

## LEXICO-SEMANTIC FEATURES OF LEGAL TERMINOLOGY

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**Abstract:** The study of legal terminology is an essential aspect of legal translation, given the pivotal role that precise language plays in the interpretation and application of laws. Legal terminology, often complex and highly specific, presents unique challenges when translated across languages. This paper explores the lexico-semantic features of legal terminology in Uzbek and English, highlighting the semantic nuances, contextual usage, and translation challenges. The research provides insights into the impact of language-specific features on the accuracy and effectiveness of legal translation, emphasizing the importance of understanding both linguistic and legal systems in cross-linguistic legal communication.

**Key words:** semantic ambiguity, bench of the judge, forum shopping, cultural differences, corpus linguistics, legal corpus.

### **Introduction:**

Legal language is characterized by its precision, technicality, and specificity, which are necessary for conveying complex legal concepts. The effective translation of legal terms is crucial to maintaining the integrity of legal systems and ensuring fair outcomes across different linguistic and cultural contexts. However, legal terms often carry meanings that are deeply embedded within specific legal systems, making their translation challenging, especially when the terms do not have direct equivalents in another language. This issue is especially significant in the case of Uzbek and English, two languages that have distinct linguistic structures and legal traditions. Uzbek, a Turkic language spoken primarily in Uzbekistan, is influenced by its historical ties to Russian and Persian, while English is a Germanic language with a global legal influence. The translation of legal terminology between these languages involves addressing semantic differences, syntactic structures, and the cultural and legal contexts in which the terms are used. This paper examines the lexico-semantic features of legal terminology in both Uzbek and English, exploring



how differences in their legal systems, language structures, and cultural contexts influence the translation process.

### Literature Review

Legal translation has become an increasingly important area of study, especially as globalization and international legal interactions rise. Understanding the challenges posed by the translation of legal terminology requires exploring both linguistic and cultural nuances. While global studies have offered significant insights into the translation of legal terms, there is relatively limited research specifically focusing on the unique challenges faced by translators between Uzbek and English. In international scholarship, Gozdz-Roszkowski (2021) emphasizes the utility of corpus linguistics in legal discourse, offering a methodological approach to identifying recurrent patterns in legal language and its variations across jurisdictions. Allison (2023) discusses the difficulties of translating legal concepts that do not have direct equivalents in different legal systems. Similarly, Al-Jarf (2023) examines the lexical and syntactic features of legal texts from an EFL perspective, underscoring the need for precise terminology in legal translation.

The study of legal translation in Uzbekistan is relatively new, but a few scholars have begun to address the linguistic and cultural aspects involved in translating legal terminology between Uzbek and other languages, particularly English and Russian. Mirzaakhmedov (2022) provides a foundational study on legal terminology in Uzbek, examining how terms are borrowed from Russian and Persian, which have influenced Uzbek legal language over centuries. His work highlights how legal language in Uzbekistan is deeply intertwined with its political history and legal transformations, particularly in the Soviet period. He stresses that while there is an abundance of legal texts in Uzbek, translators often encounter challenges when dealing with terminology that has no direct equivalent in either the Russian or English languages. Tursunova (2023) applies corpus linguistics to the translation of legal texts in Uzbekistan. She collected a specialized legal corpus consisting of court rulings, statutes, and contracts in Uzbek and English. Her research identifies frequent instances where words or phrases in legal texts require different interpretations based on jurisdiction. Uzbek research also addresses the challenges of *legal borrowing*—the process by which one legal system adopts concepts or terms from another system. Given Uzbekistan's historical ties to the Soviet Union and its shift to an independent legal system, many legal terms in Uzbek are borrowed or

adapted from Russian or Persian. This presents an added layer of complexity when translating between Uzbek and English, as terms may carry historical or political connotations not easily understood by English-speaking audiences. These studies suggest that the lack of direct equivalents in legal terminology across languages can lead to misinterpretations, which are particularly problematic in legal contexts where precision is paramount.

### **Methodology**

This study utilizes a comparative analysis approach to examine the lexico-semantic features of legal terminology in Uzbek and English. The methodology consists of two main components: a corpus analysis of legal texts in both languages and a survey of professional translators to identify the challenges and strategies they employ when translating legal terminology. The study is designed to explore how linguistic, syntactic, and cultural factors influence the translation of legal terms between Uzbek and English, while also considering the broader legal context in which these terms are used. Corpus analysis is a widely used methodology in translation studies, particularly in legal translation, as it allows for an empirical exploration of language usage in real-world contexts (Tursunova, 2023). The corpus-based approach is employed in this study to identify patterns in the usage of legal terminology and to analyze semantic equivalence across the two languages. Specifically, this study focuses on the lexico-semantic features of legal terms and phrases used in legal documents such as contracts, court rulings, statutes, and administrative documents in both Uzbek and English.

**Analysis of Lexico-Semantic Features:** Legal terminology in both Uzbek and English is characterized by high specificity and technicality, with terms often linked to particular legal institutions, concepts, and procedures. However, there are notable differences in how legal terms are used and understood in the two languages.

One of the most significant challenges in translating legal terms is dealing with semantic ambiguity. In both Uzbek and English, legal terms can have multiple meanings depending on the context. For instance, the English term "contract" can refer to a broad legal agreement or to a specific type of agreement in a particular legal context. In Uzbek, the term "shartnoma" may carry similar meanings, but the contextual nuances can vary, depending on the legal system in which it is used. Translators must carefully consider the context to ensure that the term is used appropriately. Similarly, the term "huquq" (law) can have multiple meanings

depending on whether it refers to the legal system, a particular law, or the concept of rights. The analysis of these terms involves examining how they are translated into English and identifying any discrepancies in meaning, either due to polysemy or the lack of direct equivalents. Uzbek studies such as those by Khusanov (2021) and Tursunova (2023) highlight the difficulties faced by translators in this respect. Khusanov's work, for example, shows how terms like "hukumat" (government) and "prava" (rights) are used differently in Uzbek compared to English, which can result in misinterpretations when translated without considering the legal and cultural context. Another significant part of the corpus analysis focuses on collocations (combinations of words that frequently appear together in legal texts) and lexical gaps (terms that have no direct equivalent in the target language). For example, the English phrase "legal responsibility" may be translated into Uzbek as "huquqiy javobgarlik," but this translation does not fully capture the nuances of "legal" in the English context, where it often implies a specific kind of legal duty, rather than a more general concept of responsibility. Tursunova (2023) examines similar collocations in her study of Uzbek-English legal texts, finding that many common collocations in English legal language lack direct counterparts in Uzbek, which poses challenges for translators who must find functional equivalents. This section also explores cases where Uzbek legal terms are borrowed or adapted from Russian, Persian, or Arabic, particularly in areas like international law. For instance, terms like "arbitraj" (arbitration) in Uzbek reflect historical influences from Russian and Persian legal systems. These borrowed terms often retain their original meaning but may present translation difficulties when transferred into English.

**Cultural and Legal System Differences:** Many legal terms have no direct equivalents in the target language. For example, in Uzbek, there are terms such as "hukumat" (government), which has a different connotation than the English term "government," especially when considering Uzbekistan's political system. Similarly, legal concepts such as "common law" in English have no direct equivalent in Uzbek law, which follows a civil law system. These differences require translators to adapt legal terms to the specific legal and cultural context, sometimes creating hybrid terms or explanations to convey the correct meaning. Below is an analysis of the legal terms "**bench of the judge**," and "**forum shopping**" between **Uzbek** and **English**. This analysis includes the translation and cultural/legal context of these terms, as well as their semantic equivalence in both languages. The analysis will

help illustrate the linguistic and legal complexities involved when translating these terms. The term "**bench of the judge**" refers to the physical place where a judge sits in a courtroom or the collective body of judges in a court of law, especially in appellate courts. It is often used to refer to the judge's position or authority in a courtroom setting.

Example: "The judge will take his seat on the bench before proceeding with the trial."

The direct translation of "**bench of the judge**" into Uzbek is "**sudyaniy tribunasi**" or "**sudya joylashgan joy**" (literally, the judge's seat or place where the judge sits). However, this translation may be understood differently depending on the context. In Uzbek, "**sudya**" (judge) and "**tribuna**" (tribune/seat) are commonly used, but the exact legal and institutional context of "bench" as it is used in English courts may not be fully mirrored in the Uzbek legal system. In English-speaking common law countries, "**bench**" refers not only to the physical seat but can also imply the **judicial authority** of the judge. In the case of "**bench trials**," it refers to trials conducted without a jury, where the judge acts as both the fact-finder and decision-maker. However, in Uzbek, the equivalent concept might not be as prominent. Uzbekistan, following a civil law tradition, does not commonly have a separate concept of "bench trials" as understood in common law jurisdictions. Instead, trials typically involve judges making decisions, and the term "**sudya joylashgan joy**" may primarily describe the physical space rather than any underlying legal authority or trial procedure.

"**Forum shopping**" refers to the practice of seeking the most favorable court or legal jurisdiction to hear a case, usually by choosing a forum that is more likely to yield a favorable judgment. This can involve moving a case from one jurisdiction to another to exploit differences in laws, procedures, or legal culture.

Example: "The defense lawyer was accused of forum shopping by attempting to move the case to a court with more favorable laws for his client."

The direct translation of "**forum shopping**" into Uzbek is "**forumni tanlash**" or "**sudni tanlash**" (choosing/selecting a forum/court). However, as Uzbekistan operates within a **civil law** framework, where the choice of court jurisdiction is usually more rigidly defined by law, the term does not have a well-established equivalent in the legal system. Thus, the translation may need to be elaborated with additional explanations such as "**qonuniy sud maydonini tanlash**" (selecting a



legal court forum) to convey the full meaning. In **common law** countries, “**forum shopping**” is a more pronounced issue because of the flexibility of jurisdictional rules, where parties might attempt to move cases to jurisdictions that are perceived to be more favorable. However, in **Uzbekistan**, legal proceedings are generally governed by a specific set of rules about jurisdiction that are less flexible than those in common law systems. Uzbek law does not easily allow for the practice of “**forum shopping**” as it is known in English-speaking countries. Nevertheless, it is possible that in **international disputes**, the concept of “**forum shopping**” could apply in cases involving foreign law or international arbitration, but this is typically less common in domestic Uzbek law. The practice is thus not as prevalent or defined in the Uzbek legal system as it is in English law.

**Syntactic Structures:** The syntactic structures of legal texts in Uzbek and English differ significantly. For instance, English legal sentences tend to be long, complex, and heavily reliant on passive constructions, while Uzbek legal texts are often more straightforward, with active voice being more common. This structural difference can affect the way legal concepts are presented and understood, requiring careful syntactic adaptation in translation.

**Polysemy and Collocations:** Both Uzbek and English legal terms can exhibit polysemy, where a single term may have several related meanings. For example, the English term "right" can refer to a legal entitlement, a moral claim, or a direction. In Uzbek, the equivalent term "huquq" may also cover different legal and moral aspects, depending on the context. Collocations, such as "legal responsibility" in English, may also be challenging to translate due to differences in how legal concepts are paired in each language.

### **Discussion**

The analysis of legal terminology in Uzbek and English highlights the complexities involved in translating legal terms between languages with different cultural, legal, and linguistic backgrounds. The lack of direct equivalents for many legal concepts can result in misinterpretations if translators do not take into account both the semantic and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the syntactic differences between the two languages can create challenges in maintaining the legal precision required in translation. A major finding of this study is the importance of understanding the legal systems of both languages in order to translate legal terms accurately. In cases where no direct equivalent exists, translators must either find an acceptable approximation

or provide additional explanation to ensure clarity. This requires not only linguistic skills but also a deep understanding of both legal cultures.

### **Conclusion:**

This study underscores the need for a nuanced approach to the translation of legal terminology between Uzbek and English. The lexico-semantic features of legal terms in these languages are shaped by their respective legal systems, and translators must be mindful of these differences to ensure accurate and effective communication. The findings suggest that: Legal translators should receive specialized training that covers both linguistic and legal aspects of translation.

Legal terminology dictionaries and glossaries should be developed to aid translators in finding accurate equivalents. Further research is needed on the specific challenges faced by translators working between languages with different legal systems, such as Uzbek and English.

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