

COMPARISON OF LEXICAL-SEMANTIC UNITS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LEGAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

This article analyzes how lexical and semantic units are used and interpreted in English and Uzbek legal discourse. It focuses on the linguistic nature of legal vocabulary, exploring how both languages encode legal meanings. The study argues that variations in lexical-semantic patterns arise from differences in legal systems, cultural traditions, and historical experience.

Introduction

Legal discourse serves as a special field of communication where accuracy and clarity are crucial. Each legal system develops its own linguistic style to describe laws, rights, and obligations. English legal language has developed within the Common Law framework, while Uzbek legal discourse reflects Civil Law traditions and the influence of Arabic, Persian, and Russian linguistic sources. Comparing these two systems allows us to see how each language constructs meaning through legal terminology.

Lexical Characteristics of English Legal Discourse

English legal discourse is rich in complex structures and fixed expressions. Traditional legal English contains many archaic words (e.g., hereby, aforesaid, therein) that are rarely used in modern speech but persist in formal documents. Latin borrowings (bona fide, habeas corpus, ex parte) remain an important feature, as they help preserve precision and historical continuity. Furthermore, English legal vocabulary often displays synonymy and double forms such as null and void, terms and conditions, fit and proper. These pairs reinforce meaning and reflect historical layering from Old English, French, and Latin influences.

Lexical Characteristics of Uzbek Legal Discourse

Uzbek legal discourse, by contrast, strives for clear and unambiguous terminology. Its vocabulary was formed through Arabic religious-legal terminology (huquq, adolat, majburiyat) and Russian legal terms adopted during the Soviet era (prokuror, sudya, kodeks). After Uzbekistan's independence, new words entered legal language to reflect national identity and modern legal institutions, such as fuqarolik jamiyati (civil society), davlat mustaqilligi (state independence), and inson huquqlari (human rights). Unlike English, Uzbek legal texts avoid synonymy; one concept usually corresponds to one term to ensure legal precision.

Semantic Comparison

From a semantic viewpoint, English legal units tend to have context-dependent meanings. For instance, party can denote an individual, a political group, or a side in a contract. Similarly, consideration in legal English does not mean "thoughtfulness," but refers to something of value exchanged in a contract. In Uzbek, legal terms are generally monosemous — they retain a single, specific meaning regardless of context. For example, shartnoma means "contract" and does not

extend beyond that sense. However, some English legal notions like equity, trust, or tort have no direct Uzbek equivalent. Translators usually use descriptive phrases, such as adolat tamoyili asosidagi huquq (law based on equity), to render them.

Discussion

The observed differences reveal that English legal discourse is historically layered, semantically flexible, and idiomatically rich, while Uzbek legal language is standardized and straightforward. These contrasts are not merely linguistic but reflect the underlying logic of their legal systems: the precedent-based flexibility of English Common Law versus the codified precision of Uzbek Civil Law.

Therefore, understanding these lexical-semantic distinctions is essential for effective legal translation and international legal cooperation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, both English and Uzbek legal discourses aim to express law with clarity and authority, yet they do so through different linguistic strategies. English relies on tradition, redundancy, and interpretative nuance, while Uzbek prefers transparency and stability. A comparative lexical-semantic study not only enhances linguistic understanding but also promotes accurate cross-cultural communication in legal contexts.

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