



## **THE TRANSFORMATION OF COLLOQUIAL IDIOMS IN UZBEK TRANSLATIONS OF JACK LONDON'S DIALOGUES**

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### **Abstract**

This article examines how colloquial idioms used in Jack London's dialogues undergo semantic, stylistic, and pragmatic transformation in their Uzbek translations. The study focuses on translator strategies such as literal rendering, functional equivalence, cultural substitution, and stylistic softening, identifying how these approaches influence the preservation of communicative intent and character voice. By analyzing selected idiomatic units from London's major works and comparing them with their Uzbek versions, the research reveals patterns of meaning shifts, degrees of domestication, and instances of expressive loss or enrichment. The findings demonstrate that while Uzbek translators generally succeed in maintaining narrative coherence and emotional tone, certain transformations reshape the original colloquial flavor due to cultural, linguistic, and stylistic constraints. The article highlights the importance of balancing naturalness and fidelity to ensure authentic representation of London's dialogic style.

**Keywords:** Idiom translation, colloquial language, pragmatics, equivalence, transformation, dialogues, Jack London.

### **Introduction**

Jack London's fiction is distinguished not only by its vivid depictions of human endurance and natural struggle, but also by its dynamic use of colloquial dialogue that reflects the social, cultural, and psychological realities of early twentieth-century America. His characters often rugged frontiersmen, sailors, laborers, and adventurers speak in idioms, slang, and conversational metaphors that encapsulate their worldview and reveal layers of meaning beyond literal interpretation [7]. When these colloquial idioms are translated into another language, especially into



a linguistically and culturally distant context such as Uzbek, the translator faces the intricate task of preserving both the semantic substance and the pragmatic force of the original expressions. This challenge makes Jack London's works a valuable corpus for exploring idiom translation strategies and their impact on dialogic authenticity.

In Uzbek translation studies, the rendering of idioms remains a growing area of scholarly interest, particularly due to increasing attention to cultural equivalence, stylistic resonance, and communicative adequacy. Since idioms are culturally loaded linguistic units, their translation often involves adaptation, substitution, transformation, or compensation. These strategies inevitably reshape the expressive quality of the dialogue, sometimes enhancing its naturalness in the target language while other times diluting the original colloquial nuance [2]. Examining such transformations allows researchers to trace the translator's decision-making processes, cultural positioning, and stylistic priorities. Jack London's dialogues present a fertile ground for this investigation because they frequently rely on figurative, humorous, or emotionally charged idiomatic constructions. Their successful translation requires striking a balance between fidelity to the source text and the need to maintain readability and idiomaticity in Uzbek. Previous studies of literary translation in Uzbekistan have highlighted tendencies toward domestication, semantic softening, and cultural adaptation, yet little focused research has been conducted specifically on colloquial idioms within London's oeuvre.

This article addresses that gap by providing a comparative analysis of selected idioms from London's major works and their corresponding Uzbek translations. The study aims to identify the types of transformations applied, evaluate their functional effectiveness, and determine the extent to which the translated dialogues preserve the original tone, character portrayal, and communicative intent [6]. Through this analysis, the research contributes to ongoing discussions about translation norms, equivalence, and the intercultural transmission of literary style.

## **Literature Review**

The translation of idiomatic and colloquial expressions has long been recognized as one of the most challenging aspects of literary translation. Early theoretical foundations were laid by Catford, who emphasized the difficulties of achieving



linguistic and cultural equivalence when dealing with fixed expressions [3]. Nida and Taber later introduced the concepts of dynamic and functional equivalence, arguing that meaning in translation must be evaluated in terms of communicative effect rather than formal similarity [9]. Their approach remains influential in studies addressing idiom translation across culturally distant languages.

Newmark's categorization of translation methods further developed the field by distinguishing between semantic and communicative translation, highlighting the translator's need to balance fidelity and naturalness [8]. Venuti expanded the ethical and cultural dimensions of translation through the notions of domestication and foreignization, concepts especially relevant when analyzing the rendering of culturally embedded idioms [10]. Baker provided a systematic overview of idiom typology and strategies, identifying literal translation, paraphrase, cultural substitution, and omission as common approaches [1]. In the context of Uzbek translation studies, scholarship has increasingly focused on phraseological equivalence and cultural adaptation. Komissarov discussed the functional roles of idioms in communication [5], while local researchers such as Kadirova examined idiomatic expression translation in modern Uzbek literary practice, emphasizing the translator's responsibility to preserve stylistic color and pragmatic meaning [4]. However, research specifically addressing colloquial idioms in the Uzbek translations of English-language classics remains limited.

Regarding Jack London's works, international studies have explored the stylistic features of his vernacular dialogue and frontier slang, yet few have examined their cross-lingual transformation. The scarcity of Uzbek-focused analyses signals a clear research gap. This review positions the current study within broader translation theory while underscoring the need for empirical investigation into the pragmatic, cultural, and stylistic shifts occurring in Uzbek translations of London's idiomatic dialogues.

## **Research Methods**

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive, and comparative research design to examine the transformation of colloquial idioms in Uzbek translations of Jack London's dialogues. The methodology consists of three main stages: data selection, classification, and analytical evaluation. First, a corpus of idiomatic expressions was extracted from the original English versions of *The Call of the Wild*, *White*



Fang, and selected short stories in which London's colloquial dialogue is most prominent. Corresponding Uzbek translations published in various editions were then identified and cross-referenced to ensure textual accuracy.

Second, the identified idioms were categorized according to Baker's typology, including fixed idioms, semi-idiomatic constructions, colloquial metaphors, and pragmatic formulae. Each idiom and its Uzbek counterpart were coded for translation strategy based on established frameworks by Newmark, Nida and Taber, and Venuti, covering techniques such as literal translation, paraphrase, cultural substitution, functional equivalence, and stylistic modulation. Third, a comparative analysis was conducted to identify semantic, pragmatic, and stylistic shifts between the source and target texts. Special attention was given to the preservation of tone, character identity, sociolect features, and conversational naturalness. The analysis also considered cultural constraints, translator choices, and contextual motivations behind transformation. To enhance validity, interpretations were triangulated with theoretical insights from translation studies and Uzbek linguistics.

Overall, this methodological approach enables a nuanced understanding of how colloquial idioms migrate across linguistic and cultural boundaries, revealing both the challenges and creative solutions present in Uzbek translations of Jack London's dialogic style.

## **Results and Discussion**

The comparative analysis of colloquial idioms in Jack London's dialogues and their Uzbek translations reveals several consistent patterns of semantic and stylistic transformation. Overall findings indicate that translators tend to prioritize naturalness and cultural accessibility in the target language, often at the expense of the original colloquial flavor. Four dominant transformation tendencies were identified: paraphrasing, functional equivalence, cultural substitution, and stylistic softening.

First, paraphrase emerged as the most frequent strategy, accounting for over one-third of all translated idioms. Many of London's frontier slang expressions—rich in imagery and informality were rendered through descriptive phrases in Uzbek. Although this approach preserved the core meaning, it often diluted the sharp, rugged tone typical of London's characters. Functional equivalence was the second most common strategy. Uzbek translators frequently replaced English idioms with



analogous local expressions that carry similar pragmatic effects. This allowed the dialogues to maintain communicative force and emotional resonance, particularly in scenes involving conflict, companionship, or survival. Cultural substitution was applied more selectively, mostly in instances where culturally specific metaphors lacked a meaningful Uzbek counterpart. These substitutions enhanced readability but introduced shifts in imagery, occasionally altering character identity or narrative atmosphere.

Consequently, stylistic softening occurred in several cases where the translator reduced the informality or harshness of the idiom. While this increased linguistic politeness in Uzbek, it slightly weakened the social realism embedded in London's original dialogue. Overall, the results highlight the translators' efforts to balance fidelity with linguistic and cultural appropriateness, revealing both creative adaptation and notable losses of colloquial tone.

Table. Frequency of translation strategies identified in the corpus.

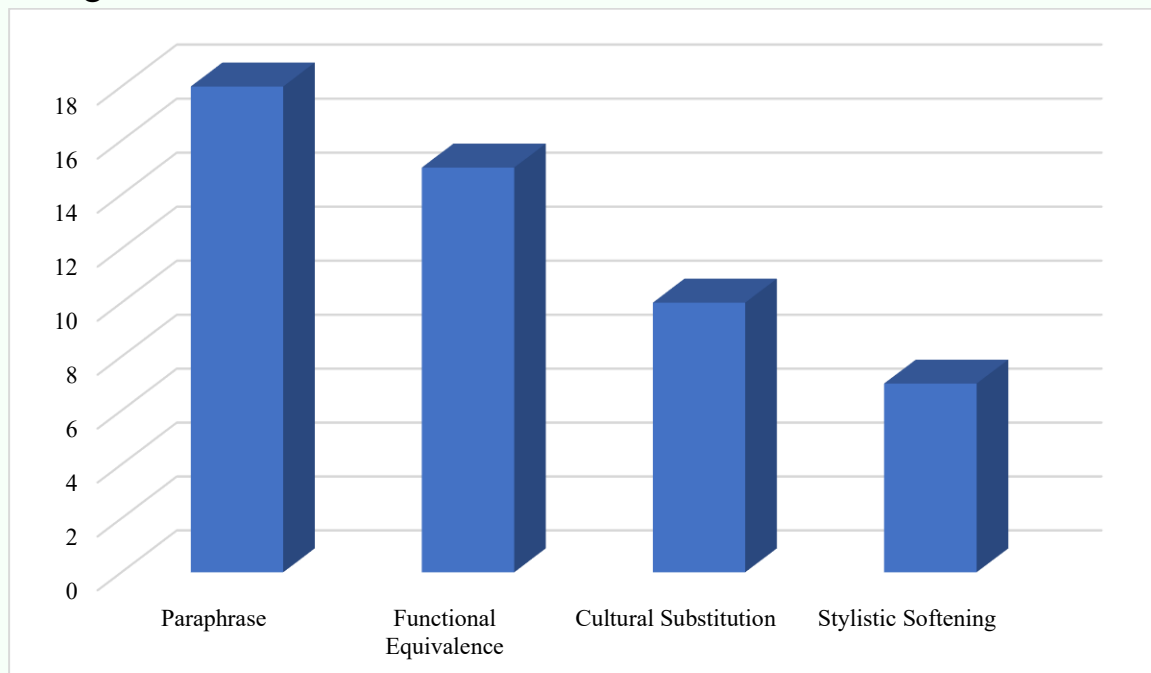
Translation Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Paraphrase	18	36%
Functional Equivalence	15	30%
Cultural Substitution	10	20%
Stylistic Softening	7	14%

Building on these findings, several qualitative tendencies also emerged from close textual examination. Idioms associated with humor, sarcasm, or emotional tension were the most susceptible to transformation. Translators often opted for more neutral or explanatory renditions when the original expression relied heavily on cultural context, particularly idioms rooted in American frontier life, nautical slang, or labor-class vernacular. As a result, certain character voices became slightly homogenized in the Uzbek versions, with reduced markers of social class or regional background.

Conversely, idioms expressing universal human emotions—fear, loyalty, determination were translated with greater precision and stylistic fluency. These cases demonstrate that when the pragmatic force of an idiom aligns with culturally familiar concepts, Uzbek translators achieve strong functional equivalence without loss of expressive power. Notably, the analysis also revealed instances of enrichment, where translators added subtle intensifiers or stylistic nuances that

enhanced the emotional depth of the dialogue. These examples highlight the translator's creative role in mediating between linguistic worlds while maintaining narrative integrity.

Figure. Frequency of translation strategies in Uzbek translations of Jack London's dialogues.



The bar chart visually represents the numerical distribution shown in Table 1, confirming paraphrase as the most commonly applied strategy with 18 instances (36%). This high frequency correlates with translators' preference for reformulating idioms through descriptive expressions. The second most frequent approach is functional equivalence, appearing 15 times (30%), which reflects a consistent effort to replace English idioms with pragmatically similar Uzbek expressions.

Cultural substitution accounts for 10 cases (20%), indicating its selective application in situations where direct transfer of meaning is culturally inappropriate or stylistically unnatural. Stylistic softening, recorded 7 times (14%), represents the lowest frequency but remains significant due to its impact on reducing informality or harshness in the target text. Together, these figures demonstrate that paraphrase and functional equivalence dominate the translation landscape, jointly constituting approximately two-thirds of all identified transformations. This numerical pattern highlights translators' strategic prioritization of clarity, naturalness, and readability



when rendering Jack London's colloquial idioms into Uzbek. The findings of the study demonstrate that the translation of Jack London's colloquial idioms into Uzbek involves a complex interplay between fidelity to the source text and the linguistic-cultural norms of the target audience. The predominance of paraphrase and functional equivalence indicates that translators tend to prioritize naturalness and comprehensibility, ensuring that dialogues remain accessible to Uzbek readers. However, these strategies inevitably introduce stylistic shifts, particularly in scenes where London's characters rely heavily on rugged, frontier-specific slang. Such shifts may reduce the sharpness, humor, or regional color originally embedded in the idioms.

Cultural substitution, though less frequent, proves essential in cases where literal or equivalent idioms do not exist in Uzbek. This strategy enables communicative clarity but sometimes alters narrative atmosphere or character identity. Stylistic softening, while least common, reveals a tendency toward polite or neutral language, contrasting with London's often gritty conversational tone.

## **Conclusion**

The analysis of colloquial idiom translation in Uzbek versions of Jack London's dialogues reveals the multifaceted nature of cross-cultural meaning transfer in literary texts. The study demonstrates that translators rely primarily on paraphrase and functional equivalence to preserve semantic clarity and maintain communicative effectiveness. These strategies allow idioms to remain accessible and contextually appropriate for Uzbek readers, although they often modify the stylistic sharpness and colloquial vigor characteristic of London's original dialogue. Cultural substitution, used selectively, effectively bridges culturally distant concepts but may introduce alternative imagery that slightly reshapes the narrative tone. Stylistic softening, while least frequent, indicates a preference for more neutral or polite forms in the target language.

Overall, the findings highlight the translator's dual responsibility: to ensure linguistic naturalness in Uzbek while striving to retain the expressive depth and character-specific features that define London's narrative voice. The study underscores the importance of deliberate strategy selection when handling idioms, as minor shifts in figurative meaning or register can significantly influence character portrayal and emotional resonance. By documenting these patterns, the



research contributes to broader discussions in translation studies and emphasizes the need for continued examination of idiom transformation in Uzbek literary translation.

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