

LEXICAL-SEMANTIC EQUIVALENCE IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF *THE INSTITUTES OF TIMOUR*

Abstract. This article examines the representation of lexical-semantic equivalence in the English translation of *Temur Tuzuklari*, known in English as *The Institutes of Timour*. The study focuses on the extent to which the semantic content, historical reference, cultural connotations, and functional value of the source-language units are preserved in translation. Particular attention is paid to military terminology, administrative expressions, historical terms, titles, ethnonyms, toponyms, and culturally marked lexical units that lack direct equivalents in English.

Keywords: *Temur Tuzuklari*, *The Institutes of Timour*, lexical-semantic equivalence, translation adequacy, historical terminology, culture-specific units, transliteration, descriptive translation, semantic loss, functional equivalence.

Introduction. The translation of historical and political works is a complex process that requires not only linguistic competence but also a comprehensive understanding of the historical, cultural, administrative, and ideological context of the source text. *Temur Tuzuklari* occupies a significant place among the written monuments associated with Amir Temur's statecraft, military organization, political principles, and administrative practices. The work contains numerous lexical units reflecting the political institutions, military hierarchy, social structure, geographical environment, and cultural worldview of the Timurid period. Consequently, its translation into English involves considerable lexical-semantic difficulties.

Lexical-semantic equivalence is one of the central criteria for assessing the quality of translation. It refers to the degree of correspondence between source-

and target-language units in terms of their denotative meaning, connotative associations, contextual function, stylistic value, and cultural significance. However, complete equivalence is not always possible, particularly when the source text contains historical terms, administrative titles, ethnonyms, military designations, and culture-specific concepts that have no direct counterparts in the target language. In such cases, the translator must select a strategy that preserves the essential meaning of the source unit while making it understandable to the target reader.

Literature review. The issue of lexical-semantic equivalence has been widely discussed in Uzbek translation studies, particularly in relation to preserving the semantic, stylistic, and cultural features of the source text. Uzbek scholars generally regard translation as a communicative and creative process aimed at reproducing the meaning and function of the original rather than merely replacing linguistic forms.

Gaybulla Salomov, the founder of the Uzbek school of translation studies, argues that translation quality should be evaluated through semantic adequacy, contextual accuracy, and the preservation of the national and stylistic characteristics of the source text. According to Salomov, lexical equivalence cannot be achieved through dictionary correspondence alone but requires consideration of the communicative context and the translator's interpretation of meaning.

The relationship between language, culture, and translation has also been examined by Najmiddin Komilov and Jumaniyoz Sharipov, who emphasize that historical texts contain culturally and historically marked lexical units whose meanings extend beyond their literal definitions. Their studies suggest that successful translation depends on preserving both denotative meaning and historical-cultural significance.

Similarly, Qudrat Musayev distinguishes lexical equivalence from translation adequacy, arguing that an adequate translation should reproduce not only semantic meaning but also the communicative function and stylistic value of

the original. This approach is particularly relevant to historical texts, where direct lexical equivalents are often unavailable.

More recent studies by G.Khujayev, Sh.Usmanova, G.Rikhsiyeva, E.Ochilov, F.Bekmurodova, J.Djumabayeva, and V.Madiyorova have focused on the translation of culture-specific vocabulary and pragmatic equivalence. These scholars highlight the importance of strategies such as transliteration, descriptive translation, explicitation, and functional equivalence in conveying culturally bound concepts.

Although Uzbek scholars have made significant contributions to the theory of equivalence and translation strategies, the lexical-semantic features of *The Institutes of Timour* have not been systematically investigated. Therefore, this study examines how lexical-semantic equivalence is achieved in its English translation by analysing the translation strategies used to preserve the semantic, historical, and cultural meanings of the source text.

Methodology. The research applies a comparative translation approach combined with lexical-semantic and contextual analyses to evaluate equivalence and adequacy in the English translation of *The Institutes of Timour*.

Results and discussion. The comparative analysis demonstrates that lexical-semantic equivalence in the English translation of *The Institutes of Timour* is realised through direct correspondence, functional substitution, transliteration, descriptive translation, semantic generalisation, specification, and contextual modulation.

One group consists of lexical units translated through relatively direct semantic correspondence. For example, the Uzbek historical terms *dushman* and *yog'iy* are generally represented by the English word *enemy*. At the denotative level, this solution is understandable because both source units refer to an opposing military force. Nevertheless, the equivalence is not complete. The word *dushman* functions as a general designation for an enemy, whereas *yog'iy* is historically marked and may refer more specifically to a hostile force, invader, rebel, or military opponent. Rendering both units as *enemy* neutralises the historical

colouring of *yog'iy* and eliminates the semantic distinction between an ordinary adversary and an actively hostile military group. Thus, the translation preserves the archiseme 'opposing force' but loses the semes of historical markedness, aggression, and military confrontation. The correspondence may therefore be classified as denotatively adequate but connotatively partial.

A similar semantic convergence occurs in the translation of *sipoh*, *lashkar*, *qo'shin*, and *askar*. These units belong to the common conceptual field of armed forces, but they are not always absolute synonyms. *Sipoh* may designate an organised military body or the professional army as an institution; *lashkar* commonly denotes an assembled army or a force participating in a campaign; *qo'shin* functions as a broader term for troops or armed forces; and *askar* usually refers to an individual soldier or, contextually, a body of soldiers. In the English translation, these units are frequently represented by *army*, *troops*, *forces*, or *soldiers*. The rendering of *askar* as *soldier* establishes a close lexical-semantic correspondence when the referent is an individual combatant. However, translating *lashkar* and *sipoh* indiscriminately as *army* creates semantic levelling because distinctions involving organisation, scale, and institutional status disappear. In such cases, the translation communicates the general military reference but does not fully reproduce the internal differentiation of the source military lexicon.

The correspondence between *qo'shin* and *army* may be regarded as contextually complete when the source unit denotes the entire organised armed force. However, *troops* is more appropriate where the text refers to groups of soldiers deployed for a particular operation. The choice between *army*, *troops*, and *forces* is therefore not merely stylistic. It determines whether the collective, institutional, or operational seme of the original unit is prioritised. The results show that equivalence is strengthened when the English term is selected according to the contextual military function of the unit rather than through automatic lexical substitution.

Numerical military titles constitute another problematic group. Units such as *yuzboshi*, *mingboshi*, and *tumanboshi* encode both rank and the numerical

organisation of the military system. Literal renderings such as *commander of a hundred*, *commander of a thousand*, and *commander of ten thousand* preserve the compositional meaning of the source terms. These translations communicate the hierarchical principle underlying the titles and are consequently more informative than the use of general English terms such as *captain*, *colonel*, or *general*. A substitution such as *yuzboshi* – *captain* may be functionally understandable, but it introduces an English or European military hierarchy that is not fully identical to the historical system represented in *Temur Tuzuklari*. Literal-descriptive translation therefore provides greater historical and referential equivalence, although it is structurally longer than the original term.

The title *bek* presents a comparable problem. Its possible English renderings include *lord*, *chief*, *governor*, and *prince*. None of these alternatives fully corresponds to the source term in every context. *Lord* conveys social superiority but may create associations with the British feudal system; *governor* highlights an administrative function but omits noble status; *chief* indicates leadership but is too general; and *prince* may incorrectly suggest royal descent. Consequently, the equivalence of *bek* depends on its contextual referent. Where it is part of a personal title, transliteration is preferable; where it denotes an office, a functional equivalent supplemented by the original title may provide a more precise rendering.

Administrative vocabulary also demonstrates different degrees of lexical-semantic correspondence. The unit *vazir* is commonly translated as *minister*. This solution preserves the general semantic components of a high-ranking state official and adviser. Nevertheless, the modern English word *minister* evokes a formally differentiated governmental department, whereas the historical *vazir* combined advisory, political, financial, and administrative responsibilities. The correspondence is therefore functionally strong but historically incomplete. The more traditional English form *vizier* preserves the Oriental and historical character of the title, while *minister* increases immediate comprehensibility. From the standpoint of historical translation, *vizier* may provide greater cultural and diachronic adequacy, especially when accompanied by contextual clarification.

The translation of *farmon* as *order*, *command*, or *decree* also produces different semantic effects. *Order* is a broad and relatively neutral term; *command* foregrounds the authority of the speaker and the obligatory nature of the instruction; *decree* conveys an officially issued sovereign act. In passages where the ruler establishes a general state regulation, *decree* is more adequate than *order*. Where an immediate military instruction is issued, *command* corresponds more closely to the communicative function of the source unit. Therefore, the selection of an equivalent should be determined by the institutional status, addressee, and illocutionary force of the original expression.

A similar distinction is observed in the translation of *tuzuk*. The title *Temur Tuzuklari* has been rendered as *The Institutes of Timour*. The English word *institutes* does not refer here to organisations but to established principles, ordinances, rules, or systems of government. This historically conditioned English usage communicates the normative character of the work, but it may be opaque to contemporary readers. The source unit *tuzuk* incorporates the meanings of regulation, arrangement, political principle, code, and established order. Neither *institutes*, *regulations*, *codes*, nor *ordinances* alone reproduces its complete semantic range. *Institutes* preserves the traditional title of the English translation, whereas a descriptive expression such as *the governmental and military regulations of Timur* would be semantically more transparent but less concise and less bibliographically recognisable. The established title can therefore be retained, but its meaning should be explained in the introductory part of the translation.

Judicial terminology reveals comparatively stronger functional equivalence. The unit *qozi* may be rendered as *judge*, but this translation removes the Islamic legal and institutional specificity of the office. A *qozi* was not simply equivalent to a modern secular judge; the position was associated with adjudication according to Islamic law and with specific social and administrative responsibilities. The transliterated form *qadi* preserves the historical institution, whereas *judge* ensures accessibility. The combined form *qadi, or Islamic judge* is therefore more semantically complete at its first occurrence.

Culture-specific socio-economic vocabulary produces even greater non-equivalence. The unit *raiya*t is often represented by *subjects*, *people*, or *peasantry*. These alternatives activate different semantic components. *Subjects* expresses political dependence on a ruler; *people* is semantically broad and neutral; *peasantry* restricts the referent to the agricultural population. In *Temur Tuzuklari*, *raiya*t may refer to the tax-paying and governed population as opposed to the ruling and military classes. Therefore, neither *people* nor *peasants* is sufficient in every context. The expression *the subjects of the realm* better preserves the political relationship encoded in the source term, although its social and fiscal connotations may still require contextual support.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that lexical-semantic equivalence in the English translation of *The Institutes of Timour* is achieved unevenly across different lexical categories. General vocabulary is usually rendered adequately, whereas historical terms, military designations, administrative titles, ethnonyms, and culture-specific units often show only partial or contextual equivalence. The main causes of semantic loss include excessive generalisation, inconsistent transliteration, and the replacement of historically specific concepts with broad English equivalents. Therefore, the most effective translation approach combines normalised transliteration, contextual interpretation, descriptive explanation, and functional equivalence. Such a strategy helps preserve the historical identity, semantic precision, and cultural value of the source text while maintaining clarity for English-speaking readers.

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