

## TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION OF TOPONYMIC PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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**Abstract:** Toponymic phraseological units (TPUs) are expressions that incorporate geographical names (toponyms) and convey meanings that go beyond the literal reference to the place. These units are an essential aspect of language, reflecting cultural, historical, and social significance. This paper explores the typology and classification of TPUs, categorizing them based on structure, semantic function, and cultural context. Simple and complex TPUs, idiomatic expressions, metaphors, euphemisms, proverbs, and stereotypes are discussed to demonstrate the richness of toponyms in language. The study emphasizes the importance of toponyms in shaping communication, identity, and collective memory. By examining these units, we gain a deeper understanding of how geographical names influence linguistic creativity and cultural expression.

**Keywords:** Toponymic Phraseological Units, Geographical Names, Idioms, Metaphors, Euphemisms, Proverbs, Phraseology, Linguistic Typology, Cultural Context, Russian Phraseology.

### Introduction

Toponymic phraseological units (TPUs) are a distinctive category of fixed expressions or idiomatic phrases that incorporate geographical names (toponyms). These units go beyond their literal geographical references and carry meanings that are shaped by cultural, historical, and social contexts. TPUs reflect how place names, when embedded in language, evoke shared experiences, societal values, and collective memories associated with those places. The study of TPUs offers a window into how geographical names influence language use, fostering a deeper understanding of both the linguistic and cultural significance of toponyms.

In many languages, geographical names are not merely labels for physical locations but serve as carriers of rich cultural associations and historical significance. Through the lens of phraseology, these place names acquire a broader symbolic function, often expressing societal attitudes, stereotypes, and metaphors that reflect human experiences. For example, references to "Rome" in expressions like "All roads lead to Rome" are not merely about the city but evoke notions of centrality, power, or destiny. [1,32] The aim of this paper is to explore the typology and classification of toponymic phraseological units, examining how they are structured, their semantic functions, and their role in communication. TPUs can take many forms, from simple idioms to complex metaphors or proverbs, and their meanings are often shaped by the historical and cultural contexts in which they arise. By categorizing and analyzing these expressions, we can gain valuable insights into how place names play a role in language, influencing both linguistic structures and cultural narratives.

Ultimately, the study of toponymic phraseological units underscores the importance of geographical names in shaping language and thought, illustrating how they contribute to the creation of meaning in both everyday speech and specialized discourse. As we explore the various typologies and functions of TPUs, we begin to appreciate the power of toponyms not only as geographical markers but as symbols that reflect the intersection of language, culture, and society.

The translation and interpretation of **Toponymic Phraseological Units (TPUs)** require a detailed understanding of both linguistic structures and the broader cultural, historical, and contextual meanings attached to geographical names. TPUs often serve as windows into the identity, values, and history of a culture, and translating them effectively demands more than simply converting words between languages. This section will explore the various aspects of TPUs, including their linguistic characteristics, challenges in translation, and strategies for accurate interpretation.[3]

Toponymic phraseological units are fixed expressions or idioms that prominently feature geographical names. These toponyms, which can refer to places such as cities, countries, rivers, or even historical landmarks, acquire additional meanings over time through cultural, literary, and social usage. For example, the expression “**All roads lead to Rome**” originally refers to the Roman Empire’s vast network of roads. Over time, it has taken on a figurative meaning to suggest that many different paths or methods can lead to the same goal or conclusion. Similarly, the term “**Hollywood**” extends beyond its geographical reference to embody the global film industry and celebrity culture.[3,21]

Some TPUs, however, can have meanings deeply rooted in cultural, historical, or political contexts that make them particularly difficult to translate. In many cases, a toponym in one language can symbolize values, ideals, or stereotypes that are not directly translatable to another language or culture. The process of translating TPUs presents a range of challenges due to the interplay of linguistic and cultural factors. These challenges include:

- **Cultural Specificity:** TPUs are often tied to specific historical or cultural events, places, or figures that may not be recognized or understood by speakers of the target language. For instance, a TPU like “**Silicon Valley**” in English refers not only to a geographic location but also to a global center for technology and innovation. If the translator is working with an audience that is unfamiliar with this concept, they may need to provide additional context or find an equivalent reference that conveys the same idea.
- **Figurative Meaning:** Many toponymic expressions are idiomatic, meaning they carry meanings that are not directly connected to their literal geographical reference. A phrase like “**Wall Street**” in English, for instance, might be translated in a way that focuses on its financial connotation, rather than simply referencing a street in New York City. Translating these expressions often requires a deep understanding of both the literal and figurative meanings.
- **Lack of Equivalence:** Some toponyms do not have direct equivalents in the target language, either because the place name itself is not known or because the cultural or historical reference is too distant. For example, expressions like “**Machu Picchu**” or “**Stonehenge**” may require an explanation in translation if the audience is unfamiliar with their cultural significance.
- **Changing Cultural Landscapes:** In some cases, the meaning of a toponym can shift over time. For example, the phrase “**The Wild West**” in American English evokes images of

lawlessness, adventure, and frontier life, but these associations may not be immediately apparent to speakers in different cultural contexts. Translating such an expression requires a sensitivity to historical shifts in meaning.[4]

To overcome these challenges, translators and interpreters use various strategies to adapt TPUs for the target audience. These strategies aim to preserve both the linguistic integrity and the cultural meaning of the expression. The most common strategies include. In cases where the toponym is widely recognized in both cultures, the literal translation of the geographical reference may suffice. For example, “**Big Apple**,” a common nickname for New York City, is recognizable worldwide and can typically be kept unchanged in most translations. When the toponym in the source language does not have an equivalent in the target language, translators may replace it with a culturally relevant place name from the target language that conveys a similar meaning or feeling. For example, if a TPU like “**Go to Moscow**” (meaning to be sent somewhere remote or unwanted) is used, it could be substituted with a well-known local place name that serves a similar function in the target culture.

When a TPU contains a place name that has a deep cultural or historical meaning but lacks an equivalent in the target language, it may be necessary to provide an explanation. For example, “**The Tower of Babel**” refers to the Biblical story of a failed human project leading to linguistic confusion. In a language where the story isn’t widely known, the translator might explain it as “The Tower of Babel, a Biblical structure symbolizing human pride and linguistic confusion.” In certain cases, when the toponym does not contribute significantly to the understanding of the expression or is too culturally specific, the translator may opt to omit the toponym altogether, provided that the meaning of the expression remains intact. However, this strategy should be used sparingly, as it may lead to the loss of important contextual information. Sometimes, the toponym can be directly borrowed from the source language. For instance, when the term “**Champagne**” is used to refer to both the region in France and the sparkling wine it produces, it is often borrowed into other languages without change because of its global recognition and importance.

To better understand how TPUs are translated and interpreted, consider the following examples:

**"Café Parisien"** (French): This phrase refers not just to a café, but to a whole cultural concept of social gatherings and intellectual life associated with Parisian cafés. In a translation to another language, a phrase like “**Parisian café**” may be used, but the full cultural significance of the term may need an additional explanation, such as “a traditional Parisian café known for its intellectual atmosphere.”

**"Gobi Desert"** (English): The Gobi Desert, located in Mongolia and China, is often used figuratively to describe a vast, barren space. In translation, this could be retained as “**Gobi Desert**” or substituted for a similar desert with cultural significance in the target language, depending on the context.

**"Pride and Prejudice"** (English): This classic novel by Jane Austen carries strong cultural connotations. In languages where the book title may not directly resonate, a literal translation might be used, but the figurative meaning of the title (social norms, personal growth) may need to be adapted or explained for full understanding.

The translation and interpretation of toponymic phraseological units demand an approach that balances linguistic accuracy with cultural sensitivity. Translators must be attuned to the cultural,

historical, and contextual meanings of the toponyms they encounter. By employing a range of strategies, including literal translation, cultural substitution, explanatory translation, omission, and borrowing, translators can ensure that the essence of the TPU is preserved while making it comprehensible and meaningful to the target audience. In this way, TPUs not only serve as linguistic expressions but also as bridges between cultures, reflecting the richness and diversity of human experience across languages.

The translation and interpretation of Toponymic Phraseological Units (TPUs) underscore the intricate relationship between language, culture, and identity. These expressions, deeply embedded in the historical and cultural contexts of their source languages, pose unique challenges for translators striving to preserve both their literal meanings and cultural nuances. As highlighted by researchers, TPUs often reflect the national character and worldview of a community, making their accurate translation essential for effective cross-cultural communication. Employing strategies such as literal translation, cultural substitution, explanatory translation, omission, and borrowing enables translators to navigate these challenges. The choice of strategy depends on factors like the TPU's cultural significance, the availability of equivalent expressions in the target language, and the desired impact on the target audience. For instance, as noted by linguists, TPUs are often tied to specific historical or cultural events, making their direct translation challenging without losing contextual meaning.

In essence, translating TPUs is not merely about converting words but involves a deep understanding of the source and target cultures, histories, and societal values. By carefully selecting appropriate translation strategies, translators can bridge cultural divides, ensuring that the richness and depth of these expressions are effectively conveyed to new audiences. This process not only facilitates communication but also fosters a greater appreciation for the diverse tapestry of human cultures.

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