

Date: 7th August-2026

TRANSLATION STRATEGIES AND EQUIVALENCE PROBLEMS OF
PHRASAL VERBS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH

Ilmurodov Abbos Malik ugli

Teacher, Specialized School,
Kattakurgan City, Samarkand Region

Abstract: This article examines the translation strategies applied to English phrasal verbs when rendered into Uzbek, and the equivalence problems that arise from the structural and semantic asymmetry between the two languages. English phrasal verbs, as highly idiomatic and polysemantic units, often lack direct one-word equivalents in Uzbek, an agglutinative language that expresses similar meanings through analytic verb constructions or affixation. The study classifies the main translation strategies — literal translation, functional substitution, descriptive translation, and omission/compensation — and evaluates their effectiveness in achieving semantic and pragmatic equivalence. The findings suggest that full equivalence is rarely achieved at the lexical level, and translators must rely on contextual and functional equivalence strategies instead.

Key words: phrasal verbs, translation strategy, equivalence, Uzbek language, English language, descriptive translation, functional substitution.

Phrasal verbs constitute one of the most translation-resistant categories of the English lexicon. Their meaning frequently cannot be deduced from the sum of their parts, and their high degree of polysemy, register variation, and idiomaticity create considerable difficulty for translators working between English and typologically distant languages such as Uzbek. Whereas English expresses aspectual, directional, and resultative meanings through a verb plus a particle (get up, give in, look after), Uzbek — an agglutinative Turkic language — typically encodes such meanings through auxiliary verbs, converbs, or derivational affixes attached to the main verb stem.

The purpose of this article is to identify and systematize the strategies used in translating English phrasal verbs into Uzbek, to assess the degree of equivalence achieved by each strategy, and to highlight recurring sources of translation loss or distortion. The analysis draws on general translation theory, particularly the concepts of dynamic and formal equivalence, and applies them to a specifically English–Uzbek language pair, which has received comparatively limited attention in translation studies.

Equivalence in translation theory is traditionally divided into formal equivalence, which preserves the structure of the source text, and dynamic (functional) equivalence, which preserves the effect and meaning for the target reader. In the case of phrasal verbs, formal equivalence is rarely attainable, since Uzbek has no direct structural counterpart to the verb-particle construction. As a result, translators are compelled to prioritize dynamic equivalence, reconstructing the intended meaning through whatever grammatical means the target language provides, even when this requires a shift in word class, sentence structure, or the addition of explanatory elements.



Date: 7th August-2026

A further complication arises from the fact that many phrasal verbs are polysemous and register-sensitive: the same verb-particle combination may carry a neutral meaning in one context and a highly colloquial or idiomatic meaning in another. For instance, the phrasal verb meaning to abandon an effort (give up) differs sharply in tone from its literal spatial reading (give something up to someone), and the translator must select the Uzbek equivalent that matches not only the denotative meaning but also the stylistic register of the source text.

Based on comparative analysis, four principal strategies can be identified for rendering English phrasal verbs into Uzbek.

First, literal or word-for-word translation is applied when the phrasal verb is semantically transparent, that is, when its meaning can be derived compositionally (sit down, stand up, come in). In such cases, a fairly direct Uzbek equivalent using a converb plus auxiliary verb construction is possible.

Second, functional substitution involves replacing the phrasal verb with a single Uzbek verb that conveys an equivalent meaning without mirroring the source structure, for example rendering an idiomatic combination meaning to relinquish something with a single native verb expressing surrender or abandonment. This strategy is the most frequently used for idiomatic phrasal verbs, since it prioritizes naturalness in the target language over structural fidelity.

Third, descriptive (explicative) translation is employed when no concise equivalent exists in Uzbek, requiring the translator to unpack the meaning into a longer phrase or clause. This strategy, while semantically accurate, often results in stylistic loss, since the compactness and idiomatic flavor of the source expression cannot be fully preserved.

Fourth, omission and compensation occur when a phrasal verb carries a nuance — often aspectual or emotive — that cannot be reproduced without disrupting the target sentence; the translator may omit the nuance at that point but compensate for it elsewhere in the text through an alternative lexical or grammatical device.

Comparative analysis reveals that translation loss most frequently occurs in three areas: aspectual precision, register, and idiomatic coloring. Aspectual precision is affected because English particles often encode fine-grained distinctions of completion, continuation, or repetition (finish up versus finish, eat away versus eat) that Uzbek auxiliary verbs approximate but do not always match exactly. Register mismatch occurs because many phrasal verbs are stylistically informal in English, while their closest Uzbek equivalents may be either more formal or more colloquial than intended, altering the perceived tone of the text. Idiomatic coloring is the hardest to preserve, since figurative phrasal verbs rooted in English cultural or spatial metaphors (for example, expressions built on the image of physical elevation or descent) often have no equivalent conceptual metaphor active in Uzbek, forcing the translator to substitute an entirely different image or abandon the figurative dimension altogether.

Given these challenges, a systematic approach to translating phrasal verbs from English into Uzbek should proceed in three stages: first, semantic disambiguation, in which the translator identifies the precise contextual meaning of the phrasal verb, since a



Date: 7th August-2026



single form may carry several unrelated senses; second, register and stylistic matching, in which the closest Uzbek expression is selected not only for denotative accuracy but also for stylistic appropriateness; and third, compensation planning, in which any unavoidable loss of nuance is identified in advance so that it can be offset elsewhere in the translated text. This staged approach reduces the risk of both under-translation, where nuance is lost, and over-translation, where the target text becomes unnecessarily verbose.

To ground the discussion, it is useful to consider how the four strategies apply across different semantic categories of phrasal verbs. Directional-spatial phrasal verbs, whose meaning remains close to the literal motion of the particle, are generally rendered through literal translation, since Uzbek converb constructions can reproduce the directional sense with reasonable accuracy. Aspectual phrasal verbs, which mark completion, initiation, or continuation of an action, pose greater difficulty, because Uzbek auxiliary verbs expressing similar notions do not always align precisely with the English particle's aspectual boundary; here, functional substitution combined with careful verb selection is usually required. Fully idiomatic phrasal verbs, whose meaning is unrelated to their literal components, almost always require either functional substitution with an unrelated native verb or descriptive translation, since no systematic correspondence exists between English particles and Uzbek auxiliary verbs at this level of abstraction.

Phrasal verbs with strong emotive or evaluative connotations present an additional layer of difficulty, since the translator must judge not only denotative meaning but also the attitude implied by the source expression — approval, disapproval, urgency, or informality — and select a Uzbek equivalent that carries a comparable evaluative charge. Failure to do so often results in a translation that is denotatively correct but pragmatically flat, losing the expressive force of the original text.

The findings of this study carry direct implications for the training of English–Uzbek translators. Since phrasal verbs cannot be translated through a fixed one-to-one substitution list, translator training programs should emphasize semantic classification skills — the ability to quickly identify whether a given phrasal verb is transparent, semi-idiomatic, or fully idiomatic in a specific context — as a precondition for selecting an appropriate strategy. Practical exercises comparing multiple published translations of the same source text can help trainee translators recognize the range of acceptable solutions and develop sensitivity to register and compensation techniques. Additionally, the compilation of a specialized bilingual glossary of high-frequency phrasal verbs, annotated with preferred translation strategies for each sense, would provide a valuable practical resource for both students and professional translators working in this language pair.

The translation of English phrasal verbs into Uzbek is inherently constrained by the typological gap between an analytic-idiomatic source system and an agglutinative target system. Full formal equivalence is rarely achievable, and translators must instead rely on a combination of functional substitution, descriptive translation, and compensation strategies to preserve meaning, register, and idiomatic effect as closely as possible. A deeper, corpus-based understanding of how specific classes of phrasal verbs are conventionally rendered

Date: 7th August-2026

in professional Uzbek translations would further refine these strategies and provide practical guidance for translator training programs.

REFERENCES:

1. Nida E.A., Taber C.R. The Theory and Practice of Translation. — Leiden: Brill, 1969.
2. Baker M. In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation. — London: Routledge, 1992.
3. Bolinger D. The Phrasal Verb in English. — Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971.
4. Catford J.C. A Linguistic Theory of Translation. — Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965.
5. Musaev Q. Tarjima nazariyasi asoslari. — Toshkent: Fan, 2005.
6. Newmark P. A Textbook of Translation. — New York: Prentice Hall, 1988.
7. Salomov G'. Tarjima nazariyasiga kirish. — Toshkent: O'qituvchi, 1978.
8. Quirk R., Greenbaum S., Leech G., Svartvik J. A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language. — London: Longman, 1985.

