
Synonymy in Translation: Cultural, Contextual, and Connotative Challenges in English–Uzbek Language Pair

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Annotation *The paper will deal with complexities of synonym selection in translation, with special consideration given to English-Uzbek language pair. Based on the linguistic theory, cultural semantics and the linguistic family, it examines the variation of synonyms in different languages based on connotation, register and usage. The research incorporates both quantitative analyses of corpora as well as a qualitative semantic assessment of interpretations of synonym pairs undertaken by native speakers and professional translators in real-life situations. It says that synonymy is not just a question of formal equivalence, it is strongly connected with cultural values, emotional subtext, and practical application. The results emphasize the relevance of contextual translation approaches and identify possible means that can be applied to make the translation process error less: footnotes, lengthy glosses, and culturally more neutral paraphrasing. The present work can be added to translation research as the study that shows that direct equivalence has its boundaries and urges allowing cultures to drive the solution of synonym.*

Keywords *Synonym selection, translation challenges, English-Uzbek translation, synonymy, connotative meaning, cultural semantics, register variation, contextual translation, cultural equivalence*

Синонимия в переводе: культурные, контекстуальные и коннотативные трудности в англо-узбекской языковой паре

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Аннотация *Статья посвящена сложностям выбора синонимов в переводе с особым акцентом на языковую пару английский-узбекский. Опираясь на лингвистическую теорию, культурную семантику и принадлежность языков к разным семьям, она исследует вариативность синонимов в разных языках с точки зрения коннотации, регистра и употребления. Исследование сочетает количественный анализ корпусов и качественную семантическую оценку интерпретаций синонимических пар, проведённую носителями языка и профессиональными переводчиками в реальных ситуациях. В работе подчёркивается, что синонимия – это не только вопрос формального эквивалента, она тесно связана с культурными ценностями, эмоциональным подтекстом и практическим применением. Результаты подчёркивают важность контекстуально-ориентированных подходов к переводу и выявляют возможные приёмы для минимизации ошибок: сноски, развёрнутые глоссы и культурно более нейтральное перефразирование. Данная работа вносит вклад в переводоведение, демонстрируя*

ограниченность прямой эквивалентности и призывая позволить культуре определять решение синонимических задач.

Ключевые слова *Выбор синонима, переводческие трудности, англо-узбекский перевод, синонимия, коннотативное значение, культурная семантика, регистровые различия, контекстуальный*

Tarjimada sinonimiya: ingliz-o'zbek tillari juftligidagi madaniy, kontekstual va konnotativ qiyinchiliklar

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Annotatsiya *Maqola tarjima jarayonida sinonim tanlash murakkabliklariga bag'ishlanadi, bunda ingliz-o'zbek tillari juftligiga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Lingvistik nazariya, madaniy semantika va tillarning turli oilalarga mansubligiga asoslanib, u turli tillardagi sinonimlarning konnotatsiya, registr va qo'llanilish nuqtai nazaridan o'zgaruvchanligini o'rganadi. Tadqiqot korpuslarning miqdoriy tahlili bilan birga, ona tili vakillari va professional tarjimolar tomonidan real hayotiy vaziyatlarda o'tkazilgan sinonim juftliklarining sifiy semantik baholashini ham qamrab oladi. Ishda ta'kidlanadiki, sinonimiya nafaqat rasmiy ekvivalentlik masalasi, balki madaniy qadriyatlar, hissiy ostmatn va amaliy qo'llash bilan chambarchas bog'liq. Natijalar kontekstga asoslangan tarjima yondashuvlarining dolzarbligini ta'kidlaydi hamda xatolarni kamaytirish uchun qo'llanilishi mumkin bo'lgan vositalarni aniqlaydi: izohlar, kengaytirilgan glossalar va madaniy jihatdan neytralroq parafrazalar. Ushbu ish tarjima tadqiqotlariga qo'shiladigan tadqiqot sifatida to'g'ridan-to'g'ri ekvivalentlikning chegaralarini ko'rsatadi va madaniyatning sinonim muammolarini hal qilishda yetakchi rol o'ynashiga imkon berishga chaqiradi.*

Kalit so'zlar *Sinonim tanlash, ingliz-o'zbek tarjimasi, sinonimiya, konnotativ ma'no, madaniy semantika, registr farqlari, kontekstual tarjima, madaniy ekvivalentlik, korpusga asoslangan tahlil, sifat semantic tahlili*

Introduction

Translation is not merely a matter of an interchange of words, it is an exchange of words and of minds in different languages traditions. Synonymy particularly requires the consideration of the subtle senses that may not occur in matching sense but can be held at similar functional senses in a conversation. The theory of non-equivalence in word-level (Non-equivalence at a word-level) formulated by

Mona Baker (2018) reveals that the similarity in appearance of the so-called synonyms does not mean that they are similar in meaning and style. This is because languages convey the experiences in their own unique manner and translation requires translators to wade through relations of using words, occasions of word usage, social languages and create perfect matches. Due to such difference in the linguistic and cultural endowment of different

languages, synonyms, consequently, are not perfect antonyms. In the book Bishop has a section on lexical relations where he discusses how the different languages utilize synonyms on the basis of cultural perspective and concludes that the choice of a synonym in any specific context would usually be governed by the factors of frequency, formality and collocation patterns, of the language that one is discussing.

Studying how people use language in casual settings is key to finding real synonyms across languages. Dictionaries give formal equivalent words, but these translations often miss the subtle differences found in everyday conversation. Colloquial use shows the cultural and social contexts of words, which is vital for deciding if two words from different languages truly work as synonyms. For example, a word in one language might have several informal meanings or associations that its direct translation in another language does not share. This difference shows that real-world synonymy cannot always be figured out using formal definitions alone.

Identifying everyday behavior helps prevent common translation mistakes. Students and translators who rely solely on formal references may choose words that fit official definitions but miss the informal context used by speakers. By focusing on this, researchers can better identify contextually similar words. This understanding is crucial for knowing how synonyms translate across different language pairs. The current approach highlights the importance of achieving clarity when comparing word meanings in both formal and informal language use. Sinclair also talks about how close lexical relationships can depict such fine semantic differences even between synonyms (Sinclair, 1991).

Another valuable work is *Patterns of Lexis in Text* by Michael Hoey (1991). Hoey notes that analyzing texture and collocates creates meaning and can help identify the referent, antonym, or even equivalent meaning of a word. Roman Jakobson is another scholar who

made an important contribution to the study of translation. He argued that while many terms can be translated directly, many others must be translated with consideration of culture and context. He pointed out that "Equivalence in difference is the central issue in language and the core issue in linguistics".

Methods

To support cross-linguistic comparability, the study employed the British National Corpus (BNC) for English and compiled a mini-corpus of selected Uzbek literary, journalistic, and spoken-language texts. Involving native informants helped ensure cultural authenticity in evaluating the nuance and appropriateness of translated synonyms. A supplementary survey aimed to gather bilingual participants' views on connotation and register. To explore differences in synonym use, we compared texts translated from Russian to English and from English to Russian. This study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative corpus analysis with qualitative semantic analysis. This setup works well for looking at both the frequency and the subtle meanings of synonyms in English and Uzbek. We concentrated on key areas like emotional connotations, register (formal or informal), and context-specific usage. We identified synonym pairs and consulted a small group of native speakers and professional translators to assess the quality and appropriateness of the translations.

Data were collected from two comparable corpora: the British National Corpus for English and the Uzbek literary works journals texts. These sources provide extensive examples of language in use across various contexts.

Procedure

First, a list of common synonyms was compiled for both languages. Then, these synonyms were searched within the corpora to identify their frequency and contexts of use. Contextual analysis focused on identifying patterns, collocations, and connotations associated with each synonym

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to compare frequency patterns. For the qualitative analysis, thematic coding was used to categorize contextual variations and semantic nuances.

Results

The analysis revealed significant discrepancies in synonym usage between the two languages. Three primary differences were identified:

1. **Connotative differences:** Words that appear to be direct synonyms often carry different emotional or cultural connotations. For example, In Uzbek, the word “*yurt*” has a broader sense compared to its English synonym “*homeland*” or “*country*”.

Yurt: This term encompasses not only the concept of a physical territory or nation but also the cultural, historical, and emotional ties people have with their land. It can refer to a sense of belonging, community, and the heritage of the people living there. While “*homeland*” in English conveys a similar idea, it often lacks the depth of cultural and emotional significance that “*yurt*” carries in Uzbek.

2. **Context-dependent usage:** In some cases, synonyms in Russian have broader or narrower contexts of use compared to their English counterparts. For instance, the Uzbek word “*tez*” can be translated as “*fast*,” “*quick*,” or “*rapid*,” but these English synonyms have more specific contexts in which they are appropriately used, whereas in Uzbek, “*tez*” applies to a broader range of situations.
3. **Register and formality:** Some Uzbek words, such as “*uzr so’ramoq*” *To be Sorry*, have no perfect match in English in terms of formality. The English equivalent, “*To be Sorry*” can be used in both formal and informal settings, while “*uzr so’ramoq*” is strictly formal. This distinction complicates translation when maintaining the same level of formality is

important. Another illustrative example is the Uzbek term “*xafa bo’lmoq*,” typically translated as “*to be upset*.” However, “*xafa bo’lmoq*” often carries a deeper emotional undertone akin to “*feeling hurt*” or “*offended*,” depending on the tone and situation. Conversely, “*upset*” in English can range from mild irritation to deep sadness, making context key to accurate rendering (Hatim & Mason, 1997). Additionally, in professional Uzbek speech, “*marhamat*” is used as an invitation or polite gesture (“*please*,” “*go ahead*”), but its English equivalents – “*please*,” “*you’re welcome*,” or “*have a seat*” – cannot capture its formal weight and politeness gradient, especially in hierarchical interaction.

Discussion

Synonymy is rarely absolute, as suggested by Lyons (1977) and Cruse (1986). Communicative equivalency is not ensured by semantic overlap. Therefore, language-specific frames and sociocultural schemata must be consulted to render meaning accurately. They also stress the importance of discourse-level analysis, where synonym choices affect coherence, speaker intention, and audience reception. The findings indicate that synonym selection in translation depends on more than just linguistic knowledge; cultural and contextual understanding is also crucial. While English and Uzbek share many overlapping concepts, the ways in which they express certain ideas through synonyms can differ significantly. Translators must pay close attention to context and connotation to ensure that the translated text conveys the same meaning as the original. In the study of language variation, synonyms often carry distinct connotations that can significantly impact their use. These connotations, whether positive or negative, add to the subtle nuances of language and affect how the message is perceived. For instance, consider the words ‘*slim*’ and ‘*skinny*.’ While both can be used to describe a person of slight build, ‘*slim*’

generally carries a positive connotation, implying attractiveness and health. In contrast, 'skinny' may have a negative connotation, suggesting a lack of nourishment or unhealthiness. These subtle differences in connotative meaning play a crucial role in language variation and choice.

Contextual Usage: "In formal writing or speech, a speaker might opt for 'slim' to convey a complimentary tone, whereas 'skinny' might be used in informal contexts where the intention is to critique or express concern. In Uzbek language the rare some potential synonyms as *Ozg'in*, *qiltiriq*, *log'ar*. The word *ozg'in* is netrual and epesially used in positive connotation while negative is widly used in negative conatation.

A key takeaway from the research is that there is often no "one-size-fits-all" approach to

choosing the correct synonym in translation. Instead, translators should adopt flexible strategies, such as providing footnotes for cultural context or opting for slightly longer explanations when necessary to preserve the nuances of the original language.

Conclusion

In English-Uzbek translations, synonyms can be challenging to use since the meanings of words are tropically different at one level, contextually in another and with respect to their connotation on another level. It is necessary to know these differences to produce effective and correct translations. Future research could be based on this one by examining additional language pairs or exploring ways in which technology can be used to improve the choice of synonyms during the translation process.

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