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CLASSIFICATION OF EQUIVALENTS IN BILINGUAL DICTIONARIES

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Annotation. This article examines the theoretical foundations of the classification of equivalents in bilingual dictionaries. It explores the lexicographic interpretation of the concept of equivalence, the dichotomies of equivalent types proposed in metalexicographic literature, and the four-category classification developed by A. Adamska-Sałaciak, which distinguishes between semantic, explanatory, translational, and functional equivalents. The article also discusses the scale of equivalence, comprising full, partial, and zero equivalence. Furthermore, it examines lexicographic strategies for addressing cases of non-equivalence and evaluates the prospects for applying these approaches to Uzbek–English lexicography.

Keywords: bilingual dictionary, equivalent, type of equivalence, semantic equivalent, functional equivalent, partial equivalence, zero equivalence, lexicography, microstructure.

Introduction. Over the past few decades, lexicography has gained considerable recognition as an independently developing branch of linguistics, not only in practical terms but also as a field of theoretical inquiry. As A. Adamska-Sałaciak (2019: 12) points out, theoretical lexicography, or metalexicography, is primarily descriptive in nature. It focuses on describing dictionary structures, proposing dictionary typologies, and formulating recommendations for lexicographers. This descriptive and prescriptive dimension provides a basis for examining one of the most challenging issues in bilingual lexicography: the problem of equivalence.

An underlying assumption of bilingual lexicography is that words in one language have equivalents in another. In practice, however, this assumption is continually challenged by the anisomorphism of linguistic systems (Adamska-Sałaciak, 2019: 15). In their research, T. Margalitadze and G. Meladze (2023: 65) highlight issues arising from linguistic anisomorphism and the lack of equivalence between Georgian and English in the context of foreign language teaching. They also demonstrate the importance of bilingual dictionaries as an effective means of correlating lexical, grammatical, and syntactic information in a foreign language with corresponding information in the learner's native language. Consequently, the accurate classification of equivalents is a key factor in determining the quality of a bilingual dictionary and its ability to meet users' needs. This article aims to synthesize classifications of equivalents proposed in metalexicographic literature, systematize the principal approaches, and explore the prospects for applying these classifications to the practical requirements of Uzbek–English lexicography.

Analysis and results. The diversity of approaches to the problem of equivalence is primarily attributable to terminological ambiguity. Citing A. Adamska-Sałaciak, L. Karpinska explains the variation in terminology by noting that "partly, genuinely different phenomena are being discussed, and partly, different authors are emphasizing different aspects of the same phenomenon" (Karpinska, 2012: 85). This observation indicates that the concept of equivalence in bilingual lexicography still

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lacks a single, universally accepted definition. Nevertheless, the literature frequently presents types of equivalents in the form of contrasting pairs, or dichotomies, thereby emphasizing the distinctions between them (Karpinska, 2012: 85–86). The following table presents the principal dichotomies identified in metalexicographic literature:

Author	**Proposed dichotomy**
Zgusta (1971)	Explanatory (descriptive) ↔ translational (contextualized) equivalents
Zgusta (1987)	Semantic ↔ functional (communicative) equivalence
Hausmann (1989)	Prototypical ↔ textual equivalents
Cop (1991)	Prototypical ↔ contextualized equivalents
Hausmann and Werner (1991)	Systemic ↔ translation equivalents
Piotrowski (1994)	Cognitive ↔ translational equivalents
Gouws (2000)	Semantic ↔ communicative equivalence
Svensén (2009)	Semantic ↔ pragmatic equivalence; explanatory ↔ translational equivalence

As the table above illustrates, despite the terminological diversity, the authors appear to use different terms to refer to closely related phenomena. Contextualized equivalence corresponds to translational and textual equivalence, whereas prototypical equivalence corresponds to systemic and cognitive equivalence (Karpinska, 2012: 86–87). This observation provides a basis for developing a more comprehensive classification.

A generalized classification of types of equivalents

A. Adamska-Sałaciak provides an in-depth analysis of various dichotomies and consolidates them into four categories of equivalent types (Karpinska, 2012: 87). The classification discussed by L. Karpinska comprises the following categories.

(S) Semantic, cognitive, systemic, and prototypical equivalents

This category refers to established lexical units in a given language that can serve as translations of the prototypical meanings of dictionary headwords, although they may not be appropriate in more specific contexts. According to Adamska-Sałaciak, this is the type of equivalent expected in a conventional bilingual dictionary and the only type that can pass the back-translation test (Karpinska, 2012: 87). Such equivalents are established lexical units and therefore do not need to be created by the translator.

For example, the Uzbek–English dictionary entry kitob is glossed as “book” (Dirks, s.v. “kitob”). This pairing illustrates a conventional lexical equivalent: the English word book corresponds to the basic meaning of the Uzbek word kitob. Although the dictionary also records related expressions such as kitob qurti (“bookworm”), the basic pairing kitob–book represents the prototypical lexical correspondence.

(E) Explanatory and descriptive equivalents

These equivalents consist of explanatory paraphrases or definitions provided for dictionary headwords. They resemble definitions in monolingual explanatory dictionaries and are not necessarily the preferred solution in a bilingual dictionary. Nevertheless, they can be used when no suitable lexical equivalent is available. An explanatory equivalent can be formulated even when no established equivalent of category (S) exists (Karpinska, 2012: 87).

An illustrative example is the Uzbek term muchal, which Dirks defines as a “method of reckoning according to a 12-year animal cycle,” listing the animals in the cycle and explaining its calendrical basis (Dirks, s.v. “muchal”). Rather than providing a single-word English equivalent, the

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dictionary explains the concept through a descriptive definition. This example illustrates how explanatory equivalents can convey culturally specific meanings when a direct lexical correspondence is insufficient.

(T) Translational, contextualized, and textual equivalents

These equivalents convey the same or a very similar denotative meaning to that of a headword in a particular context and produce an adequate translation when substituted for the original expression (Karpinska, 2012: 87). However, a bilingual dictionary cannot include every possible contextual equivalent of a headword because a single lexical unit may occur in a wide range of contexts (Karpinska, 2012: 87–88).

The Uzbek adjective achchiq provides a useful illustration. Dirks lists such English equivalents as sour, bitter, hot, strong-tasting, and sharp, alongside figurative meanings such as caustic and scathing (Dirks, s.v. “achchiq”). The dictionary also gives context-specific examples: achchiq choy is rendered as “strong or bitter tea,” while achchiq qil- means “to be cross or angry.” These examples demonstrate that the appropriate English equivalent depends on the meaning activated by the context. Thus, bitter may be suitable in one context, whereas angry or cross is required in another.

(F) Functional, situational, and communicative equivalents

Although functional equivalents may resemble category (T) equivalents, functional equivalence is often achieved through means other than a straightforward translational equivalent of the headword. This may involve differences in grammatical categories or the use of idiomatic expressions whose literal structures differ considerably between the two languages (Karpinska, 2012: 88).

Adamska-Sałaciak argues that functional equivalence is required when it is impossible to provide an equivalent that is simultaneously semantic and grammatical, that is, one belonging to the same part of speech as the headword (Karpinska, 2012: 86). Zgusta likewise notes that functional equivalents can be used when translating proverbs and expressions, while literal translations and explanations of meaning may also be necessary (Karpinska, 2012: 86).

An illustrative example from Dirks’s dictionary is the Uzbek expression ko‘tar tuguningni, rendered as “Pack up your things and go!” (Dirks, s.v. “tugun”). The English expression conveys the communicative force of the Uzbek phrase rather than reproducing its literal structure. This example can therefore be interpreted as a functional equivalent, since the translation prioritizes the intended message in the relevant situation over formal correspondence.

In addition to the classification of equivalent types, a three-way distinction between degrees of equivalence is widely recognized in the literature: (1) full (absolute or perfect) equivalence; (2) partial equivalence; and (3) zero equivalence. Researchers note that zero equivalence is relatively uncommon in bilingual lexicography, full equivalence is even rarer, and partial equivalence is by far the most prevalent category (Karpinska, 2012: 88-89).

According to B. Svensén, full equivalence requires complete correspondence between lexical units in the source and target languages in terms of both meaning and usage. It is therefore as rare as absolute synonymy within a single language and is likely to be restricted to certain terminological units (Karpinska, 2012: 89). In cases of partial equivalence, correspondence in meaning and usage is incomplete. The missing semantic or usage-related features are generally compensated for by adding a gloss or explanatory note to the target-language equivalent.

L. Zgusta strongly supports this conclusion, observing that “the absolute and overwhelming majority of equivalents, regardless of the language pair concerned, belong to the category of partial equivalents” (Karpinska, 2012: 89). Consequently, bilingual lexicography deals primarily with varying

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degrees and forms of partial equivalence. This makes the four-category classification outlined above particularly useful for practical lexicographic analysis.

Lexicographic strategies for addressing non-equivalence. When equivalence is entirely absent, lexicographers traditionally resort to several strategies. In the context of compiling an L2–L1 dictionary, L. V. Shcherba identifies the following options: borrowing, creating a calque, and using a lexical unit of the native language figuratively. He concludes that, "regardless of the method employed, the most important thing is that concepts are borrowed" (Karpinska, 2012: 89).

A. Adamska-Sałaciak expands this list by proposing six possible lexicographic strategies for addressing problems of equivalence:

Providing a definition of the headword in the target language, thereby using an explanatory (E-type) equivalent.

Combining a partial equivalent with an explanatory gloss.

Offering two or more partial equivalents.

Providing an approximate cultural equivalent.

Supplying the headword's "extended syntagmatic range." This strategy is relevant when the translation equivalent extends beyond the lemma itself, thereby activating an F-type equivalent.

Introducing a neologism, that is, creating a new S-type equivalent. This is a last-resort strategy and, as the source puts it, one that "keeps the lexicographer awake at night" (Karpinska, 2012: 90).

The hierarchical ordering of these strategies is also significant. According to Adamska-Sałaciak, the lexicographer should first seek an S-type equivalent. If no such equivalent can be found, the lexicographer may resort either to an E-type equivalent, a strategy characteristic of older dictionaries, or to the provision of "several T-type equivalents together with relevant contexts," an approach adopted by many contemporary dictionaries (Karpinska, 2012: 88).

Furthermore, when no semantic equivalent is available, placing one or more T-type or F-type equivalents immediately after the headword is an entirely legitimate solution, as it may provide greater practical value to dictionary users.

Conclusion. The analysis shows that, although the metalexicographic literature presents types of equivalents as dichotomies, they can essentially be generalized into the four categories proposed by A. Adamska-Sałaciak: (S) semantic, (E) explanatory, (T) translational, and (F) functional equivalents (Karpinska, 2012: 87–88). Combined with the scale of equivalence degrees (full–partial–zero), this classification makes it possible to describe the relationship between a headword and its target-language unit along two dimensions: "what" (type) and "how much" (degree).

From a practical standpoint, the fact that partial equivalence is the dominant degree in bilingual lexicography (Karpinska, 2012: 89) requires the lexicographer to supplement (T) and (F) type equivalents with contextual indications, and (E) type equivalents with explanatory glosses. In cases of non-equivalence, the methods proposed by L. V. Shcherba and A. Adamska-Sałaciak (borrowing, calque, figurative use, explanation, gloss, cultural equivalent, extended syntagmatics, and innovation) are of clearly practical value. For Uzbek-English lexicography, the most promising direction is to compensate for partial equivalence in the entries of polysemous words in English-Uzbek dictionaries through glosses and contextual examples, and to give functional equivalents together with literal translations for realia and idiomatic units. In future research, the application of this classification to the English-Uzbek dictionary entries you provide could be a separate object of analysis.

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