



THE PROBLEM OF HOMONYMS IN TRANSLATION

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Abstract: This article discusses how homonyms create confusion in translation and negatively effect meaning. It explores how homonyms can lead to misunderstanding in translated texts. This research shares various strategies for translating homonyms ,including contextual analysis, semantic disambiguation and the use of explanatory phrases.It also examines how homonyms function in different languages and the role of cultural and linguistic factors in their interpretation.

Keywords: Homonyms, meaning in words, language structure, translation, types of homonyms.

Analysis of translation errors reveals that homonyms frequently cause confusion, as translators may overlook differences in meaning in repeated words. Since homonyms have the same pronunciation or spelling but distinct meanings, their correct interpretation depends heavily on contextual clues. According to Newmark 1988, he refers to this issue as lexical ambiguity. It occurs a word has two meanings that could both be applicable in a given sentence. In such cases, translators must carefully examine the context to determine the intended meaning rather than relying solely on word - for - word translation.



Translating homonyms is particularly complex because these words can appear deceptively simple, but carry entirely different meanings, making it difficult to convey the correct sense in the target language.

One of the key challenges in translation is differentiating homonyms from polysemous words. While both involve multiple meanings, they function differently in language.

1. Homonyms are words that have the same spelling and pronunciation but completely different, unrelated meanings.

Example: Bank (a financial institution) and bank (the side of a river).

2. Polysemy, on the other hand, has different meanings that are still connected in some way.

Example: Head (a part of body) and head (a leader of a group) – both meanings involve a position of importance or leadership.

Lobner classifies homonyms into two main types:

Total homonyms – these are words that have completely different meanings but share the same spelling and pronunciation. They also differ in grammatical category and properties, making them entirely unrelated in meaning.

Partial homonyms – these words share some similarities in meaning or grammatical forms but do not match in all aspects. In some cases, they may coincide in certain forms but differ significantly in others.

Polysemy happens when a single word (either written and spoken) has multiple meanings that are connected. For example: the word foot can mean the part of a person's body and the base of a bed. According to Crystal, polysemy refers to one word with different related meanings, while homonym happens when two completely different words look or sound the same. Polysemous words have meanings that are historically connected, while homonyms have meanings that are separate and unrelated.



Yule suggests using a dictionary to check if a word is polysemous and homonymous. If a word is polysemous, the dictionary will list all its related meanings under one entry. However, if two words are homonyms, they will appear as separate entries. However, sometimes it is difficult to clearly distinguish between polysemy and homonymy. The translation of the English texts from English to Uzbek language is a serious problem since there are linguistic and cultural variations. English and Uzbek language have different metaphorical styles of writing and this poses various connotation of vocabulary. Thus, the problem becomes more complicated due to the different culture to which each language belongs.

Jakobson divides translation into three main types:

1. Intralingual translation or rewording.

It explains words using different words within the same language.

2. Interlingual translation or translation proper.

It explains the interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.

3. Intersemiotic translation (transmutation).

It expresses words through nonverbal signs, such as symbols or gesture.

Translating religious texts is especially tough. The differences between languages, such as English and Uzbek create challenges at many levels, including pronunciation, grammar, meaning, sentence structure and culture. When translating metaphors, translators should utilize communicative translation and paraphrasing to clearly express the intended meaning.

Let's look at some examples:

English: **A bat flew into the room.**

Uzbek: **Xona ichiga ko'rshapalak uchib kirdi.** (Here **bat** is an animal)

English: **He hit the ball with a bat.**

Uzbek: **U to'pni bita bilan urdi.** (Here **bat** is a wooden stick used in sports)

English: **This bag is very light.**



Uzbek: **Bu sumka juda yengil.** (**Light** as in weight) .

English: **Turn on the light, it is dark here.**

Uzbek: **Chiroqni yoq, bu yer qorong’u.** (**Light** as illumination)

Let’s look short passage and analyze it.

“It was a **fine fall** morning and James decided to go for a walk by the **bank**. He enjoyed the fresh air as he passed by the large **plant** near the river. The **wind** was gentle, making the leaves rustle softly.

As he reached the bank, he saw a man sitting on a beach, reading a newspaper. James glanced at the headline: “Local Bank Opens New Branch “. He smiled to himself – just yesterday, he had tried to withdraw money, only to find the bank closed.

Further down the path, James noticed a tall man standing near a tree. “Excuse me “, James said , “ Do you know if there is a good place to eat around here ?” The man nodded :”Yes, there is a cafe just past the factory . They serve great fish and chips. But, be careful – the road is steep and it is easy to fall “. James thanked him and continued walking.

Finally, he arrived that cafe.

Now, let’s explain the homonyms in passage :

1. Bank – (a place for money / the side of a river)
2. Fall – (to drop / a season)
3. Fine – (pleasant / monetary penalty)
4. Plant – (a factory / a living organism)
5. Wind – (moving air / to twist something)

This passage demonstrates how homonyms can appear in everyday situations, making translation more complex if the context is not carefully considered.

Some translators used an explicitation strategy to clarify the hidden meaning if ambiguous words, which others overlooked this aspect and translated literally. A big challenge in translation is that some words have multiple meanings. The hardest type of confusion in translation comes from words that look or sound the same but have different



meanings. If a translator does not know the right word or phrase to use, they might make mistakes, which can lead to incorrect translations. In the analysis process in the texts, many researchers try to answer the research questions:

1. How far is homonymy diagnosed and identified in the selected texts?
2. To what extent do translators succeed in capturing the homonymous sense in the selected texts?

Translators need to be careful when dealing with homonyms, which are words that look or sound the same but have unlike meanings. However, not all similar – looking words are true homonyms and sometimes writers use them on purpose to create a certain effect or make the text more interesting for the reader. A translator should pay close attention to literary techniques like homonyms, words with multiple meanings, wordplay and repetition. Before translating, they must check the real meaning of these words to avoid mistakes. Translators should be very cautious when working with homonyms because two words that look or sound alike do not always mean the same thing. Sometimes, translators make great mistakes when translating homonyms because they think the second word is just a repetition of the first. Nevertheless, this happens because they do not fully understand the deeper meaning of the text or the cultural differences that affect the words’ meanings.

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