

**FUNCTIONAL-SEMANTIC INTERPRETATION OF NON-EQUIVALENT LEXICAL UNITS
IN BILINGUAL DICTIONARIES: ENGLISH AND UZBEK****Tog'aymurodova Sevara Sirojiddin qizi**

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Annotation

This article analyzes the issues of functional interpretation of non-equivalent lexical units in bilingual learner dictionaries. The study examines the methods of representing non-equivalent units, the mechanisms for revealing their semantic structure, and the challenges of translation, based on materials from Uzbek and English. The findings indicate that non-equivalent lexicon can be effectively conveyed through explanatory, descriptive, and contextual approaches.

Keywords

lexicography, non-equivalent lexicon, bilingual dictionary, semantics, interpretation, translation.

INTRODUCTION

In modern lexicography, the importance of bilingual dictionaries is steadily increasing. In particular, the problem of adequately representing lexical units that lack full equivalents in other languages has become highly relevant. Such units, referred to as “non-equivalent lexicon,” often embody specific national and cultural features. Research on Uzbek and English materials shows that representing non-equivalent units in dictionaries goes beyond simple translation. Accurate functional-semantic interpretation requires specialized approaches. The purpose of this article is to identify the features of functional-semantic representation of non-equivalent lexical units in bilingual dictionaries.

The acceleration of globalization, as well as the expansion of international scientific, cultural, and economic relations, has brought interlingual relations to a new stage. In this context, bilingual dictionaries serve not only as translation tools but also as crucial lexicographic resources that facilitate intercultural communication. This role is particularly significant when examining lexical relations between typologically distinct languages such as Uzbek and English.

At the same time, one of the most challenging tasks in compiling bilingual dictionaries is the adequate representation of non-equivalent lexical units. A non-equivalent lexical unit is defined as a term that is specific to one language and lacks a complete or partial equivalent in another linguistic system. Such units are often associated with national-cultural realities, customs, social institutions, historical events, and traditional concepts. Therefore, translating them based solely on lexical equivalence often leads to semantic losses or misinterpretations.

In contemporary lexicography, addressing the interpretation of non-equivalent units requires not only linguistic but also cognitive and pragmatic approaches. The meaning of such units is not limited

to their lexical component; it is also intrinsically linked to broader cultural contexts, national conceptual frameworks, and conceptual systems. From this perspective, the functional-semantic interpretation of non-equivalent lexical units in bilingual dictionaries requires special scholarly attention. Studies based on Uzbek and English materials indicate that various strategies are employed to represent non-equivalent units in dictionaries. Among the most commonly used methods are descriptive explanations, contextual elucidation, transliteration, and functional equivalents. Each of these approaches has its own advantages and limitations, and the choice of method depends on the purpose of the dictionary, its intended audience, and the communicative function of the entry. The relevance of this study lies in its systematic analysis of the functional-semantic interpretation of non-equivalent lexical units in bilingual dictionaries, as well as in identifying scientifically grounded principles for their effective representation. The aim of the research is to investigate the representation of non-equivalent lexical units in Uzbek-English and English-Uzbek dictionaries and to develop theoretical and practical conclusions regarding their functional-semantic interpretation. The findings of this study contribute to the development of bilingual lexicography, the improvement of dictionary compilation practices, and the accurate interpretation of non-equivalent units in translation.

MAIN BODY

Non-equivalent lexical units constitute one of the most complex and multifaceted objects in bilingual lexicography. Their main characteristic is that such units exist within one linguistic system but have no direct lexical equivalent in another language. Therefore, representing them in bilingual dictionaries requires in-depth semantic and functional analysis, going beyond standard translation practices. Analysis of the semantic structure of non-equivalent units demonstrates that they often comprise the following components: denotative meaning (core content), connotative meaning (cultural and emotional nuance), and pragmatic component (scope of use and communicative function). For example, the Uzbek lexeme “mahalla” denotes not only a “neighborhood” but also encompasses social regulation, neighborly relations, and mutual assistance systems. There is no single English lexeme that fully corresponds to it. Accordingly, in dictionaries it can be represented as: mahalla-a traditional Uzbek neighborhood community with social and cultural functions

This explanation preserves the semantic core while also revealing the functional characteristics of the unit. Another example is the term “hashar”, which refers to the traditional practice of communal voluntary labor to accomplish a particular task. A simple translation such as “collective work” or “voluntary work” is insufficient, as it lacks the element of national tradition. A more appropriate representation would be: hashar-a traditional form of voluntary communal labor practiced in Uzbek culture. Here, the terms “traditional” and “communal” maintain the cultural specificity of the unit.

Based on analyses, several primary strategies for representing non-equivalent lexical units in bilingual dictionaries have been identified:

a) Descriptive explanation-in this approach, the meaning of the unit is elaborated through a detailed explanation. This method is among the most widely used and effective. Example: sumalak-a traditional sweet dish made from germinated wheat, prepared during spring festivals. This entry not only identifies the product but also conveys its preparation process and cultural context.

b) Transcription combined with explanation-when it is necessary to preserve national cultural realities, the original form is provided along with an explanatory note. Example: doppi-doppi (a traditional Uzbek skullcap worn by men and women). This approach allows learners to familiarize themselves with the new concept while maintaining the original term.

c) Functional equivalent selection-in some cases, although no fully equivalent term exists, a functionally similar term is chosen. Example: to'y-wedding ceremony. However, in this case, the broader cultural meaning of to'y (e.g., sunnat to'y, beshik to'y) should be clarified through explanatory notes.

d) Contextual interpretation-the meaning of the unit is revealed within a specific context. This method is especially important for polysemous or culturally complex units. Example: Ular hashar uyushtirdi-They organized a traditional communal work event (hashar). Here, the context further clarifies the meaning.

Semantic loss and its prevention-one of the major challenges in translating non-equivalent lexical units is the potential loss of semantic and cultural components. For instance, translating "mahalla" simply as "neighborhood" neglects its socio-institutional significance. Similarly, rendering "hashar" merely as "help" significantly narrows its meaning. Therefore, contemporary lexicography emphasizes the following principles: maximizing semantic accuracy; preserving cultural components; providing clear and concise explanations; and offering additional context or examples when necessary. User-oriented dictionary considerations-the intended audience of the dictionary is a critical factor in the interpretation of non-equivalent lexical units. In learner dictionaries, explanations should be simple and comprehensible, whereas in academic dictionaries, detailed and terminologically precise definitions are prioritized. Example for a learner dictionary: navro'z-a spring festival celebrated in Central Asia. Example for an academic dictionary: navro'z-an ancient Indo-Iranian spring festival marking the vernal equinox, widely celebrated in Central Asia. As evident, the second variant provides a broader historical and cultural context.

The above analyses indicate that the functional-semantic interpretation of non-equivalent lexical units in bilingual dictionaries is a multi-stage and complex process, integrating linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic factors. The most effective approach appears to be a combination of descriptive explanation, transliteration, and contextual interpretation.

CONCLUSION

Within the scope of this study, the functional-semantic interpretation of non-equivalent lexical units in bilingual dictionaries has been systematically examined, and their lexicographic representation has been analyzed in depth. The findings reaffirm that non-equivalent lexicon cannot be reduced to simple translation units; rather, it represents a complex semantic phenomenon reflecting the intrinsic connection between language and culture. Non-equivalent lexical units possess a multilayered semantic structure, encompassing not only denotative meaning but also connotative and pragmatic components. This multilayered nature complicates the process of transferring these units into another language and representing them in dictionaries.

Consequently, a single translation strategy is insufficient for their adequate representation in bilingual dictionaries. The study identifies that descriptive explanation, transliteration, functional equivalent selection, and contextual elaboration are the most effective methods for interpreting non-equivalent lexicon. At the same time, it is emphasized that the isolated use of any single method may lead to a degree of semantic loss; however, employing these strategies in combination can minimize such losses. The interpretation of non-equivalent units in bilingual dictionaries should not be limited solely to linguistic criteria. Consideration of cultural, social, and pragmatic factors is essential. In particular, units representing national-cultural realities carry unique conceptual content, requiring comprehensive explanations and contextualization for full understanding. The type of dictionary and its intended audience also play a decisive role in determining the appropriate interpretative strategy. In learner dictionaries, explanations should be simple and accessible, whereas in scholarly or specialized dictionaries, accuracy, terminological consistency, and detailed descriptions are prioritized. This highlights the necessity of a differential approach when representing non-equivalent lexical units.

Overall, the functional-semantic interpretation of non-equivalent lexical units in bilingual dictionaries constitutes a significant domain within modern lexicography, situated at the intersection of linguistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication. The findings of this research contribute to improving the practice of compiling bilingual dictionaries, provide a scientific framework for describing non-equivalent lexicon, and support the preservation of semantic and cultural adequacy in translation processes.

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