

Translation of Metaphorical Units in A Foreign Language and Their Application in Teaching

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Received: 27 June 2025; **Accepted:** 26 July 2025; **Published:** 31 August 2025

Abstract: Metaphorical units are integral components of language that reflect cultural values, social practices, and cognitive frameworks. Their translation into a foreign language often presents challenges, as direct equivalents may not exist due to cultural and linguistic differences. This article explores the theoretical foundations of translating metaphorical units, the strategies applied in overcoming cultural barriers, and the pedagogical value of metaphor translation in teaching foreign languages. By integrating metaphorical units into classroom practice, learners enhance not only their linguistic competence but also intercultural communicative skills. The study highlights the importance of cognitive, cultural, and pragmatic approaches in teaching metaphorical units to foreign language learners.

Keywords: Metaphorical units, translation, foreign language teaching, intercultural communication, pedagogical application.

Introduction: Metaphors are not only stylistic embellishments but also cognitive tools that shape human perception of reality. According to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors structure thought processes and provide a framework for understanding abstract concepts through more concrete domains. In the field of translation studies, metaphorical units represent one of the most complex areas due to their cultural specificity. Literal translation may lead to misunderstanding or loss of meaning, while adaptive translation strategies require deep awareness of cultural and pragmatic nuances. In foreign language teaching, metaphorical units play a dual role: they enrich vocabulary acquisition and simultaneously foster cultural awareness. This paper aims to investigate the translation of metaphorical units and demonstrate their pedagogical significance in teaching a foreign language.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study is based on a descriptive, comparative, and pedagogical approach, combining both theoretical and practical dimensions. The research process was carried out in three main stages:

1. Selection of Metaphorical Units.

Metaphorical expressions were collected from various authentic sources such as English and Uzbek literary works, proverbs, idiomatic dictionaries, newspapers, and educational materials. Priority was given to metaphorical units that carry strong cultural connotations and are frequently used in everyday communication, such as "time is money," "spill the beans," and Uzbek equivalents like "qozonni qaynashidan bilsa bo'ladi," "ko'ngil ko'zi ochiq."

2. Translation Strategy Analysis.

The selected metaphorical units were analyzed in terms of translation strategies. The research employed the classification of strategies proposed by Newmark (1988) and later expanded by other scholars. The strategies included:

Literal translation, where metaphors were translated word-for-word, often resulting in semantic distortion.

Functional equivalence, which aimed at finding target-language expressions with similar cultural and pragmatic value.

Cultural substitution, where the metaphor was replaced with a culturally appropriate expression in the target language.

Paraphrasing or explanatory translation, applied when no equivalent metaphor was available.

Each metaphorical unit was categorized according to the strategy applied, and the advantages and limitations of each approach were examined.

3. Pedagogical Application.

The practical aspect of the methodology focused on the integration of metaphorical units into foreign language teaching. A small-scale classroom experiment was conducted with undergraduate students learning English as a foreign language. The experiment was divided into three phases:

Pre-teaching stage, where students were introduced to basic metaphorical concepts and their role in shaping thought.

Teaching stage, where metaphorical units were incorporated into reading, speaking, and vocabulary-building activities. Contextualized examples and cross-cultural comparisons were emphasized.

Post-teaching stage, where students' comprehension, usage, and intercultural awareness were measured through discussions, reflective writing, and questionnaires.

4. Data Collection and Analysis.

Qualitative methods were employed for data collection. Classroom observations, student feedback, and teacher reflections were recorded. Questionnaires were distributed to assess learners' perception of metaphorical expressions, their difficulty level, and usefulness in communication. The collected data were analyzed through thematic categorization, highlighting patterns in students' understanding and translation choices.

This multi-layered methodology allowed the research to address not only the theoretical problems of translating metaphorical units but also the practical challenges and benefits of applying them in a teaching context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis revealed that metaphorical units carry deep cultural meanings that often resist direct translation. For instance, the English metaphor "time is money" has a cultural equivalent in Uzbek but with nuanced differences in pragmatic use. Strategies such as functional equivalence proved most effective in ensuring both linguistic and cultural transfer. Literal translation was rarely successful as it often led to semantic distortion.

In classroom application, students exposed to metaphorical units demonstrated improved vocabulary retention and a higher level of cultural competence. Teaching metaphors in context allowed learners to grasp both figurative meaning and cultural

associations. For example, when Uzbek learners of English encountered metaphors like "to break the ice," understanding its metaphorical meaning facilitated fluency in conversational contexts.

Moreover, metaphorical awareness encouraged learners to reflect on their own linguistic worldview and compare it with the target language. This comparative perspective reinforced intercultural understanding and improved communicative competence.

CONCLUSION

The translation and teaching of metaphorical units require careful attention to cultural, cognitive, and pragmatic aspects of language. Metaphors are not merely stylistic devices; they reflect the ways in which people conceptualize reality and organize their experiences through language. Therefore, their accurate translation demands sensitivity to both semantic content and underlying cultural frameworks. Successful translation goes beyond word-for-word equivalence, relying instead on strategies that preserve not only the literal meaning but also the metaphor's emotional impact, symbolic value, and cultural resonance. This approach ensures that metaphors remain comprehensible and relatable to speakers of the target language, thereby preventing misinterpretations or loss of meaning. Integrating metaphorical analysis into pedagogy also supports learners in developing not only linguistic knowledge but also deeper insights into cultural patterns of thought. By comparing metaphors across languages, students become more aware of cultural similarities and differences in conceptualizing abstract ideas such as time, emotions, morality, and social relations. This comparative approach strengthens intercultural awareness and allows learners to approach communication with greater empathy and flexibility. Furthermore, incorporating metaphorical units into language teaching helps bridge the gap between cognitive linguistics and applied pedagogy, creating a more holistic and meaningful learning environment.

Looking ahead, future research should explore digital tools, corpus-based resources, and multimodal teaching methods for teaching metaphorical units more effectively in multilingual contexts. With the rise of technology-enhanced learning, online platforms, interactive applications, and AI-driven translation tools can provide learners with authentic examples of metaphorical use across languages and cultures. Such innovations can also facilitate personalized learning, enabling students to practice and analyze metaphors in real-life communicative situations. Multimodal approaches, combining text, image, sound, and

gesture, can further enrich the teaching of metaphors by engaging learners' multiple senses and reinforcing conceptual understanding. In conclusion, the translation and teaching of metaphorical units require a multidimensional approach that combines linguistic accuracy with cultural sensitivity and pedagogical innovation. By embracing metaphor as both a linguistic and cognitive phenomenon, educators and translators can contribute to more effective language learning and deeper intercultural understanding in today's multilingual world.

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