

Lexical-Semantic Features of the Concepts of “Trust” and “Doubt”

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the problems of translation equivalence and interpretation of the concepts of “trust” and “doubt” in English and Uzbek. It examines the Uzbek equivalents of such units as trust, confidence, belief, faith, doubt, suspicion, and uncertainty, focusing on their pragmatic, linguocultural, and discursive features. The article also highlights the importance of functional equivalence, cultural substitution, modulation, and compensation strategies in translating phraseological, paremiological, and metaphorical units.

Keywords: Concept of trust, concept of doubt, translation equivalence, interpretation, pragmatics, linguoculturology, phraseological units.

INTRODUCTION

This article analyzes the problems of translating the concepts of “trust” and “doubt” in English and Uzbek, focusing on their functional equivalence and the major challenges arising in the process of interpretation. In the previous sections, the linguocultural profiles of these concepts, as well as their pragmatic functions in speech acts and discourse, were examined. The present section concentrates on how linguistic units associated with “trust” and “doubt” are transferred from one language into another, in which cases direct equivalents can be identified, and in which situations pragmatic, linguocultural, and discursive adaptation becomes necessary. In our view, the real

complexity of the concepts of “trust” and “doubt” becomes particularly evident at the stage of translation. This is because such units often convey not only lexical meaning, but also epistemic degree, evaluative attitude, interpersonal distance, communicative intention, and culturally specific norms.

In translation theory, the issue of equivalence is considered one of the central problems. J. C. Catford approaches equivalence at linguistic and textual levels, emphasizing that translation should rely not merely on formal correspondence but on functional adequacy. E. Nida distinguishes between formal and dynamic equivalence, arguing that the true value of translation depends on the effect it produces on the target-language reader or listener. P. Newmark differentiates semantic and communicative translation, noting that in some cases fidelity to meaning is more important, while in others preserving communicative effect becomes the primary goal. M. Baker, in turn, examines equivalence at lexical, phraseological, grammatical, textual, and pragmatic levels. In our opinion, the translation of the concepts of “trust” and “doubt” requires precisely such a multilayered approach. This is because units such as “trust,” “confidence,” “belief,” “faith,” “doubt,” “suspicion,” and “uncertainty” cannot always be rendered into Uzbek through a single lexical equivalent; their target-language counterparts are often selected according to text type, addressee, social context, and pragmatic function.

Russian translation studies have also extensively explored this issue. L.S. Barkhudarov argues that lexical, grammatical, and stylistic transformations are inevitable in achieving equivalence in translation. A. V. Fedorov interprets translation as a complex creative process that ensures not only semantic correspondence but also stylistic and functional adequacy. V. N. Komissarov distinguishes various levels of equivalence and demonstrates that in certain cases preserving communicative and pragmatic purpose may be more important than achieving complete semantic correspondence. In our opinion, translation problems related to “trust” and “doubt” should be addressed precisely through these approaches, since while these concepts preserve

their semantic core, they acquire different pragmatic force across languages.

In Uzbek translation studies, G'. Salomov emphasizes that translation transfers not only words but also national worldview and spiritual meaning. U. K. Yusupov, within the framework of contrastive linguistics, differentiates between formal similarity and functional correspondence. Sh. Safarov, from a pragmalinguistic perspective, argues that meaning cannot be fully interpreted outside context and addressee. In our view, especially in translating units related to "trust" and "doubt," these three dimensions – spiritual meaning, functional adequacy, and pragmatic interpretation – must operate together. This is because the process of translation should preserve not only the lexical core of these concepts, but also their social, ethical, and communicative load.

PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATION EQUIVALENCE IN THE CONCEPT OF "TRUST"

The first and most significant problem in translating the concept of "trust" lies in the fact that it is divided into several lexical centers in English. Although units such as "trust," "confidence," "belief," "faith," "reliance," and "assurance" are semantically close, they are not identical in meaning. In Uzbek, however, this conceptual field is often represented through such units as *ishonch* (trust), *ishonmoq* (to trust/believe), *e'tiqod* (faith/belief), *ko'ngli to'q* (to feel reassured), and *o'zinga ishonch* (self-confidence). In our view, the principal difficulty in translation is that the internal distinctions within a single conceptual field in English are frequently conveyed in Uzbek through contextual or syntactic means. For example, "I trust you" is usually translated as *senga ishonaman*. However, "I have confidence in you" cannot always be reduced to the same equivalent; depending on the context, variants such as *sening qo'lingdan kelishiga ishonaman* ("I believe you are capable"), *o'zingga bo'lgan ishonchingni yo'qotma* ("do not lose confidence in yourself"), or *senga ko'nglim to'q* ("I feel reassured about you") may sound more natural.

A similar issue can be observed in the translation of “belief” and “faith.” While “belief” is generally associated with “believing in an idea” or “opinion,” “faith” implies a deeper form of conviction, spiritual reliance, and moral support. In Uzbek, *e’tiqod* and *imon* may correspond to “faith” in certain contexts, whereas *ishonch* carries a broader and more everyday meaning. In our opinion, translating expressions such as “faith in humanity,” “faith in God,” or “faith in the future” merely as *ishonch* may reduce their semantic depth; in some cases, equivalents such as *e’tiqod*, *umid bilan qarash* (“to look with hope”), or *ishonch bilan kutish* (“to await with confidence”) are more adequate. Thus, equivalence in translating the concept of “trust” is determined not by lexical correspondence alone, but by conceptual focus and axiological weight.

The second problem related to the concept of “trust” concerns the distinction between its personal and institutional dimensions. In English, expressions such as “public trust,” “consumer confidence,” and “trust in institutions” are natural and highly frequent. Although Uzbek possesses equivalents such as *xalq ishonchi* (“public trust”), *iste’molchi ishonchi* (“consumer confidence”), and *institutlarga ishonch* (“trust in institutions”), their stylistic and social resonance differs from that of English. In our opinion, particularly in journalistic and political translation, rendering “trust” solely as *ishonch* is not always sufficient; depending on the pragmatic purpose of the text, alternatives such as *e’tibor* (“credibility/attention”), *ishonarlilik* (“reliability”), or *obro‘-e’tibor* (“prestige/reputation”) may be more appropriate. For example, “public confidence has fallen” can be translated as *xalq ishonchi pasaydi*, but in some contexts, forms such as *jamoatchilikning ishonchi susaydi* (“public trust has weakened”) or *aholining ishonchi kamaydi* (“people’s confidence has decreased”) may sound more communicatively natural.

The third important problem of the concept of “trust” concerns its translation as a pragmatic function. The English expression “trust me” may function as encouragement, persuasion, or even a manipulative device. In Uzbek, *ishoning* (“believe me”) is similarly multifunctional, yet it is not always the most natural equivalent. For example, the sentence “Trust

me, this is the best way” can be translated literally as *Ishoning, bu eng yaxshi yo'l*. However, depending on the context, variants such as *Menga ishonsangiz, bu eng yaxshi yo'l* (“If you trust me, this is the best way”), *Ishonchingiz komil bo'lsin, bu eng to'g'ri yo'l* (“Rest assured, this is the right way”), or *Gapimga ishonsangiz, shu yo'l ma'qul* (“If you believe me, this way is preferable”) may carry stronger pragmatic force. In our opinion, the translator should preserve not merely the literal equivalent, but primarily the illocutionary function.

Another subtle issue concerns the Uzbek model *ko'ngli to'q*. English expressions such as “I feel reassured, I am at ease,” or “I feel secure” approach this meaning, yet none of them fully capture the linguocultural richness of *ko'ngli to'q*. This expression conveys not only trust, but also inner peace, reduced anxiety, sincere relations, and spiritual calmness. In our view, translating such units often requires semantic expansion or explanatory equivalents. Therefore, the problem here is not merely lexical equivalence, but linguocultural equivalence.

PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATION EQUIVALENCE IN THE CONCEPT OF “DOUBT”

The main difficulty in translating the concept of “doubt” lies in its different lexical profiling in English and Uzbek. In English, units such as “doubt,” “suspicion,” “uncertainty,” “mistrust,” and “skepticism” constitute a single conceptual field, whereas in Uzbek this field is represented through such means as *shubha* (doubt), *gumon* (suspicion), *noaniqlik* (uncertainty), *ishonchsizlik* (distrust), *ikkilanish* (hesitation), and *hadik* (unease/apprehension). Direct and rigid one-to-one correspondence between these units does not always exist. For example, “I doubt it” may often be translated as *bunga shubham bor* (“I have doubts about it”) or *menimcha unday emas* (“I do not think so”). However, “I doubt he will come” may sound more natural in translation as *u kelishiga ishonish qiyin* (“it is difficult to believe that he will come”), *u kelsa kerak deb o'ylamayman* (“I do not think he will come”), or *u kelmasa kerak* (“he probably will not come”), depending on the context. In our view, the

principal principle in translating the concept of “doubt” is preserving degree and tonal nuance.

Although the correspondence between “suspicion” and *gumon* appears relatively close, they do not always carry the same semantic force. The English expression “under suspicion” is typically used in legal or procedural contexts and corresponds well to *gumon ostida*. However, “I have my suspicions” cannot always be translated literally as *menda gumon bor* (“I have suspicion”); in some contexts, variants such as *nimadandir shubhalanyapman* (“I suspect something”), *ko‘nglim g‘ash* (“I feel uneasy”), or *bir gap bordek* (“something feels wrong”) may sound more pragmatically natural. In our opinion, “suspicion” in English often occupies an intermediate position between negative suspicion and procedural uncertainty, whereas the Uzbek *gumon* tends to carry stronger moral and relational connotations. Therefore, these units require careful differentiation in translation.

At first glance, the equivalence between “uncertainty” and *noaniqlik* appears relatively complete. Nevertheless, pragmatic and stylistic differences remain. “Economic uncertainty” is correctly rendered as *iqtisodiy noaniqlik*, yet “I’m uncertain” should not always be translated literally as *men noaniqman*. More natural equivalents would be *ikkilanayapman* (“I am hesitating”), *aniq emasman* (“I am not sure”), or *bir qarorga kelolmayapman* (“I cannot reach a decision”). In our view, the problem here is that English frequently employs abstract adjectives and nominalizations, whereas Uzbek often expresses the same meaning more naturally through verbalized or predicative structures. Thus, translation in this case requires not only lexical equivalence but also syntactic adaptation.

Expressions such as “healthy skepticism” are particularly problematic in translation. A literal rendering such as *sog‘lom skeptitsizm* may be acceptable in scientific or philosophical discourse, but in popular or journalistic styles it often sounds unnatural. Depending on the context, equivalents such as *tanqidiy qarash* (“critical perspective”), *ehtiyotkor yondashuv* (“cautious approach”), or *tekshirib qabul qilish odati* (“habit of verifying before accepting”) may prove more adequate. In our

opinion, the translator must distinguish between the terminological and popular layers of the concept. Otherwise, the pragmatic function of the English unit may appear artificial and foreign in Uzbek.

Significant difficulties also arise when translating Uzbek expressions such as *hadik* and *ko'ngliga g'ulg'ula tushdi* into English. *Hadik* often denotes a combined state of doubt, anxiety, and caution. It cannot always be adequately rendered through "fear," "doubt," or "suspicion" alone. Depending on the context, variants such as "unease," "misgiving," "apprehension," or "nagging doubt" may be more appropriate. The expression *ko'ngliga g'ulg'ula tushdi* is even more complex, as it conveys inner disturbance, emotional uneasiness, and the relational-emotional dimension of doubt. In such cases, explanatory translation, modulation, or compensation strategies become necessary. Otherwise, the cultural weight of these units may disappear if reduced merely to ordinary terms such as "doubt" or "worry."

TRANSLATION OF PHRASEOLOGICAL AND PAREMIOLOGICAL UNITS

The translation of phraseological units often becomes the point at which conceptual and linguocultural differences appear most sharply. M. Baker emphasizes that in translating phraseological expressions and idioms, it is not always possible to find a literal equivalent. Likewise, P. Newmark notes that in idiom translation, preserving communicative effect is often more important than maintaining formal correspondence. In our opinion, phraseological units related to "trust" and "doubt" should also be translated according to this principle.

For example, the English idiom "to give someone the benefit of the doubt" would be entirely inappropriate if translated literally as "to give someone the benefit of doubt." Semantically, this expression means "not rushing to accuse someone when evidence is insufficient" or "interpreting a situation more positively." In Uzbek, functionally close equivalents include *yaxshi niyat bilan qaramoq* ("to look upon with goodwill"),

ayblashga shoshilmaslik (“not to rush to accuse”), or *unga oqlov imkonini berish* (“to give someone the benefit of justification”). In our view, the translation problem here lies in the fact that although the semantic core of the expression is connected with doubt, its pragmatic function is to express fair caution. Therefore, the translator should convey not the isolated concept within the expression, but rather its discursive function.

The phraseological unit “take it on trust” presents a similar issue. A literal rendering such as “accept it on trust” sounds unnatural in Uzbek. Depending on the context, variants such as *gapimga ishonavering* (“just trust my words”), *dalilsiz bo‘lsa ham qabul qiling* (“accept it even without proof”), or *ishonch bilan qabul qiling* (“accept it with trust”) may be used. Yet here too, each text type requires a separate translational decision. In scientific discourse, such an expression may often carry a negative connotation, whereas in everyday communication it may simply function as an appeal for trust. In our opinion, there are few areas in translation where context exerts such a strong influence as in the translation of phraseological units.

The Uzbek expression *ishonchini oqlamoq* is often translated into English as “justify someone’s trust,” “live up to someone’s trust,” or “prove worthy of trust.” Although these variants are semantically close, they do not fully convey the moral weight and relational sincerity embedded in the Uzbek expression. In our opinion, this Uzbek unit encompasses not only “trust,” but also the notions of respect, appreciation, and moral responsibility. Therefore, in such cases, explication or compensation elsewhere in the text may become necessary.

The problem becomes even more complex in the translation of paremiological units. The proverb “Seeing is believing” may be translated literally as *Ko‘rish – ishonishdir*, yet in Uzbek a more natural and culturally resonant equivalent is *Yuz marta eshitgandan, bir marta ko‘rgan yaxshi* (“Better to see once than hear a hundred times”). Here, the semantic meaning remains the same, but the paremiological form is national in character. In our view, the principle of paremiological equivalence should be applied in translating proverbs and sayings: a national proverb with a corresponding semantic and axiological core should be

selected. Otherwise, even if the translation conveys the meaning, it loses its cultural impact.

Similarly, the proverb “Once bitten, twice shy” achieves the most natural result in Uzbek when translated as *og‘zi kuygan qatiqni ham puflab ichadi* (“One whose mouth has been burned blows even on yogurt before drinking it”). Here too, the expression conveys doubt, caution, and a defensive mechanism shaped by negative experience. In our opinion, abandoning literal translation in such cases does not diminish translational fidelity; on the contrary, it strengthens pragmatic and linguocultural equivalence.

METAPHORICAL INTERPRETATION AND LINGUOCULTURAL ADAPTATION

G. Lakoff & M. Johnson argue that metaphors are not merely stylistic ornaments, but fundamental mechanisms structuring human thought. Z. Kövecses further notes that preserving or adapting metaphorical models in translation is an especially delicate issue from a cultural perspective. This very problem emerges in the translation of metaphors related to “trust” and “doubt.”

The English expression “seeds of doubt” conceptualizes doubt as seeds planted within an inner field or mental space. In Uzbek, a literal equivalent such as *shubha urug‘ini sochmoq* (“to sow the seeds of doubt”) may exist, yet it does not always sound natural. Depending on the context, variants such as *ko‘ngliga shubha solmoq* (“to instill doubt into one’s heart”), *gumon uyg‘otmoq* (“to arouse suspicion”), or *ko‘ngliga g‘ulg‘ula tushirmoq* (“to cause inner uneasiness”) may carry stronger pragmatic force. In our opinion, while the metaphor itself may not remain formally identical, the conceptual effect is preserved. Thus, the purpose of metaphor translation is not always to reproduce the image formally, but rather to retain its conceptual impact.

The expression “without a shadow of a doubt” provides another interesting example. Literally, it could be rendered as “without even the shadow of doubt,” yet in Uzbek expressions

such as *zarracha shubhasiz* (“without the slightest doubt”) or *mutlaqo shubhasiz* (“absolutely without doubt”) sound more natural. Here, the English image of “shadow” disappears in Uzbek, but the meaning of complete absence of doubt remains intact. In our view, in such cases the translator abandons the formal metaphor while preserving the semantic-intensifying effect.

Translating the Uzbek expression *ko‘ngli to‘q* into English is, conversely, more complex. Depending on the context, variants such as “he felt reassured,” “she felt at peace,” “his heart was at ease,” or “she felt secure” may be used. However, none of these expressions fully captures the linguocultural richness of *ko‘ngli to‘q*. In our opinion, the translation problem here stems from the fact that the Uzbek concept of *ko‘ngil* (“heart/soul/inner emotional world”) does not possess a single ready-made metaphorical center in English. Therefore, in some cases semantic explanation, and in others contextual modulation, becomes necessary.

The expression *ko‘ngliga g‘ulg‘ula tushdi* presents a similar difficulty. In English, variants such as “he felt uneasy,” “she became troubled,” or “a nagging doubt entered her mind” may be used. Nevertheless, the emotional and psychological force of the Uzbek *ko‘ngil* + *g‘ulg‘ula* model cannot always be fully reconstructed in English. In our opinion, the most appropriate way to preserve such metaphors in translation is to find an equivalent corresponding to the stylistic register of the text and the psychological state of the character, and, where necessary, compensate for the lost effect elsewhere in the discourse.

PROBLEMS OF PRAGMATIC INTERPRETATION

The problem of translation does not end with the selection of an equivalent; it is followed by the issue of interpretation by the target-language reader or listener. J. House identifies pragmatic and sociocultural adequacy as important criteria in assessing translation quality. B. Hatim and I. Mason likewise emphasize that the process of translation always requires reinterpretation from both discursive and pragmatic perspectives. In our opinion,

the problem of interpretation is especially relevant in units related to “trust” and “doubt,” since they often possess not only explicit semantic meaning, but also implicit illocutionary force.

For example, the English expression “I’m not sure” may in certain contexts signify not merely uncertainty, but strong doubt or even a polite refusal. If it is translated into Uzbek only as *aniq emas* (“not certain”), without taking into account the general tone of the text or dialogue, the reader may perceive the real pragmatic force as weaker than intended. Similarly, translating the Uzbek expression *ko‘nglim ishongani yo‘q* literally as “I don’t believe it” may in some cases create excessive harshness. Depending on the context, softer variants such as “I’m not convinced,” “I’m not sure about that,” or “it doesn’t feel quite right to me” may be more appropriate. In our opinion, this is precisely where the problem of interpretation arises: a literal translation may preserve the semantic core, yet distort the pragmatic effect.

The national and cultural background of the reader or listener also influences interpretation. Within the framework of cultural scripts theory, A. Wierzbicka demonstrates that communicative formulas conventional in one language may not be interpreted in the same way in another. In our opinion, indirect, emotionally sensitive, or “heart-oriented” expressions of doubt typical of Uzbek discourse may sometimes appear overly vague or weak to an English-speaking reader. Conversely, English “dry understatement” or “hedging” strategies may leave an impression of weakness or insincerity on an Uzbek reader. Therefore, the problem of interpretation lies not only in linguistic units themselves, but also in the cultural-cognitive background through which those units are perceived.

TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

Based on the analyses above, we consider the following strategies to be the most effective in translating the concepts of “trust” and “doubt.” The first strategy is direct lexical equivalence. This method is applied when the core semantic correspondence is relatively high: *trust* → *ishonch*, *doubt* →

shubha, *mistrust* → *ishonchsizlik*. The second strategy is functional modulation. In this approach, the focal point of the unit is shifted: *I doubt it* → *bunga ishonish qiyin* (“it is difficult to believe that”); *ko ‘ngli to ‘q* → *felt reassured*. The third strategy is expansion (explicitation). In necessary cases, implicit pragmatic meaning is made explicit: *benefit of the doubt* → *ayblashga shoshilmay, unga imkon berish* (“not rushing to accuse and giving someone a chance”). The fourth strategy is cultural substitution. In proverbs and idiomatic expressions, a national equivalent is selected: *Once bitten, twice shy* → *og‘zi kuygan qatiqni ham puflab ichadi*. The fifth strategy is compensation, in which linguocultural or emotional subtlety is restored elsewhere in the text. In our opinion, only through the combined application of these strategies can adequate translation equivalence of the concepts of “trust” and “doubt” be preserved.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study demonstrate that although the concepts of “trust” and “doubt” share a common epistemic foundation in English and Uzbek, their semantic, pragmatic, and linguocultural profiles differ nationally. Thus, despite being grounded in universal mechanisms of cognition, these concepts acquire distinct verbal and axiological forms within each language and culture.

The article, drawing upon theories of concept studies, pragmatics, and linguoculturology, establishes that “trust” and “doubt” are not merely semantic units, but rather multi-component concepts integrating epistemic, axiological, relational, and discursive layers. Therefore, their study requires not only a lexical-semantic approach, but also an integrative methodological framework, which can be considered scientifically more appropriate.

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