



USAGE OF IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS IN CONTEMPORARY LITERARY WORKS

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the pervasive presence and significance of idiomatic expressions in modern literature. Idioms, as cultural and linguistic artifacts, play a crucial role in shaping the texture and authenticity of literary narratives. Through an examination of their use in contemporary works, this study delves into how idiomatic expressions enrich storytelling and convey cultural identity. Additionally, the article addresses the challenges and rewards of translating idioms, highlighting their role in connecting readers across diverse cultural landscapes.

Introduction

Idioms are the colorful threads that weave the fabric of language, adding depth and richness to our communication. In the realm of literature, idiomatic expressions serve as powerful tools for writers, allowing them to convey complex ideas and emotions with vivid imagery and cultural resonance [6]. This article delves into the captivating world of idioms, examining their significance in contemporary literary works and their role in shaping the texture of language. These expressions, deeply rooted in culture and language, play a crucial role in shaping the narrative landscape of contemporary literary works. As authors weave these phrases into their writing, they not only reflect the nuances of everyday speech but also offer readers a glimpse into the cultural identities and societal norms of the characters and settings portrayed.

Idioms, as figurative expressions whose meanings cannot be deduced from the literal definitions of their individual words, hold a special allure in language. The allure of idioms lies in their ability to encapsulate complex ideas or emotions within a few words, often in a colorful or metaphorical manner. These expressions are like cultural artifacts, reflecting the history, values, and experiences of a community. When used in writing, idioms can add depth, authenticity, and a sense of familiarity to the narrative, drawing readers into the world of the story.

One example of the allure of idioms can be seen in the expression "raining cats and dogs." This idiom is used to describe heavy rainfall in a colorful and vivid way. While the literal meaning of the phrase may seem nonsensical, it conveys the intensity of a downpour in a memorable and imaginative manner [1].



When incorporated into writing, this idiom can evoke a sense of drama and visual imagery, instantly painting a picture for the reader. By using familiar idiomatic expressions like "raining cats and dogs," writers can create a connection with their audience, inviting them to share in the experience and emotions being conveyed.

The allure of this particular idiom lies in its ability to transform a mundane weather event into a lively and engaging image, showcasing the power of language to capture the imagination and spark creativity.

Idioms also have a universal appeal—they transcend language barriers and offer insight into the collective consciousness of a society. Whether humorous, poignant, or thought-provoking, idioms can evoke a wide range of emotions and create connections between people from different backgrounds.

Furthermore, idioms often carry a sense of timelessness. While rooted in specific cultural contexts, many idiomatic expressions have endured across generations, becoming part of a shared linguistic heritage. This timelessness adds a layer of richness to literary works, allowing authors to tap into a reservoir of human experience and wisdom.

Contemporary literature abounds with idiomatic expressions that reflect the nuances of modern life. Authors often incorporate idioms into their writing to imbue their narratives with authenticity and resonance. Whether used to evoke a sense of place, convey a character's personality, or underscore a thematic motif, idiomatic expressions infuse literary works with layers of meaning and emotional depth. Here are a few examples of idioms used in recent literature:

1. In the novel "The Fault in Our Stars" by John Green, the character Augustus Waters says, "I'm on a roller coaster that only goes up, my friend." This idiomatic expression "roller coaster" is used metaphorically to convey the ups and downs of life.

2. In "The Night Circus" by Erin Morgenstern, the author writes, "The ballroom is filled with chandeliers that cast prisms on the walls as the dancers twirl and whirl." The idiom "twirl and whirl" is used to vividly describe the movement of the dancers, adding a sense of enchantment to the scene.

3. In "The Goldfinch" by Donna Tartt, the protagonist reflects, "I felt like I was walking on eggshells around him." This idiomatic expression "walking on eggshells" is used to convey a sense of caution and tension in the character's relationship.

4. In "The Book Thief" by Markus Zusak, Death, the narrator, says, "I am haunted by humans." Here, the idiomatic expression "haunted by humans" is used metaphorically to convey the emotional burden of witnessing human suffering [3].

These examples illustrate how contemporary authors incorporate idiomatic expressions to enrich their storytelling and create evocative imagery in their literary works.

Furthermore, in contemporary literary works, authors often use idiomatic expressions to delve into the intricacies of cultural identity, showcasing the rich tapestry of language and heritage. By incorporating idioms, writers can vividly portray the nuances of a community's linguistic heritage and explore themes of tradition, modernity, assimilation, and belonging.

For example, in Jhumpa Lahiri's novel "The Namesake," the protagonist, Gogol Ganguli, grapples with his dual cultural identity as an Indian-American. Through the use of idiomatic expressions specific to both Bengali and American English, Lahiri captures the tension



between Gogol's heritage and his desire for individuality and assimilation. Idioms such as "caught between two worlds" or "lost in translation" symbolize Gogol's struggle to reconcile his Indian roots with his American upbringing [4].

Similarly, in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel "Americanah," the protagonist Ifemelu navigates the complexities of race, identity, and belonging as a Nigerian immigrant in the United States. Adichie skillfully weaves idiomatic expressions from Nigerian Pidgin English into the narrative, providing readers with a glimpse into Ifemelu's cultural background and experiences. Phrases like "shine your eye" or "wahala dey" add depth and authenticity to Ifemelu's voice, highlighting her unique perspective on life in both Nigeria and America [2].

Through the strategic use of idiomatic expressions, contemporary authors can effectively explore the multifaceted nature of cultural identity, offering readers a deeper understanding of the challenges and triumphs faced by individuals straddling multiple worlds. By infusing their works with idioms that reflect the cadence and richness of everyday speech, writers create immersive narratives that celebrate the diversity and complexity of human experiences across different cultures.

However, the translation of idiomatic expressions poses a unique challenge for literary translators, as the essence of an idiom often lies in its cultural and linguistic context. Capturing the intended meaning and emotional resonance of an idiom in another language requires finesse and creativity. Translators must navigate the delicate balance between fidelity to the original text and the need to ensure that idiomatic expressions resonate with readers in the target language.

Challenges	Rewards
Cultural Specificity: Idioms are often deeply rooted in the culture and history of a language, making them difficult to directly translate without losing their original meaning.	Cultural Exchange: Translating idioms allows for a deeper understanding of different cultures, as it requires delving into the historical, social, and linguistic aspects of a language.
Contextual Understanding: Idioms rely heavily on contextual understanding, and translating them requires not only linguistic fluency but also a deep understanding of the cultural context in which the idioms are used.	Creative Expression: Successfully translating an idiom in a way that preserves its meaning and impact in another language can be a creatively satisfying endeavor.
Loss of Nuance: Direct translation of idioms can result in a loss of nuance, humor, or emotional impact, as the original meaning may not carry over seamlessly into another language.	Bridging Language Gaps: Translating idioms effectively can bridge language gaps and promote cross-cultural communication and understanding.
Untranslatability: Some idioms simply have no direct equivalent in another language, making it challenging to convey the same sentiment or concept.	Insight into Language Structure: The process of translating idioms provides insights into the structure and nuances of both the source and target languages,



	enriching one's understanding of language as a whole.
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As it can be seen from the table, translating idioms presents a unique set of challenges, but it also offers rich rewards in terms of cultural exchange, creative expression, and enhanced linguistic understanding.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the art of translating idiomatic expressions is a complex and nuanced endeavor, presenting both challenges and rewards for literary translators. The intricate balance between preserving the original meaning and ensuring resonance in the target language requires finesse, cultural insight, and linguistic creativity. While the challenges of cultural specificity, contextual understanding, and potential untranslatability are significant, the rewards of cultural exchange, creative expression, and enhanced linguistic understanding make the process of translating idioms a deeply enriching and valuable contribution to cross-cultural communication and appreciation. Despite the difficulties, the act of translating idioms serves as a bridge that connects people across languages and cultures, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the intricacies of human expression.

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