

LINGUOCULTURAL PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATING SOMATIC PROVERBS:  
THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

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**Annotation:** This article provides a theoretical analysis of linguocultural difficulties in translating somatic proverbs between different languages, particularly English and Uzbek. The research focuses on the interrelation of language, culture, and cognition in the process of proverb translation. Attention is paid to issues of cultural connotation, semantic loss, equivalence and non-equivalence, as well as metaphorical and literal translation strategies. The study argues that somatic proverbs, being culture-bound and metaphorical in nature, require a deep understanding of both source and target cultural systems to achieve adequate translation.

**Keywords:** linguoculture, somatic proverb, equivalence, non-equivalence, cultural connotation, metaphorical translation, semantic loss.

**Introduction**

Proverbs are considered linguistic and cultural signs that encode the collective experience, ethical values, and worldview of a nation. Somatic proverbs — those based on the names of human body parts — occupy a special place in this system, as they metaphorically express human behavior, moral judgment, and emotional states. Their translation is not merely a linguistic task but a **linguocultural and cognitive operation**, which requires reconstructing both the figurative and cultural meanings contained in the source text.

In translation studies, the most challenging aspect of rendering somatic proverbs lies in maintaining **cultural equivalence**, since the symbolic meanings of body parts vary across cultures. Hence, the translation process involves an intersection of language, cognition, and culture.

*1. Linguocultural Nature of Somatic Proverbs.* Somatic proverbs are anthropocentric linguistic units reflecting the human body as a metaphorical model of the world. In each culture, body parts are associated with specific conceptual fields such as intellect, emotion, morality, or social relations. The translator must therefore recognize the **cultural coding** of these somatic components and interpret them in the context of the target culture.

From the linguocultural viewpoint, somatic proverbs are not simply idiomatic expressions but **conceptual symbols** that convey culturally determined ways of perceiving and evaluating reality. The problem arises when the symbolic value of a somatic element in one language does not coincide with that in another.

*2. Cultural Connotation and Semantic Loss.* Cultural connotation refers to the set of cultural associations and evaluative meanings attached to a linguistic unit. In translating somatic proverbs, cultural connotations often become the source of **semantic loss**, which occurs when the target language lacks an equivalent cultural reference or metaphorical association.

Semantic loss may appear in several forms:

- The **emotional tone** of the proverb may weaken or disappear.
- The **metaphorical image** may lose its symbolic depth.
- The **pragmatic force** of the proverb (advice, warning, moral evaluation) may be distorted.

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Preserving cultural connotation thus requires not literal reproduction, but **reconstruction of cultural meaning** through equivalent imagery or contextual adaptation.

3. *Equivalence and Non-equivalence.* Equivalence is a central notion in translation theory, but in the context of somatic proverbs it transcends purely linguistic similarity. Equivalence here implies **functional, conceptual, and pragmatic correspondence** between the source and target texts.

- **Full equivalence** exists when both languages share the same somatic metaphor and cultural meaning.
- **Partial equivalence** arises when the conceptual core is similar but the imagery differs due to cultural divergence.
- **Non-equivalence** occurs when there is no direct counterpart, and the translator must rely on adaptation or substitution to reproduce the proverb's communicative value.

In such cases, translation becomes an act of **cultural mediation**, where the translator negotiates between two systems of cultural thought rather than two codes of language.

4. *Metaphorical and Literal Translation Strategies.* The metaphorical nature of somatic proverbs necessitates specific translation strategies. Two principal approaches are recognized: **metaphorical (equivalent image)** translation and **literal translation**.

The **metaphorical strategy** aims to preserve the figurative structure and cognitive image of the source proverb, maintaining its emotional and cultural resonance. This method requires finding culturally familiar metaphors in the target language that fulfill the same cognitive and aesthetic functions.

The **literal strategy**, in contrast, transfers the surface meaning of the proverb without adapting it to the target culture. Although this method maintains lexical accuracy, it often leads to loss of idiomaticity and cultural flavor.

Modern translation theory emphasizes the need for a **balanced approach** — preserving the metaphorical core while ensuring communicative naturalness. This balance can be achieved through *conceptual equivalence* rather than direct word-for-word rendering.

5. *Linguocultural Competence in Translation.* The successful translation of somatic proverbs requires not only linguistic competence but also **linguocultural awareness**. Translators must understand the symbolic and associative meanings that each culture attaches to human body parts. This involves knowledge of ethnolinguistic concepts, cultural metaphors, and national patterns of thought.

Linguocultural competence ensures that the translator can identify which elements are **culturally universal** and which are **culture-specific**. It also enables the translator to apply appropriate strategies — such as adaptation, substitution, or explanation — to bridge conceptual gaps and preserve communicative effectiveness.

6. *The Cognitive-Conceptual Aspect.* From a cognitive linguistics perspective, somatic proverbs are manifestations of **embodied cognition** — the idea that human conceptualization is grounded in bodily experience. Each culture interprets bodily experience through its own symbolic system. Therefore, translating somatic proverbs is essentially a process of **transferring embodied metaphors** between different conceptual frameworks.

This transfer requires the translator to reconstruct the **conceptual metaphor** underlying the proverb rather than focusing solely on linguistic equivalence. When the same conceptual metaphor exists in both languages, translation is straightforward; otherwise, cognitive transformation and cultural adaptation become necessary.

### Conclusion

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### VOLUME-5, ISSUE-10

Translating somatic proverbs represents a complex linguocultural challenge that goes beyond lexical equivalence. The translator operates within the intersection of linguistic form, cognitive metaphor, and cultural symbolism. Problems such as cultural connotation, semantic loss, and non-equivalence arise due to the deep cultural embeddedness of somatic imagery.

Achieving an adequate translation requires **cognitive interpretation, cultural sensitivity, and functional adaptation**. The translator's ultimate goal is to reproduce not only the verbal message but also the worldview, moral values, and emotional tone encoded in the source proverb. In this sense, translation becomes a form of intercultural dialogue, preserving the unity of human experience through the diversity of linguistic expression.

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