

INTEGRATING KUNIN’S PHRASEOLOGICAL THEORY WITH BAKER’S TRANSLATION STRATEGIES: TOWARD A UNIFIED MODEL OF IDIOM ANALYSIS

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Annotation. *This article seeks to integrate A. V. Kunin’s phraseological theory with Mona Baker’s translation strategies to propose a unified model for idiom analysis and translation. Kunin’s theory emphasizes the linguistic and cultural distinctiveness of idiomatic expressions, while Baker’s framework focuses on the pragmatic and functional aspects of equivalence. The study highlights the intersection of these two approaches in addressing semantic opacity, cultural specificity, and pragmatic relevance. Through comparative analysis, the paper demonstrates how combining structural and communicative perspectives yields more effective idiom interpretation and translation. The integrated model bridges the gap between theoretical linguistics and applied translation studies, enhancing both idiom comprehension and cross-cultural communication. The research concludes that harmonizing Kunin’s and Baker’s insights offers a comprehensive, culturally grounded framework for modern phraseological analysis.*

Key words: *phraseology, idiom, Kunin, Baker, translation theory, equivalence, cultural context, pragmatics, semantic transparency, functional approach, communicative equivalence, idiomaticity, unified model.*

INTRODUCTION

Idioms occupy a central place in the study of language and translation, representing a bridge between linguistic form and cultural meaning. The complexity of idiomatic expressions lies in their figurative nature, cultural embedding, and pragmatic variability. Among the most influential scholars in phraseological research, A. V. Kunin developed a comprehensive theory that systematized idioms as stable, semantically indivisible expressions reflecting a people’s worldview and linguistic creativity. On the other hand, Mona Baker advanced a pragmatic approach to idiom translation, emphasizing the need for functional and contextual equivalence rather than literal accuracy. Although these frameworks emerged from distinct linguistic traditions Kunin’s from Russian structural linguistics and Baker’s from English translation studies they share a common concern with meaning, usage, and communicative effect. Integrating their perspectives enables a holistic understanding of idioms as both linguistic and cultural phenomena (A. V. Kunin 1986). This article aims to synthesize Kunin’s phraseological principles with Baker’s idiom translation strategies, proposing a unified model that combines theoretical depth

with practical applicability. Such integration will contribute to contemporary translation studies by offering a systematic methodology for interpreting and translating idioms across languages while preserving their cultural and emotional resonance.

MAIN PART

A. V. Kunin's contribution to phraseology fundamentally reshaped the study of idioms by treating them as independent linguistic units characterized by semantic integrity, stability, and cultural coloration. He defined idioms as "phraseological units whose meaning cannot be derived from the sum of their parts," emphasizing that their figurative meaning emerges from cultural and historical experience. According to Kunin, idioms serve as a mirror of a nation's mentality, social reality, and humor. For instance, English idioms such as "raining cats and dogs" or "a blessing in disguise" reflect metaphorical patterns and historical narratives deeply rooted in English-speaking culture. Thus, phraseological meaning extends beyond lexicon into the realm of cultural semiotics.

Mona Baker, in her book *In Other Words*, approached idiom translation from a functional and communicative perspective. She identified four main strategies: using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but different form, paraphrasing, and omission when no equivalent exists. Baker's emphasis on functional equivalence aligns with Eugene Nida's dynamic equivalence, which seeks to reproduce the same response in the target audience as in the original. Baker also introduced the concept of cultural substitution, advocating for replacing idioms with culturally familiar expressions in the target language to preserve pragmatic and emotional effects (Mona Baker 1992).

Integrating Kunin's structural and cultural framework with Baker's functional and communicative strategies creates a comprehensive idiom analysis model. Kunin's approach provides the theoretical foundation for understanding idiom structure, semantic non-compositionality, and national-cultural connotation, while Baker's strategies offer practical methods for their cross-linguistic transfer. The unified model, therefore, combines linguistic description with translation practice, addressing both what idioms are and how they should be handled in translation (A. V. Kunin 1986).

The proposed model consists of three interrelated dimensions:

1. Structural-semantic analysis (Kunin's perspective) - identifying the idiom's fixed structure, figurative meaning, and lexical stability. This step recognizes idioms as autonomous phraseological units and analyzes their internal composition.
2. Cultural-contextual interpretation (Kunin + Baker) - exploring the socio-cultural background, historical origin, and metaphorical imagery associated with the idiom. This

stage ensures the translator comprehends not only the literal but also the symbolic layer of meaning.

3. Functional-communicative translation (Baker’s perspective) - applying translation strategies to achieve equivalence in meaning, style, and effect. Here, the translator determines whether to use equivalent idioms, paraphrasing, or cultural substitution.

For example, consider the English idiom “to kill two birds with one stone.” From Kunin’s viewpoint, it represents a stable, semantically indivisible unit expressing the idea of achieving two goals with one effort. Culturally, it reflects pragmatic problem-solving typical of English discourse. From Baker’s side, the translator may use the Uzbek idiom “*bir o‘q bilan ikki quyovni urmoq*” which carries an identical figurative meaning though slightly different imagery. This demonstrates how the integrated model allows both cultural preservation and functional adequacy.

Another example is “*to bury the hatchet*” meaning “*to make peace*”. The idiom originates from Native American traditions. Kunin’s approach would emphasize its historical and cultural specificity, while Baker’s strategies would guide translators toward a suitable cultural substitution such as “*yarashmoq*” in Uzbek, maintaining pragmatic equivalence while omitting cultural references that may confuse the target audience. The unified model thus promotes culturally sensitive and contextually appropriate translation decisions.

The integration of these theories also addresses one of the most persistent issues in translation studies: the balance between linguistic fidelity and cultural adaptation. Kunin’s theory ensures that idioms are analyzed in their original linguistic and cultural context, preventing superficial or literal translations. Baker’s approach complements this by emphasizing communicative effectiveness and naturalness in the target language. When combined, they produce a translation that is both accurate in meaning and authentic in expression.

Furthermore, the unified model contributes to pedagogical applications in translation training. Students often struggle with idioms because they require both linguistic competence and cultural awareness. Teaching idioms through Kunin’s structural typology phraseological fusions, unities, and collocations helps learners recognize idiom patterns. Integrating Baker’s strategies then guides them in selecting appropriate translation methods for different communicative contexts. This dual approach enhances both analytical and practical translation skills.

Cognitively, the model aligns with conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson, which argues that idioms arise from shared cultural metaphors. Kunin’s

framework explains idioms as culturally motivated phraseological units, while Baker’s model operationalizes this understanding in translation practice. For instance, the metaphor “*life is a journey*” manifests in idioms like “*to be at a crossroads*” or “*to reach a dead end*”. Translating these requires recognizing both the underlying metaphor and the cultural resonance. A translator guided by the integrated model would preserve conceptual coherence across languages, even when literal equivalence is impossible (Lakoff, G., Johnson 1980).

The unified model also supports cross-cultural research, offering a tool for comparing idioms across linguistic systems. It enables researchers to trace how similar experiences are conceptualized differently in various cultures. For example, English and Uzbek share idioms related to animals, yet the symbolic meanings often diverge due to cultural associations. In English, “a dark horse” denotes a mysterious or underestimated person, while in Uzbek, similar imagery might not carry the same implication. The integrated approach thus aids in identifying cultural asymmetries and improving intercultural understanding.

In translation theory, such integration exemplifies interdisciplinarity-bridging linguistic theory, cultural studies, and translation practice. It recognizes idioms as living linguistic entities that evolve with culture. Kunin’s analytical precision provides a scientific basis for idiom classification, while Baker’s translation-oriented pragmatism ensures applicability in real-world translation. The resulting model not only refines theoretical perspectives but also equips translators with a dynamic, culturally responsive methodology. Merging Kunin’s phraseological insights with Baker’s translation strategies yields a comprehensive model that unites structural analysis, cultural awareness, and functional adaptation. This synthesis advances idiom studies beyond traditional dichotomies of form versus function, proposing a unified framework for understanding idioms as both linguistic artifacts and communicative tools shaped by culture.

CONCLUSION

Integrating Kunin’s phraseological theory with Baker’s translation strategies creates a balanced framework for idiom analysis and translation. Kunin’s model provides the structural and cultural foundation necessary to understand idioms’ semantic complexity, while Baker’s approach ensures functional and communicative effectiveness in translation. The unified model bridges theoretical and practical dimensions, offering translators a coherent method for managing idiomatic meaning across cultures. It enhances linguistic accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and communicative naturalness. This integration represents a step toward a holistic approach to phraseological research, where

linguistic form, cultural context, and pragmatic intent function as interconnected elements of idiom translation.

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