpak material, analyzed how the oppositional categories of "man" and "woman" are lexicalized with distinct positive or negative connotations across the three related languages. These studies collectively demonstrate that Uzbek phraseological research increasingly situates itself within a broader Central Asian comparative framework rather than treating Uzbek-English contrasts in isolation.

Research Conducted in Karakalpakstan

Research specifically devoted to Karakalpak phraseology, although comparatively recent and

smaller in volume than the Uzbek-English literature, has produced a coherent and growing body of work. A dedicated study of the research history of phraseology in Karakalpak linguistics documented how Karakalpak idioms historically drew on pastoral and nomadic imagery — expressions built around camels, sheep, horses, and donkeys — and traced culturally specific idioms such as dize bu'giw ("to kneel"), which the author linked to historical practices of subordination before rulers, illustrating the deep historical and ethnographic embedding of Karakalpak fixed expressions.

A comparative analysis of phraseological synonyms in English and Karakalpak identified six key parameters for defining phraseological units in linguistic research (the nature and number of their elements and their semantic unity among them) and demonstrated that translation difficulties between English and Karakalpak arise chiefly from differing patterns of idiomatic synonymy and polysemy, concluding that understanding phraseological synonymy has direct pedagogical value for developing learners' linguistic competence. A related ethnosemantic study of somatic idioms in Karakalpak and English examined lexemes for body parts such as bet and juz ("face") and their idiomatic extensions, drawing on earlier Karakalpak-Russian lexicographic work, including T. Dzhumamuratov's Russian-English phraseological dictionary compiled in Nukus.

More recent studies have extended this line of inquiry to specific structural and thematic subclasses: a cross-linguistic study of reduplication in English and Karakalpak; an analysis of phraseologisms with a colorative component in English, Karakalpak, and Russian, which the authors identified as a domain in which comparative and lexicographic methods reveal the phraseological equivalence problem with particular clarity ; a study of Karakalpak two-component phrasal verbs and their presentation in English-Karakalpak bilingual lexicography, aimed at improving the quality of dictionary entries for translators ; and a 2026 study of the functional-semantic features of zoonyms in Karakalpak and English fairy-tale discourse, which analyzed animal-related phraseological units and proverbs as carriers of the moral and ethical attitudes of the two peoples. Taken together, these studies indicate that Karakalpak phraseology is an active but still developing research field, concentrated on lexicographic description and thematic (somatic, color, zoonymic) subclasses, with fewer large-scale statistical or corpus-based translation studies than exist for the English-Uzbek pair.

Comparative Overview by Region

Table 3 summarizes the orientation, principal sources, and relative maturity of phraseological and translation research across the four regions considered in this background.

Region	Main research focus	Key source(s)	Character of research
International	Theoretical classification of PUs (Vinogradov, Kunin, Fernando, Cowie); translation-strategy theory (Baker, Newmark)	Kunin (1996); Fernando (1996); Cowie (1998); Baker (2018); Newmark (1988)	Foundational-theoretical, classical schools
CIS (Russia, Kazakhstan)	Russian phraseological school; comparative study of Kazakh-English phraseological verbs; compilation of phraseological dictionaries	Vinogradov (1977); history of Kazakh-English phraseological research (Eurasian J. Philology Science and Education)	Theoretical-classificatory, historical-comparative
Uzbekistan	Semantic, cultural, and translation-oriented comparison of English-Uzbek PUs; somatic and color-coded PUs	CyberLeninka (2024); ResearchGate (2026); Sayfullaeva (2021); Central Asian J. of Literature, Philosophy and Culture (2026)	Applied-comparative, translation-problem oriented

Karakalpakstan	Specificity of Karakalpak phraseology; English-Karakalpak PU synonymy; somatic and zoonymic PUs	ResearchGate (2023, 2025); Global Research Network (2026); Dzhumamuratov's dictionary (1985)	Regional-ethnolinguistic, still emerging
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Source: compiled by the author based on the sources cited throughout this background.

The comparison shows a clear gradient: international scholarship supplies the fundamental theoretical apparatus (classification systems and translation-strategy typologies) with which Central Asian material is subsequently analyzed; CIS scholarship supplies the historically dominant classificatory model, developed for Russian and adapted for other languages of the region, including Kazakh; Uzbekistan-based research has moved furthest toward systematic, thematically organized comparison with English; and Karakalpakstan-based research, while genuinely present and methodologically sound, remains comparatively narrow in scope, concentrated on specific semantic subclasses (somatic, color, zoonymic, reduplicative) rather than on comprehensive corpus-based or statistically validated translation-strategy studies.

CONCLUSION

This review indicates that the theoretical foundations for a comparative analysis of English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak phraseological units are well established: the Vinogradov-Kunin classificatory tradition, Rahmatullayev's Uzbek phraseological dictionary, and Baker's and Newmark's translation-strategy typologies together provide a coherent analytical apparatus. At the same time, a realistic assessment of the existing literature reveals an uneven distribution of research effort. English-Uzbek phraseological comparison is now a well-populated field, addressing general, somatic, and color-based subclasses with reasonably consistent methodology. Karakalpak phraseology, by contrast, has been studied mainly through lexicographic and thematic case studies (somatic idioms, zoonyms, reduplication, phrasal verbs), and comprehensive three-way comparative studies that directly juxtapose English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak phraseological units within a single translation-strategy framework remain scarce.

Accordingly, the most defensible conclusion is threefold: first, a three-way comparative study of English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak phraseology is

theoretically well supported but empirically underdeveloped, which constitutes a genuine and specific research gap rather than a general call for "more research"; second, future work should draw systematically on Baker's and Newmark's strategy typologies to classify actual translation choices in parallel English-Uzbek-Karakalpak text corpora, rather than relying solely on illustrative examples; and third, closer integration of Karakalpak lexicographic resources (notably Dzhumamuratov's dictionary and subsequent thematic studies) with the more extensively developed English-Uzbek comparative methodology offers the most realistic path toward a rigorous, source-grounded comparative and translation-strategy analysis of phraseology across the three languages.

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