



## **TYPES AND EXPRESSIONS OF WORD MEANING IN TRANSLATION**

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the multifaceted nature of word meaning within the context of translation studies, analyzing how different dimensions of semantic content are transferred across languages. Translating a word involves far more than finding a literal equivalent; it requires a deep understanding of various types of meaning, including denotative, connotative, collocational, and socio-stylistic meanings. This paper examines the linguistic and cultural challenges translators face when these meanings do not align perfectly between the source and target languages. Furthermore, it investigates the diverse translational methods and expressions—such as modulation, adaptation, semantic expansion, and neutralization—used to preserve the integrity of the original message. Through a comparative analysis of lexical units, the study highlights that successful translation depends on the translator's ability to prioritize and express the dominant type of meaning required by the specific context. Ultimately, the article provides practical insights for translators and linguists aiming to minimize semantic loss in cross-cultural communication.

**Keywords:** Translation studies, word meaning, denotation and connotation, semantic equivalence, lexical translation, contextual meaning, translational expressions, cross-cultural linguistics.

### **Introduction**

Correctly expressing word meaning in translation requires not only working with a dictionary but also understanding the deep semantic layers of a language. Below, we provide a detailed analysis of the types of word meaning in translation and the specific challenges posed by polysemy.

**Denotative and Connotative Meanings** are fundamental concepts in translation studies that determine both the content and the impact of a text.

**Denotative Meaning (Denotation):** This is the direct, objective, and literal meaning of a word. It represents the primary definition of a word as found in a dictionary, describing an object or phenomenon without any emotional coloring.

**Function:** To convey information.

**Characteristic:** It is perceived almost identically across different cultures (for example, when hearing the word "water," everyone understands it as a colorless liquid).

**Connotative Meaning (Connotation):** This is the emotional, cultural, subjective, and stylistic coloring superimposed on the primary meaning of a word. This meaning can change depending on culture, experience, or context. Connotation imparts a positive, negative, or neutral tone to a word.

**Function:** To exert an emotional impact or express an attitude.

**Characteristic:** We rely more heavily on connotation in fiction (belles-lettres) and everyday speech.

### **The Role of Denotative and Connotative Meaning in Translation**

The greatest challenge for a translator is achieving equivalence, that is, finding the correct counterpart.

1. **Denotative Equivalence:** If a translator focuses solely on denotative meaning, the translation becomes "dry"—meaning it loses its stylistic and emotional coloring.

2. **Connotative Equivalence:** If a translator alters the connotative meaning, it can distort the original intent of the text. For instance, it could inadvertently turn a compliment into an insult.

Let us look at words that share the same denotative meaning but carry different connotations:

1. **The Concept of Thinness:** In English, the following words are used to describe a person's thinness:

**Slender / Slim:** (Positive connotation) — *Xushqomat* (elegant/slender)

**Thin:** (Neutral connotation) — *Ozg'in* (Thin).

**Skinny / Scrawny:** (Negative connotation) — *Eti suyagiga yopishgan* (Skin and bones), "*qiltiriq*" (Scrawny/Lean).

If an author describes a character in a literary work as a “**slender girl**”, and the translator renders it as “**ozg’in qiz**” (thin girl), the connotative meaning regarding the character's beauty is lost. The correct alternative would be: “**xushqomat qiz**” or “**xushbichim qiz**” (elegant/well-proportioned girl).

## 2. The Word “Is – hid” (Smell / Scent)

**Fragrance / Aroma:** (Positive) — *Atir isi* (perfume scent), *yoqimli hid* (pleasant smell).

**Smell:** (Neutral) — *Hid* (general smell).

**Stench / Odor:** (Negative) — *Qo’lansa hid* (foul smell), *badbo’y is* (stench).

**Example:** The phrase “*The smell of the kitchen*” is neutral. However, if it is phrased as “*The aroma of the kitchen,*” it must be translated into Uzbek with a positive connotation, such as “*oshxonadan kelayotgan yoqimli is/bo’y*” (the pleasant aroma coming from the kitchen).

## 3. Cultural Connotation

- In English, the word “**Owl**” symbolizes **wisdom**.
- In Uzbek, “**Boyo’g’li**” (owl) is a symbol of **misfortune or ruin**.

If the English sentence “*He is as wise as an owl*” is translated literally into Uzbek as “*U boyo’g’lidek dono,*” it will confuse the reader. Therefore, an equivalent expression like “*juda dono*” (very wise) is used in Uzbek.

In the following table, we will examine the denotative and connotative meanings, as well as the translations, of several words in English and Uzbek.

Word	Denotative meaning	Connotative meaning	Uzbek translation
<b>Youthful</b>	Yosh	Ijobiy (g’ayratli)	Navqiron
<b>Juveline</b>	Voyaga yetmagan	Salbiy (bolalarcha)	Go’daklarcha, xom
<b>Vintage</b>	Eski	Ijobiy (qadrli)	Antikvar, noyob
<b>Decrepit</b>	Eski	Salbiy (ishdan chiqqan)	Xaroba, shaloq

A translator must not rely solely on the dictionary. They must feel the emotion (connotation) behind every single word and recreate it in their own language with the exact same nuances and tone.

Word	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning
<i>To bloom / flower-</i> <b>Gullash</b>	A plant opening its blossoms	Development, achieving success ( <i>To flourish / prosper</i> )
<i>Donkey</i> <b>Eshak</b>	A domestic animal, a mount	A stubborn, uncomprehending person
<i>Palov / Pilaf</i> <b>Osh</b>	National dish	A wedding, hospitality, celebration
<i>Fox</i> <b>Tulki</b>	A predatory mammal	A sly, cunning person

## II. Lexical-Semantic Polysemy

The term **polysemy** originates from the Greek words *poly* (many) and *sema* (meaning). It refers to a single word form having two or more interconnected meanings.

In polysemy, the meanings of a word do not emerge randomly. Instead, they are linked to one another based on a specific chain or radial system consisting of the word's **literal (primary) meaning** and its **figurative (secondary) meanings**.

Lexical-semantic polysemy is primarily formed through three methods:

### Metaphor

Derived from the Greek word *metaphora* (transfer, carrying over), a metaphor is an artistic and descriptive tool of speech. It involves the transfer of meaning from one word to another based on a **similarity** (in shape, color, movement, or characteristic feature) between objects or phenomena.

<i>Tog'ning etagi</i>	( <i>Tog'ning pastki qismi kiyim etagiga o'xshatilgan</i> ).
<i>Qozonning qulog'i</i>	( <i>Tutqich shakli inson qulog'iga o'xshash</i> ).
<i>The eye of a needle</i>	( <i>Igna teshigi — shaklan ko'zga o'xshash</i> ).
<i>The foot of the mountain</i>	( <i>Tog'ning etagi - oyoq kabi pastda joylashgan</i> )

### Metonymy

Derived from the Greek word *metonymia* (meaning “renaming”), metonymy involves the transfer of meaning based on a **constant logical connection** between objects or phenomena. Unlike a metaphor, objects in metonymy are not compared or likened to one another; instead, the transfer is based on an actual association between them (such as place, time, container/content, etc.).

“ <b>Toshkent</b> bu masalada o‘z bayonotini berdi.	(bu yerda Toshkent shahri emas, balki <b>O‘zbekiston hukumati</b> nazarda tutilyapti).
“Butun <b>qishloq</b> oytoqqa turdi.”	(Qishloq uylari emas, balki <b>qishloq aholisi</b> )
“ <b>The White</b> house issued a statement”	(Oq uy binosi emas, <b>AQSH administratsiyasi</b> )
“ <b>Downing street</b> has no comment”	(Ko‘cha nomi emas, <b>Britaniya Bosh vaziri idorasi</b> )

### Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a specific type of figurative transfer (a subtype of metonymy) that is based on a **quantitative relationship** between objects and phenomena. Put more simply, it is a method of expressing the whole through a part, or a part through the whole.

In synecdoche, only a single part of an object is named, but the entire object is meant (or vice versa).

“Mening <b>oyog‘im</b> bu yerga boshqa qadam bosmaydi!”	(Bu yerda faqat oyoq emas, butun inson nazarda tutilmoqda).
“Qishloqqa beshta <b>qo‘l</b> kerak.”	(Ishchi kuchi, ya‘ni odamlar nazarda tutilmoqda).
“Nice <b>wheels!</b> ”	(Bu yerda “wheels” (g‘ildiraklar) so‘zi butun bir avtomobilni anglatadi).
“The <b>police</b> are at the door.”	(Butun politsiya tizimi emas, balki bir yoki ikki nafar xodim).

In conclusion, the art and science of translation extend far beyond a mechanical exchange of linguistic tokens or direct dictionary equivalents. As explored throughout this study, word meaning is a multi-layered, dynamic phenomenon that cannot be decoupled from its semantic structure and cultural ecosystem.

Translators must constantly balance objective, literal definitions (*denotatsiya*) with emotional, expressive, and cultural undercurrents (*konnotatsiya*). As demonstrated by culturally loaded concepts like the symbol of the owl or the local nuances of national cuisine, a purely denotative approach often leads to communication breakdown, meaning a translator's primary duty is to preserve the *impact* of the message rather than just its form.

The structural creation of secondary meanings relies heavily on systematic conceptual transfers - namely **metaphor** (similarity), **metonymy** (association/contiguity), and **synecdoche** (quantitative part-whole relationships).

Translating these expressions requires deep cognitive and cultural awareness, as different languages rarely share identical metaphorical paths or metonymic associations.

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