

Improving the Definitions of Historical Terms in Explanatory Dictionaries

ABDUQAHHOROVA KHOSIYAT ABDURASUL QIZI
Uzbek State University of World Languages, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This article broadly discusses the need to improve historical terminology and its scientific and methodological foundations. Historical terms serve as linguistic means of expressing past events, and it is crucial that they are used accurately, clearly, and in accordance with the national context. The article addresses the criteria for improving the description of historical terms in explanatory dictionaries, such as accuracy, semantic clarity, etymological explanation, source citation, synonyms and variants, and stylistic labeling.

Keywords: archaisms, polysemy, historical term, historiography, terminology, national thinking, accuracy, semantics, etymological explanation, source citation, synonyms and variants, stylistic labeling.

INTRODUCTION

In linguistics, explanatory dictionaries are an important source for collecting the richness of a language, its historical layers, and its new lexical strata. Historical terms, in turn, reflect a nation's historical memory, political, social, and cultural life through language. Therefore, it is currently an urgent matter to present historical terms in explanatory dictionaries in a complete, consistent, and scientifically grounded manner. The regulation and improvement of the descriptions of terms in explanatory dictionaries should not remain solely the task of linguists and

terminologists but should also attract the attention of specialists in the relevant fields.

In this regard, terminologist Lotte expressed his views on the requirements and improvement of terms, emphasizing the need for synonym avoidance, monosemy, clarity, systematicity, brevity, simplicity, comprehensibility, and ease of pronunciation [4]. Historical terms such as historical source, periodization, development, tradition, interpretation, and gender history meet these requirements fully.

Terminologist I. Yuldoshev also wrote that “standardizing terminology has always been an urgent issue in linguistics. Regulating the terminology of each field remains significant today. In Uzbek linguistics, considerable work has been done to systematize field-specific terminology, but much remains unresolved.”

Russian terminologists note that the inclusion of all lexical units in a language as terms requires that they:

- belong to a particular system and have a specific meaning within that system,
- possess distinctive classification features,
- not bear national coloration, and
- be concise and easy to pronounce [4: 27].

It should be noted that not all entries marked “tar.” (historical term) in existing explanatory dictionaries truly qualify as terms. Their regulation is an urgent issue today.

In our view, the development and advancement of any scientific field are closely related to the perfection of its terminological system and the organization of its dictionaries.

Such dictionaries play an important role in the evolution of historical terminology. However, their number remains limited.

In the 2nd vol (published earlier), the 5th vol (2006-2008), and the 6th vol (2023) editions of the *Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language* (O‘TIL), lexical units were shortened to avoid excessive word accumulation. Some spoken forms of terms were

referred to by cross-references such as “see” (qarang) or “same” (aynan) instead of full explanations.

Comparing the 2nd vol and later 5th and 6th volume editions reveals improvements in definitions. For example:

SAYS [a] dialect. Horsekeeper.

SAYSXONA [a+f-t] dialect. Stable.

In later editions:

SAYIS [a.] – horsekeeper, caretaker of animals. *Hist.* A person responsible for the horses kept for military and economic purposes in Central Asian khanates.

2 Gen. A horsekeeper.

SAYISXONA *Hist.* A house built next to a stable for horsekeepers to live in.

2 Gen. Stable.

2. The stable. He entered through the gate and tied his horse to a single iron hook in the groom’s shed. (M. Hazratqulov, Jur’at). On the right side, along the stone-paved path lined with an open-fronted stable, a warehouse, a guest room, and several stables, a tall and dignified man in his mid-sixties was coming. E. A’zam “Where Could Heaven Be” A moment later, I could hardly believe my eyes: inside the long, wide stable, its front fenced with smooth, thick wooden bars, a herd of sleek, spirited stallions and graceful young colts were prancing and snorting with restless energy; while at the far end, beneath a low ceiling blackened by soot and webbed with cobwebs, a lean, muscular farrier bent over his work, the hiss of his breath mingling with the glow of the forge as he straightened a girth strap and shaped horseshoes and pegs upon a perfectly flat, waist-high anvil.

By the 6th vol edition, the entry was further expanded with illustrative quotations from Uzbek literature. This development indicates progress in the field of terminology and lexicography.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS

The methods and issues of defining terms in the *Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language* have been discussed in several

linguistic works. Uzbek lexicography and terminology have been studied by I. Kh. Sadikova, S. Kh. Nurmatova, O. Tursunova, P. P. Nishonov, O. S. Ahmedov, H. V. Mirzakhmedova, S. Mukhamedova, S. E. Normamatov, S. T. Mustafaeva, and Kh. Dadaboyev. Field-specific terminology has been analyzed by D. Kh. Kadirbekova, N. A. Martinova, A. B. Adigeneva, D. Kamchibekova, and others.

Azim Hojiev, while developing his principles of dictionary compilation, identifies six structural layers in the explanation of words. These include: the headword; the component that follows the headword in a dictionary entry, which provides information about the etymology of the headword; the grammatical, stylistic, and referential notes that are given before the definition of the headword and its related expressions; the process of defining and recording the meanings of the lexical items (the headword and fixed expressions); the core component of the dictionary entry, which consists of the explanation or interpretation of the meanings of these lexical items; the final component of the dictionary entry, which provides illustrative examples following the explanation of meaning [7].

Therefore, the components used to explain terms in *The Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language* (O‘TIL) can be presented as follows:

1. Headword,
2. Etymological information,
3. Grammatical/stylistic notes,
4. Definition of meaning(s),
5. Explanation of meaning(s),
6. Illustrative examples [7].

According to Madvaliev, the headword and its definition are essential components of any dictionary entry, while other components may or may not be present. For terminological dictionaries, grammatical notes are often unnecessary since terms are mainly nouns.

Every dictionary is compiled according to specific guidelines. Terms are listed alphabetically and presented in the

nominative case, except for names of ethnic groups, dynasties, and biological species, which are given in plural form (Arabs, Turks, Uzbeks, Abbasids, etc.).

The terms used as headwords are presented in the zero form (that is, in the nominative case). Only the names of nations, tribes, ethnic groups, clans, and dynasties (for example: aborigines, Albanians, Arabs, Kurds, Nogais, Turks, Uzbeks, Khakasses, Karachays; Abbasids, Ashtarkhanids, Dzungars, Arameans, Sogdians; Mangits, Khazars, Karluks, Kipchaks), as well as terms from such fields as botany, zoology, chemistry, and other sciences that denote the types, genera, families, and classes of trees and plants, animals and birds, individual substances, and compounds (for example: Asteraceae, bifidobacteria, crucifers, halophytes, delphinids, defoliants, legumes, lianas, mediators, microfertilizers, felids, nitrates, mollusks, pigments, props, receptors, synanthropes, ferrous alloys, phytophages, sands) are given in the plural form. [6]

Examples:

ABBASIDS (*hist.*) – Arab caliphal dynasty that ruled in Baghdad from 750 to 1258 CE.

BULGARS (*hist.*) – 10th–15th century Turkic tribes living near the Volga and Kama rivers; same as Bulgarians.

In many entries, no illustrative examples are given. Also, plural endings (-lar) are used not only for plurality but also for collectivity, affection, and intensification.

Another issue is the system of markers (labels) in dictionaries indicating technical or field-specific terms. Private labels denote a term's field affiliation [1: 206; 5: 43].

The improvement of historical term descriptions in dictionaries is an urgent task. Historical terminology covers a wide range of subjects, and its explanation requires special lexicographic principles. As society evolves, so do social relations and, consequently, historical terms.

The issue of improving the descriptions of historical terms in the explanatory dictionaries of the Uzbek language is considered to be of current importance.

First of all, when one mentions historical terms, most people immediately envision complex processes and social relations. However, the scope of historical terminology is quite broad, and there are specific lexicographic principles and approaches that guide the explanation of such terms. Naturally, as humanity continues to advance in the development of society, the social relations among people also become more refined; consequently, the lexical units related to history evolve and develop along with them. According to researcher O. Saidov, “The meaning of a word derives from its definition. However, for most words, their meaning becomes more complete and vivid only within an extended syntactic environment – as part of a sentence; this reveals the word’s living usage in speech. Such a manifestation of a word’s meaning and use in discourse is provided in the illustrative material of dictionaries – in quotations from well-known and famous figures, press materials, and partially in speech samples (short combinations of two or three words used to explain the meaning or characteristics of a word)” [8: 127].

One of the lexicographic difficulties lies in its belonging to a system of specialized knowledge. This knowledge occupies a specific place and its interrelations with other elements are determined. While the collection of terms is a separate issue, explaining their definitions and improving them constitutes a complex and serious process.

The field of lexicography is one of the most complex branches of linguistics; its elements are extensive and systematic, interacting closely with one another. Any lexeme in one language is directly or indirectly connected with lexemes of other languages through complex and diverse relationships. This interconnection may be based on similarities or differences in form and content. In linguistic research, these are referred to as paradigmatic relations [9: 75, 83]. “Paradigmatic connections unite and semantically approximate certain features of similarity. Based on such similarities, words are grouped into various classes. Moreover, this section maintains paradigmatic relations with other sections. Consequently, the vocabulary of a language can be represented as a system of interrelated and intersecting

words” [3: 62]. Indeed, the similarities found among the terms of any given field should not influence their interpretation.

In this study, we aim to provide some reflections and recommendations for improving the explanations of certain historical lexemes included in *The Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language*. First of all, there are several factors that determine the criteria for selecting historical lexemes in the Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language (volumes 2, 5, and 6) and contribute to enhancing the accuracy and completeness of their definitions.

Several historical terms in the *Explanatory Dictionary* need revision due to archaism, polysemy, or borrowing.

1. **Archaisms:** words like *miroxur*, *mutavalli*, *mubashshir*, *dahyakchi*, and *dasturxonchi* are outdated but essential in historical texts.
2. **Polysemy:** terms like *bek*, *amir*, and *ulus* have different meanings across eras and must be differentiated.
3. **Borrowed layer:** terms of Arabic, Persian, Mongolian, and Russian origin (*divan*, *iqto*, *boj*, *forum*, *reforma*) require etymological and historical clarification.

The first aspect of the issue lies in the fact that some historical lexemes possess an archaic character or have taken on the form of historicisms. As a result, the emergence of a need for new equivalent terms has led to the appearance of certain problems.

Let us draw attention to the explanation of the following term:

MUNSHIY [Arabic – founder, creator, builder, compiler, writer.]
A scribe responsible for handling written correspondence and documentation in a royal court.

When Anvar reached the divan office, all the scribes and secretaries, from the lowest to the highest ranks, rose from their seats to congratulate their new superior. A. Qodiriy, Mehrobdan chayon [10: 642].

Today, the term *munshiy* is considered archaic, no longer in active usage, and has turned into a historical term. Consequently, there is a growing need for a modern equivalent that meets the demands of the current era. On another note, the multiple definitions associated with the term *munshiy*, such as “founder,” “creator,” “builder,” “compiler,” and “writer,” can potentially mislead users. For instance, a student lacking sufficient linguistic or historical understanding might associate the word “builder” with an architect, which is clearly a misinterpretation. This confusion stems from the overly broad and ambiguous explanations accompanying the term.

Thus, providing clear and precise definitions for terms is a critical process, as even a single word or phrase can significantly influence comprehension. If lexical components such as “founder,” “creator,” or “compiler” are preceded by more context-specific nouns such as “text,” “letter,” or “list,” the meaning becomes much clearer. For example, expressions like “text creator,” “letter writer,” or “list compiler” more accurately reflect the function of a *munshiy*, emphasizing that the role is primarily associated with writing and documentation.

Furthermore, the definition states that a *munshiy* is a “scribe responsible for written work in the royal court.” However, to fully understand the term, readers are compelled to consult the definition of another term – *katib* (secretary). In the *Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language*, *katib* is defined as:

KOTIB [Arabic – one who writes (a letter), one who copies (a book)]*1hist.* A person responsible for preparing lists and copying manuscripts; a scribe.

2An employee responsible for written communication and clerical work in offices and institutions, typically serving under officials, writers, and others.

3A person responsible for managing the secretarial affairs of an office or institution.

4A person who records the minutes and written proceedings of official councils and meetings.

This term is polysemous, with its functions having evolved over time. However, all definitions share a core meaning: a person

engaged in writing and clerical tasks. The first definition in particular prompts readers to consult yet another term: mirza.

MIRZA [Arabic + Persian] A person holding an official post responsible for clerical and written work.

2figurative. A literate, educated individual.

3hist. A person belonging to the upper class; a nobleman.

It becomes evident that *katib* and *mirza* are synonyms of *munshiy* in their primary meanings, though this relationship is not immediately apparent due to the layered and indirect way definitions are cross-referenced.

Such interdependent definitions create difficulty for users trying to fully grasp the meaning of these historical terms. It would be more effective if the definitions in explanatory dictionaries were written in a clear, concise manner that is understandable to all. When a term is explained through ambiguous definitions, multiple synonyms, outdated vocabulary, or convoluted grammatical constructions, it inevitably leads to confusion and questions, especially for students and general readers.

Therefore, explanatory dictionaries must strive to be free from excessive interpretation and unnecessary complexity. In the future, when compiling comprehensive multi-volume explanatory dictionaries, particular attention should be paid to ensuring the clarity and completeness of definitions for historical terms. One of the significant challenges in this regard is preserving the national character of terminologies in the Uzbek language. Given the rapid development of modern society, when a single term cannot adequately convey a complex concept in plain language, adopting a compound-term approach may prove to be a more effective and appropriate strategy.

In terminology, it is important that each term accurately, clearly, completely, and concisely reflects the concept, event, or phenomenon it denotes. Unless this condition is properly ensured, various problems will continue to arise.

The process of improving the definitions of historical terms in explanatory dictionaries should be based on the following criteria:

1. **Accuracy:** definitions must reflect historical and scientific truth.
2. **Semantic consistency:** polysemous terms must be differentiated by historical period.
3. **Etymological explanation:** origin and borrowing source must be provided.
4. **Source citation:** first recorded use or historical text reference must be indicated.
5. **Synonyms and variants:** different names of the same concept across eras (e.g., khan – sultan – king).
6. **Stylistic labeling:** indicate that a term is used only in historical context (e.g., “arch.”).

Another process that needs to be considered when improving the explanation of terms is the lack of illustrative examples in the dictionary for some terms. We believe that it is important to provide illustrative examples in the explanations of terminological units belonging to various scientific fields, unlike literary language units in social relations.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in today's rapidly developing and dynamic era of scientific and technological advancement, as in all other branches of Uzbek linguistics, it has become a necessity to utilize the latest achievements in lexicography and to create new explanatory dictionaries across various fields. Replacing certain historical terms with their national equivalents and improving their explanations contribute to the ease of pronunciation and the purity of speech. Presenting words that are difficult to understand in a single form as compound expressions provides greater clarity, as this plays an important role in describing complex situations and processes. The issue of refining historical terms in explanatory dictionaries holds not only linguistic but also national and spiritual significance. Scientifically interpreting historical terms, revealing their origins, and presenting them in a form comprehensible to modern readers serve the development of historiography, linguistics, and culture

REFERENCES

1. Berkovich, T. L. 1988. The content and functions of labels for terminological vocabulary in general dictionaries of various types. *Dictionary Categories: A Collection of Articles*. Moscow.
2. Dubichinsky, V. V. 2008. *Lexicography of the Russian Language: A Textbook*. Moscow: Nauka-Flinta.
3. Ergasheva, M. 2016. The linguistic picture of the world and the division into semantic fields. *Young Scientist*, 3/1, 62.
4. Lotte, D. S. 1969. *Fundamentals of the Construction of Scientific and Technical Terminology*. Moscow.
5. *The Dictionary of the Modern Russian Literary Language*. 1958. Moscow.
6. Madvaliev, A. 2017. *Issues of Uzbek Terminology and Lexicography*. Tashkent: State Scientific Publishing House
7. Olim, S. 2012. *An Inexhaustible Treasure (On the New Edition of the Explanatory Dictionary)*. Ma'rifat newspaper.
8. Saidov, U. 2023. The System, Semantics, and Lexicographic Interpretation of Business-related Terms. PhD Dissertation, Karshi.
9. Superanskaya, A. V. 1976. Terminology and nomenclature. *Issues of Defining Terms in Dictionaries of Various Types* (pp. 75-83).
10. *Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language*. 5 vol. 2020. Tashkent: Uzbekistan Publishing House.

ABDUQAHHOROVA KHOSIYAT ABDURASUL QIZI
SENIOR LECTURER,
DEPARTMENT OF UZBEK LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE,
UZBEK STATE UNIVERSITY OF WORLD LANGUAGES.
E-MAIL: <XOSIYATABDUQAHHOROVA655@GMAIL.COM>