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English Equivalence of Kazakh Idioms

Every language has its special words, stable word-groups and phrases which reflect its peculiarities in accepting the linguistic worldview. All this words can also be called idioms or idiomatic expressions.

Kazakh idiom comes across the similar difficulties in defining and classifying stable word combinations. As English and Russian dictionaries, Kazakh phraseological dictionaries and other highly valuable reference books contain a great wealth of idioms, phrases, various lexical units of all kinds, but as a rule do not seek to lay clown a reliable criterion to distinguish between variable word-groups and idioms. Academician Smet Kenesbayev's dictionary may seem the first one in which the theoretical principles for the selections of Kazakh idioms have been elaborated. It should be noted that investigation of Kazakh idioms was initiated by academician S. Kenesbayev.

Various attempts have been made to investigate the problem of an idiom in different ways in the Kazakh language. There still exists a certain divergence of opinion as to the essential feature of idioms as distinguished from other word-groups and the nature of phrases that can be properly termed as idioms [1, 43].

In Kazakhstan the investigation of idioms or phraseology started in 1940s only. That is why there is a sharp necessity to study this sphere thoroughly, especially in comparison with English.

The complexity of the problem may be largely accounted for by the fact that the borderline between free or variable word-groups and idioms is not clearly defined in Kazakh either.

The so-called free word-groups are only relatively free as their lexical and grammatical valency, which makes at least some of them very close to set-phrases,

fundamentally delimits collocability of their member-words. Idioms are comparatively stable and semantically inseparable. For example, the constituent “кеcy” (to wink) in the word-group “көз кесy” (to wink at smb.) may be substituted for by any other verbs (жұмы, ашу, etc.) without changing the denotative meaning of the word-group under discussion (closing one’s eyes). In the idiom “бармақ бәсте, көз кесте” (everything is done on the quiet (on the sly), no such substitution is possible, as a change of the noun or verb would involve a complete change in the meaning of the whole group [2].

No substitution of any elements whatever is possible in the following Kazakh unchangeable idiomatic expressions: “айрандай аптап, көбедей көптеп” (to take smb in hand), “ақпа құлақ” (disobedient); “өсек аян” (gossip); “бірін айтпай, бәрін айт” (to cut a long story short).

As G.B. Antrushina states, "... phraseology is a kind of picture gallery in which vivid and amusing sketches of the nation’s customs, traditions and prejudices, recollections of its past history, scraps of folk songs and fairy-tales are collected. Quotations from great poets are preserved here, for phraseology is not only the most colorful but probably the most democratic area of vocabulary and draws its resources mostly from the very depths of popular speech" [2].

Kazakhstaniac academician S. Kenesbayev is the first one to open the field of investigation of Kazakh Phraseology. His Kazakh phraseological dictionary is a highly valuable reference book.

Considering all the pros and cons of the above mentioned terms used within English, Russian and Kazakh Phraseology, we accept the term “phraseological unit” (PhU) in the article for this term is the most neutral and dimensional one if compared to such terms like “idiom” in English linguistics and “phraseologisms” in Russian and Kazakh linguistics. To confirm the given allegation we would like to pay attention to the fact that the term “idiom” which is widely used in English linguistics does not have the exact usage in Russian and Kazakh linguistics. It can be proved by the investigation by a Kazakhstaniac linguist A. Kemelbekova who considers the term “idiom” to be a synonym to the terms “phraseological unities”, “phraseological

fusions” and “phraseological combinations” though these terms constitute the types of phraseological units [3, 12].

All the features mentioned are common for English as well as for Kazakh idioms. Idioms describing people are common for English as well as for Kazakh languages. Idioms connected with positive and negative qualities, for example: *His fingers are all thumbs* (he’s clumsy) has Kazakh equivalent қотыр түйедей болу. *She has iron nerves* (she’s composed) өз өзіне мығым болу. How people relate to the social norm, for example: *I think Mary has a secret to hide* (She keeps something from us); Kazakh variant will be тірі жанға тіс жармай.

We have divided idioms describing feelings or mood into three sub-groups. They are positive and negative feelings, moods and states. For example: to get on someone’s nerves (to exasperate) - қанын қайнату, to have a horror of (to disgust) - ет сыртына тебу, to be as happy as the day is long (extremely content) - айызы қану.

There are also idioms of physical feelings and states. For example: to burst into tears (to cry) – пора порасы шыққанша жылау. And also idioms of people’s fear or fright. For example: *She was scared stiff* (very scared), in Kazakh it sounds like this: жүрегі тас төбесіне шығу.

Next group is idioms connected with problematic situations. The second sub - group is idioms related to situations based on get. For example: to get frustrated (defeat) – қанжығасына жеңісті байлау. The third sub - group is changes and staves in situations. For example: to change one’s mind (think better of it) - көн етікке құрым шұлғау.

At last idioms connected with easing the situation. For example: to do well (recover) -беті бері қарай, to get off lightly (escape) - зыта жөнелу. There are also idioms connected with praise and criticism, for example: to go on at someone (criticize) жұрттың өсегіне қалу.

Also there are idioms connected with using language and communication. Idioms connected with communication problems. For example: to have a row with somebody (to quarrel) – өсекке сүттей ұйылу. Good and bad talk. For example: stream of

consciousness (flow of words) тілге тиек болу. Talk in discussions, meetings, etc. For example: to strike up (a conversation) (to start a conversation) бірінші боп сөз бастай. There can be idioms – miscellaneous. Idioms connected with paying, buying and selling. For example: to save up for (put by). Idioms based on names of the parts of the body. For example: to lend an ear (to listen to) – құлақ түріп тыңдау. Idioms connected with daily routine. For example: to do up (tidy up) айнадай қылу. There are also single idioms which cannot be included into described above groups. For example to run out (to come to an end) сөз сабын саптау, and some special groups of expressions in “Blueprint” such as all along (always) құдайдың құтты күні, all in all (as a result) сөз сабын саптай келе, all of a sudden (unexpectedly) аяқ астынан. The last group of idioms is proverbs. For example: “Out of the frying Pan and into the fire” (from one disaster into another) жығылғанға жұдырық болу. Also it can be seen from the following table [see Table 1]:

Table 1
Kazakh equivalence of English idioms

Kazakh variant	English variant
<i>Қозыдай момын</i>	<i>As meek as a lamb</i>
<i>Менсінбеу, кекірею, тәкәппар</i>	<i>To be on the high horse</i>
<i>Кінәлі пішінді көзқарас</i>	<i>A hand-dog look</i>
<i>Есінен тану, шығу, кету (қуанғаннан)</i>	<i>As mad as a March hare</i>
<i>Мешкейлікке, ішкілікке салыну</i>	<i>To please the pigs</i>
<i>Аңдамай сөйлеу, сыр ашу, аузына ие болмау</i>	<i>To let the cat out of the bag</i>

It seems impossible to find a single English equivalent for all contexts. At first glance, however, it appears quite possible to find several English idioms and translate the kazakh idiomatically “by parts”, that is:

1) “Қаны қайнау” may be expressed by “to be beside oneself with rage” or “to go up into the air” (i.e. explode with rage) or “to fly off the handle” (which may, sometimes, correspond to the Kazakh “зығырданы қайнау”);

2) “Аузынан ақ ит кіріп, қара ит шығу” can be idiomatically expressed by “to jump down smb.'s throat” (i.e. shout angry words at smb. though (3) it is needless and/or unwise to do) or by “to go off the deep end” (i.e. speak with unduly anger). “Өз өзін қолға алу” when one is under a moment's strain usually means “to pull oneself together” and... stop crying or being panicky, or the like.

Example:

...Klavdia, who had not done her addition and subtraction, burst out into loud sobs during the lesson, Katya knocked her pencil on the teacher's desk:

“Pull yourself together this moment, Klavdia”.

“Өз өзін қолға алу” when someone is under a more or less permanent strain and is worrying about something usually means “to take oneself in hand”.

Example:

“By and large, I'd say take your- self in hand”, Carry said. “To be quite honest, as man to man, you're a lot cleverer than I am, but you can't stick to one thing at a time.” However, in the following extract, the man in love seems to believe that his nervous strain has a permanent nature though his friends who think the opposite advise him that he rather “pull himself together” and not “take himself in hand”:

...“I can't help my feelings,” he said, “my love is stronger than my will.” Sergei Andreyevich and I naturally advised him to pull him- Self together—but he wouldn't listen. He said his control centers had snapped! How d'you like that?

“Түк болмаған күйде болу” and never show signs of fear or other emotions usually means “to hold (or: keep) oneself in hand”. However, we must admit that this expression does not point to the amount of will power or, say, extreme efforts taken by the person in question for keeping control of him. But precisely this can be conveyed by the phrase “to keep a (tight) hold on oneself”. For instance, chain smokers and drunkards who try to abstain would undoubtedly say that they “keep a tight hold on themselves”.

We have seen above that the phrase “өз өзің қолға алу” can be expressed by several English phrases in different contexts. Why is it so?

We know, for instance, that one Kazakh word may correspond to two or more English words (e.g., “аяқ” - “leg” or “foot”, “бармақ” – “finger”, “thumb” or “toe”).

But they perform the same function in the action “өз өзің қолға алу”. Their meaning in this action comes to us from their function. The function (cause) is primary. The meaning (effect) is secondary. Thus, it is the function that has to be translated first thing and never mind by what means. Here, ends justify the means (lexical, grammatical, etc.).

We want to consider now some of the possible contextual functions of the phrase “ат үстінде тұрғандай” and how each particular function can be translated into English:

1) “ат үстінде тұрғандай” and “to turn a blind eye (to smth.)” may perform one and the same function of “ignoring on purpose”;

2) the function of “pretending not to see smth. embarrassing or hit with danger” may be expressed by both “ат үстінде тұрғандай” and “to shut one's eyes (to smth.)”;

3) when a person who “көз жұма қарай” is criticized for it because he is believed “to be irresponsible enough to overlook someone’s grave misconduct”, one can say that the irresponsible person simply “turned a blind eye (to it)”, which is, in fact, negative attitude in criticism in;

4) the phrases “ат үстінде тұрғандай” and “to look through one’s fingers” (or. “to wink at smth.”) may be used in the function of “to pretend (for some reason) not to see an error, piece of misconduct, etc”.;

5) and finally, “ат үстінде тұрғандай” may have the function of “neglecting as being indifferent”, that is, of “not caring a damn (about smth.)” or simply “not troubling”.

Thus, we can see that two phrases (in two different languages) that perform the same functions can meet each other, shake hands and make a junction as allies and brothers-in-arms.

There are a lot of common idioms in both English and in the Kazakh language.

Let's take for instance some phrases from Kazakh and English languages:

- 1) The apple of one's eyes – көзінің ағы мен қарасы.
- 2) Kill two birds with one stone – екі қоянды бір таяқпен ұрып өлтіру.
- 3) Cat and dog life – ит пен мысықтай өмір.
- 4) Play with fire – отпен ойнау.
- 5) Asperse somebody's name – біреудің атына кір келтіру.

As we can see, these are rather simple examples, because we can translate them word-for-word. This is called full equivalency. This can show that there are some similarities between different nations. But it does not occur all the time.

- 1) Abound in courage – жүрек жұтқан болу.
- 2) Abuse somebody left and right – жерден алып жерге салу.
- 3) Commit adulatory – жұбайының көзіне шөп салу.
- 4) Asperse somebody's character – біреудің абыройын айрандай төгу [4].

Though these units are not translated word-for-word the meaning of the whole unit can be deduced from the meanings of the constituent parts. These are motivated units and this type is called imaginary equivalency [see Table 2].

Table 2

English equivalence of Kazakh idioms

English variant	Kazakh variant
<i>Jangle on somebody's ears</i>	<i>Зығырданын қайнату</i>
<i>Jump down somebody's throat</i>	<i>Аузына құм құйылды</i>
<i>Lose one's tongue</i>	<i>Аузын бақадай ашты</i>
<i>Do a snow job on somebody</i>	<i>Аузын жиде жегендей қылды</i>
<i>Born under lucky star</i>	<i>Ардайым желі оңынан тұру</i>
<i>To hand in one's dinner pail</i>	<i>Көзіне құм құйылды</i>
<i>Neither rhyme nor reason</i>	<i>Қаңқасы да жоқ</i>

Thus we can see that in both languages idioms are similar, their meaning cannot be deduced from the meaning of the constituent parts.

Kazakh idiom comes across the similar difficulties in defining and classifying stable word combinations. As English and Russian dictionaries, Kazakh phraseological dictionaries and other highly valuable reference books contain a great wealth of idioms, phrases, various lexical units of all kinds, but as a rule do not seek to lay down a reliable criterion to distinguish between variable word-groups and idioms. In academician Smet Kenesbayev's dictionary, there are theoretical principles for the selections of Kazakh idioms which have been elaborated. It should be noted that investigation of Kazakh idioms was initiated by academician S. Kenesbayev [2, 47]. Various attempts have been made to investigate the problem of an idiom in different ways in the Kazakh language. There still exists a certain divergence of opinion as to the essential feature of idioms as distinguished from other word-groups and the nature of phrases that can be properly termed as idioms.

In brief, there is a sharp necessity to study this sphere thoroughly, especially in comparison with English.

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