

ANALYSING FALSE FRIENDS IN LINGUISTICS

(Based on examples of Uzbek and English words)

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Annotation. This paper explores the linguistic phenomenon of false friends—pairs of words in two languages that look or sound similar but have different meanings. The research examines their origins, classifications, and the challenges they create in translation and foreign language learning. It highlights how false friends can lead to misunderstandings, translation errors, and miscommunication between speakers of different languages. The study also discusses strategies to minimize these difficulties, including contextual analysis, comparative linguistic methods, and awareness-raising in language education. By analyzing examples from English and other languages, the research aims to demonstrate the importance of recognizing false friends for accurate translation and effective cross-linguistic communication.

Key Words: false friends; linguistic interference, translation difficulties, semantic analysis, cognates, language learning, cross-linguistic communication, lexical similarity, etymology.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola “false friends” deb ataluvchi tilshunoslik hodisasini — ya’ni ikki tilda shakli yoki talaffuzi o’xshash, ammo ma’nosi turlicha bo’lgan so’z juftlarini o’rganadi. Tadqiqotda ularning kelib chiqishi, tasnifi va tarjima hamda chet tilini o’rganish jarayonida keltirib chiqaradigan qiyinchiliklari tahlil qilinadi. Ishda “false friends” so’zlari sabab yuzaga keladigan tushunmovchiliklar, tarjima xatolari va muloqotdagi muammolar yoritilgan. Shuningdek, bu muammolarni kamaytirish uchun kontekstual tahlil, qiyosiy tilshunoslik usullari va til ta’limida xabardorlikni oshirish strategiyalari taklif etiladi. Ingliz tili va boshqa tillardan olingan misollar asosida tahlil olib borilib, “false friends” hodisasini to’g’ri anglash tarjima aniqligi va samarali tilaro muloqot uchun muhimligi ko’rsatib beriladi.

Kalit so’zlar: Tarjimonning soxta do’stlari; tilaro aralashuv; tarjima qiyinchiliklari; semantik tahlil; kognatlar; til o’rganish; tilaro muloqot; leksik o’xshashlik; etimologiya.

The phenomenon of false friends has been a topic of hot discussion in the areas of linguistics, language acquisition, translation, and lexicography. False friends (FFs) are generally defined as pairs of words that look or sound phonologically and/ or orthographically similar in two languages, but differ significantly in meaning. False friends are words in two languages that are similar in form but different in meaning (e.g. English *library* “place for reading and borrowing books” vs Spanish *librería* “bookshop”). From the point of view of EFL teaching and learning, false friends are important because they lead us to errors in L2 production and comprehension (e.g. *I am very constipated; it has been a fastidious speech and you should eat food without preservatives*).

False friends have received worldwide lexicographic consideration. The fact that similar words in different languages do not necessarily overlap semantically has inspired many linguists to identify false friends in different languages and provide a lexical description of them in dictionaries.

False Friends between English and Uzbek Languages

The phenomenon of false friends is a significant subject of study in modern linguistics and translation studies. It refers to pairs of words in two languages that are similar in spelling or pronunciation but differ in meaning. Such words may create misunderstandings in translation, interpretation, or everyday communication. The problem of false friends is particularly relevant for learners of English and Uzbek, as these two languages contain numerous examples of similar-sounding words that have entirely different meanings.

False friends usually appear due to historical borrowing, phonetic resemblance, or influence from third languages such as Russian or French. Many Uzbek words that resemble English ones were borrowed during the Soviet period, often from Russian, which in turn had borrowed them from European languages. As a result, these words may look familiar to English speakers but differ semantically. For example, the English word “magazine” means a journal or periodical, while the Uzbek word “magazin” refers to a shop. This difference in meaning can easily lead to confusion among learners who assume that both words share the same sense.

Another clear example is “actual”, which in English means real or existing, whereas the Uzbek word “aktual” expresses the meaning important or topical. Similarly, “fabric” in English denotes cloth or material, but in Uzbek, the similar word “fabrika” means factory. These differences are caused by divergent borrowing paths and semantic shifts over time.

The English noun “sympathy” is often misunderstood by Uzbek learners. In English, it refers to compassion or pity, while the Uzbek word “simptiya” carries the sense of liking or affection. The same applies to “artist”, which in English describes a painter, musician, or performer, but in Uzbek, “artist” is used specifically for an actor. The English verb “pretend” also causes confusion because it has no direct equivalent in Uzbek; it means to act as if something is true, but many learners interpret it incorrectly as to claim or to attempt.

Other examples include “control” (English: to manage or regulate / Uzbek: to check), “camera” (English: a device for taking pictures / Uzbek: a prison cell), and “complex” (English: complicated / Uzbek: a group of buildings). Another interesting pair is “intelligent” and “intelligensiya”. In English, intelligent means smart or clever, while in Uzbek, “intelligensiya” is used for the educated or cultural elite. Although the words share the same Latin root, their modern meanings have diverged.

The existence of false friends highlights the importance of semantic awareness in translation. Translators and language learners must be cautious not to rely solely on visual or phonetic similarity when interpreting words across languages. Instead, they should analyze the context and etymology of each term to avoid misunderstandings. For example, using the English word magazine to mean shop in translation would completely change the intended meaning of a text. Similarly, translating aktual masala as actual problem would be semantically incorrect; the correct translation would be a topical issue or a relevant question.

In addition, the problem of false friends demonstrates the dynamic nature of languages and the influence of cultural contact. As languages evolve, borrowed words often undergo semantic shifts that make them “false friends” to their original counterparts. For students of translation, identifying and understanding such pairs is an essential part of developing linguistic competence and translation accuracy.

To conclude, false friends between English and Uzbek illustrate how languages can appear similar but function differently on the semantic level. Recognizing these distinctions helps avoid translation errors, promotes intercultural understanding, and enriches the linguistic knowledge of both translators and learners. Therefore, awareness of false friends is an indispensable skill for anyone involved in cross-linguistic communication and translation.

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