



TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION OF BEHAVIORAL VERBS FROM UZBEK INTO ENGLISH

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Abstract

The translation of behavioral verbs from Uzbek to English presents intricate linguistic challenges due to semantic ambiguity, syntactic differences, and cultural specificities embedded in both languages. This study investigates these challenges through corpus analysis and translator interviews. Findings reveal that translators often navigate polysemy, verb valency shifts, and pragmatic nuances, requiring adaptive strategies such as modulation, compensation, and restructuring to maintain semantic accuracy and communicative intent. The results offer important insights for translation theory and pedagogy, emphasizing the need for cultural and linguistic competence in translating behavioral verbs effectively.

Keywords: Behavioral verbs, Uzbek-English translation, semantic ambiguity, syntactic differences, pragmatic translation, translation strategies, cross-cultural communication, translator competence, polysemy in translation, modulation and compensation.

Introduction

Behavioral verbs constitute a distinct class of verbs that encapsulate human actions, attitudes, emotional responses, and social interactions. Unlike simple action verbs, behavioral verbs often embody subtle psychological or social dimensions, making them indispensable for nuanced discourse. Examples include verbs such as “to encourage,” “to hesitate,” and “to complain.” These verbs not only describe physical actions but often reflect mental attitudes and interpersonal dynamics that are closely intertwined with cultural norms.

In the context of translation, behavioral verbs present a unique set of challenges. Given their complex semantic load and culturally bound pragmatics, direct word-for-word translation between Uzbek and English frequently leads to loss or



distortion of meaning. Linguistic systems differ in how they encode behaviors and attitudes; syntactic structures, verb valency, and pragmatic conventions impact the adequacy of translated texts. This is further compounded by the fact that behavioral verbs are often polysemous, carrying multiple meanings that depend heavily on context.

Despite their communicative importance, behavioral verbs have received limited focused treatment in Uzbek-English translation studies. Existing research has generally concentrated on broad verb categories or specific linguistic features, leaving a gap concerning the systematic challenges and strategies involved in behavioral verb translation. This study seeks to address this gap by focusing on the linguistic intricacies of behavioral verbs in the Uzbek-English translation context. To guide the investigation, the following research questions were formulated:

What are the primary semantic difficulties in translating Uzbek behavioral verbs into English?

How do syntactic and pragmatic differences influence the translation process?

What translation strategies do professional translators employ to address these linguistic challenges?

The study aims to:

Identify semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic challenges involved in translating behavioral verbs.

Explore how cultural factors influence these challenges.

Document effective translation strategies applied by practitioners.

2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative, mixed-methods design combining corpus-based linguistic analysis with qualitative data from semi-structured translator interviews. This approach allows both the objective examination of linguistic phenomena and subjective insights into translation practices.

A parallel bilingual corpus was compiled, consisting of approximately 250 Uzbek sentences containing behavioral verbs and their English translations. Sources included academic articles, literary texts, news media, and official documents to ensure diversity. The corpus was annotated to identify behavioral verbs and classify semantic senses and syntactic properties.



Eight professional translators with demonstrated expertise in Uzbek-English translation participated. Their experience spanned from 5 to 12 years, primarily in fields requiring frequent handling of behavioral verbs such as social sciences, literature, and journalism.

Corpus Analysis: Using linguistic annotation software, the sentences were examined for semantic polysemy, verb valency differences, and pragmatic use. Equivalence types were categorized: literal, adaptive, explicative, or omitted.

Interviews: A semi-structured interview guide was developed focusing on challenges with behavioral verbs, cultural mediation, and preferred translation strategies. Interviews lasted 40-60 minutes and were audio recorded.

Quantitative corpus data were analyzed descriptively, focusing on frequency patterns of semantic shifts and syntactic alterations. Qualitative interview data were transcribed and subjected to thematic coding using NVivo software, enabling identification of common translation challenges and coping strategies.

Participants were briefed on study aims and their rights. Consent was obtained, guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality. Data storage complied with institutional ethical guidelines.

3. Results

Polysemy was pervasive; translators frequently encountered verbs with multiple, context-dependent meanings. For instance, the Uzbek verb “ikkilanish” can denote hesitation in decision-making or a subtle form of doubt. Choosing an English equivalent depended heavily on contextual cues. Translators reported dilemmas in balancing semantic precision with readability.

Lexical gaps also surfaced when no direct English verb fully captured the behavioral nuance. This often required employing paraphrasing or verb phrase substitutions, which sometimes altered the source message’s stylistic qualities.

Syntactic restructuring was regularly necessary due to differences in verb argument structure. Uzbek often employs nominal forms or participles where English uses infinitives or gerunds. For example, an Uzbek phrase equivalent to “she encouraged him” might be rendered literally as “she gave encouragement to him,” requiring syntactic condensation for English fluency.



Verb valency differences led to shifts in subject-object relations or the addition of pronouns to clarify meaning. These structural adjustments occasionally modified emphasis or altered thematic focus.

Behavioral verbs encapsulate cultural values, social hierarchies, and face-saving strategies. Uzbek expressions often signal politeness or social distance through verb choice and modality. Translators had to calibrate English equivalents appropriately, sometimes using indirectness or modal auxiliaries to preserve pragmatic intent. The emotional tone conveyed by Uzbek behavioral verbs sometimes conflicted with typical English pragmatics, prompting translators to adopt compensatory strategies, such as explicitation or tonal modulation.

Three main strategies emerged in translation:

Modulation: Reframing the semantic perspective (e.g., switching from active to passive).

Compensation: Adding explanatory notes or equivalent expressions elsewhere.

Restructuring: Applying syntactic transformations to fit target language norms.

Interviewees emphasized the importance of cultural competence and pragmatic sensitivity alongside linguistic skills in successfully translating behavioral verbs.

4. Discussion

The results demonstrate that semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic challenges are deeply intertwined in behavioral verb translation. The translator's role involves dynamic negotiation among these dimensions to produce coherent, culturally appropriate text.

The study reinforces that translation is not only linguistic but cross-cultural mediation. Behavioral verbs incarnate social norms, requiring translators to understand and convey cultural nuances to avoid misinterpretation or loss of meaning.

This study extends prior research by focusing on a relatively neglected verb subset in Uzbek-English translation, illustrating practical difficulties and adaptive strategies that confirm and elaborate on functionalist translation theories.

Training programs should integrate targeted modules on behavioral verb semantics, syntactic differences, and soft skills in cultural mediation. Case studies, corpus work, and translator reflexivity exercises could enhance competence.



The main limitation is focus on one language pair and sample size. Future studies should broaden linguistic diversity, include more languages and genres, and explore computational translation tools' efficacy with behavioral verbs.

5. Conclusion

Behavioral verbs embody complex linguistic and cultural information essential for communicative success. Their translation from Uzbek to English is fraught with semantic ambiguities, syntactic incompatibilities, and pragmatic sensitivities. Effective translation requires an integrative strategy combining linguistic acumen and cultural insight. This study provides foundational data and analysis, advocating for focused translator training and further research to improve translation quality involving behavioral verbs.

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