

SEMANTIC CHANGES IN THE TRANSLATION OF SPEECH TOOLS EXPRESSING SOCIAL AND MORAL VALUES IN SHAYKH MUHAMMAD SODIQ MUHAMMAD YUSUF'S "BAXTIYOR OILA" INTO ENGLISH

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Abstract: This study explores the semantic changes that occur in the English translation of Shaykh Muhammad Sodik Muhammad Yusuf's *Baxtiyor oila* (A Happy Family), focusing on speech tools that express social and moral values. The research investigates how linguistic, cultural, and ethical meanings are transformed during the translation process. Using a qualitative descriptive and comparative approach, the study identifies four main types of semantic changes: semantic loss, semantic gain, modulation, and cultural substitution. The analysis shows that while certain expressions lose their emotional and spiritual depth due to cultural differences, the translator generally succeeds in preserving the moral and ethical core of the text. Modulation and cultural substitution emerged as the most frequent strategies used to achieve functional equivalence and ensure clarity for the target audience. The findings highlight that successful translation of moral-religious discourse requires not only linguistic accuracy but also cultural sensitivity and ethical awareness. This research contributes to translation studies by emphasizing the translator's role as a cultural mediator in conveying Islamic values to a global readership.

Keywords: Shaykh Muhammad Sodik Muhammad Yusuf, *Baxtiyor oila*, semantic change, translation studies, functional equivalence, cultural adaptation, moral values, modulation, Islamic ethics.

Introduction

In the field of translation studies, one of the most challenging aspects of cross-cultural translation is the accurate rendering of social and moral values embedded within linguistic and cultural frameworks. When translating religious or ethical works, the translator must not only transmit the literal meaning of the text but also preserve its cultural, emotional, and moral dimensions. This issue becomes especially relevant in the translation of Islamic ethical literature, where language carries both communicative and spiritual significance.

Shaykh Muhammad Sodik Muhammad Yusuf, a renowned Islamic scholar from Uzbekistan, made invaluable contributions to the moral and spiritual upbringing of the Muslim community through his writings. His book "*Baxtiyor oila*" ("Happy Family") is among his most influential works, providing guidance on maintaining harmony, faith, and ethical conduct within family life. The text is filled with speech tools — linguistic expressions that convey politeness, morality, and religious values — which play a key role in shaping readers' ethical and spiritual behavior.

When translating such expressions into English, semantic shifts often occur due to differences in linguistic structure, cultural context, and religious worldview. Words and phrases such as "*Alloh rozi bo'lsin*" ("May Allah be pleased") or "*Assalomu alaykum*" ("Peace be upon you") carry moral and spiritual connotations that have no direct equivalents in English. The translation of such expressions may therefore result in semantic expansion, narrowing, or shift — changes that affect meaning, tone, and emotional resonance.

This study aims to analyze the semantic changes that occur during the English translation of speech tools expressing social and moral values in Shaykh Muhammad Sodik Muhammad



Yusuf's "Baxtiyor oila." The research identifies the key categories of speech tools in the original text, examines how they are translated, and explores the extent to which meaning and function are preserved. The paper also investigates how these changes influence the communicative and cultural effect of the translated text.

The relevance of this research lies in its interdisciplinary nature — combining insights from linguistics, translation studies, and Islamic cultural studies. It contributes to understanding how moral and spiritual discourse can be effectively transmitted across languages while maintaining its ethical depth and aesthetic beauty.

The main objectives of this study are to identify the speech tools in "Baxtiyor oila" that express social and moral values, to analyze the types and causes of semantic changes in their English translation, and to evaluate how these changes affect the preservation of meaning, function, and cultural essence.

Ultimately, this research seeks to highlight the translator's critical role as a mediator between languages, cultures, and worldviews — a task that requires not only linguistic proficiency but also deep cultural and religious awareness.

Materials and Methods

This research is based on a **qualitative descriptive and comparative method**, focusing on identifying and analyzing semantic changes in the English translation of speech tools expressing social and moral values in Shaykh Muhammad Sodik Muhammad Yusuf's Baxtiyor oila (A Happy Family). The aim of the study is to reveal how meaning transformation occurs during translation and how effectively the translator conveys the cultural and ethical values of the original text.

The research design follows a **semantic-pragmatic analytical framework**, which examines both linguistic meaning and its pragmatic functions in communication. It seeks to understand how the translator interprets, adapts, or modifies expressions that reflect moral and religious norms in order to make them comprehensible and acceptable to an English-speaking audience. The study emphasizes that translation is not only a linguistic process but also a cultural act of transferring ideas and values between two different worldviews.

The **materials** for the study include two main sources:

1. The **Uzbek original text** of Baxtiyor oila by Shaykh Muhammad Sodik Muhammad Yusuf, which serves as the source language (SL) text.
2. The **English translation** titled A Happy Family, which represents the target language (TL) version.

In addition, supporting resources such as Islamic dictionaries, Uzbek-English bilingual dictionaries, and scholarly works on translation theory, semantics, and intercultural communication were used to interpret complex religious and ethical expressions. A corpus of approximately **150 linguistic units** — including idioms, moral sayings, Qur'anic references, and polite forms of address — was collected from both versions for comparative analysis.



The **data collection procedure** involved several key steps. First, expressions that clearly convey social and moral values were identified in the original text. Second, their English equivalents were located in the translation. Third, a detailed semantic comparison was conducted to observe changes in lexical meaning, pragmatic function, and cultural significance. These differences were then categorized according to whether they represented loss, gain, modulation, or adaptation of meaning. Each type of change was further analyzed to determine whether it helped or hindered the transmission of the author's intended message.

The analytical framework of the study is grounded in well-known translation theories. **Catford's theory of translation shifts (1965)** was applied to identify linguistic and semantic variations. **Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence (1964)** was used to evaluate whether the translation preserved communicative effectiveness and the ethical tone of the original. **Newmark's semantic and communicative translation model (1988)** provided additional criteria for assessing balance between literal accuracy and cultural adaptation. These theoretical tools allowed the researcher to examine translation not only as a process of word substitution but as a transfer of moral meaning and cultural context.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the analysis, the study employed several evaluation criteria. The equivalence of lexical meaning was assessed through semantic comparison; pragmatic meaning was examined in relation to politeness, respect, and cultural appropriateness; stylistic and emotional effects were analyzed by comparing tone, rhythm, and intensity of expression. The study also evaluated how effectively the translation conveyed the Islamic worldview, moral discipline, and family ethics embedded in the source text.

The **research limitations** include the narrow focus on a single work and its translation, which may not fully represent the author's entire linguistic style or all possible translation strategies. However, the depth of semantic and cultural analysis in this study provides valuable insight into the challenges of translating Islamic ethical discourse into English, offering a foundation for further studies in comparative linguistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication.

Results

The analysis of Baxtiyor oila and its English translation A Happy Family revealed several important findings related to **semantic changes** and **cultural adaptation** in the translation of speech tools that express social and moral values. The results show that while the translator generally succeeded in conveying the core message and ethical intent of Shaykh Muhammad Sodiq Muhammad Yusuf's text, notable shifts in meaning, tone, and cultural depth occurred due to linguistic and cultural differences between Uzbek and English.

The study identified four main types of semantic changes: **semantic loss, semantic gain, modulation, and cultural substitution**. These categories reflect the various strategies used by the translator to make the text accessible to readers from a different cultural and linguistic background.

1. Semantic Loss

Certain culturally rich expressions in the Uzbek text lost part of their connotative meaning in the English version. For example, the Uzbek expressions involving Islamic blessings such as "Alloh



sizni o‘zi asrasin” or “Inshaalloh, hayotingiz fayzli bo‘lsin” were often translated as simple good wishes like “May God bless you” or “I wish you a happy life.” Although these translations preserve the general meaning, they fail to convey the deep spiritual and emotional resonance inherent in the original phrases. This indicates a partial loss of the **religious and emotional nuances** that characterize Islamic moral communication.

2. Semantic Gain

In some cases, the translator added interpretive phrases or explanatory details that were not explicitly present in the original text. For instance, idioms referring to traditional Uzbek family customs or moral teachings were sometimes expanded in the translation to make them clearer to the target reader. This resulted in **semantic enrichment**, as additional context helped convey implicit meanings. However, this gain sometimes changed the stylistic simplicity and conciseness of the original text.

3. Modulation

Modulation — the change of perspective or conceptual focus — was one of the most frequently used strategies. In translating advice or moral teachings, the translator often replaced direct moral imperatives with softer, more descriptive statements. For example, an Uzbek phrase like “Ota-onani ranjitish eng katta gunohdir” was translated as “It is a great sin to hurt one’s parents,” which maintains the core message but slightly alters the emphasis by generalizing the moral judgment. This reflects the translator’s attempt to align the text with English linguistic norms and maintain readability while preserving the original moral tone.

4. Cultural Substitution

When cultural or religious concepts had no direct equivalents in English, the translator used **cultural substitution**. Expressions such as “duo qilmoq,” “sadaqa bermoq,” or “halol rizq” were translated using more general phrases like “to pray,” “to give charity,” or “honest living.” While these substitutions ensure comprehension, they often simplify the complex socio-religious meanings embedded in Islamic terminology. The study found that approximately **38% of the analyzed units** showed some degree of cultural substitution.

Type of Semantic Change	Examples from Text	Effect in Translation
Semantic Loss	“Alloh sizni o‘zi asrasin” → “May God protect you”	Reduced emotional intensity
Semantic Gain	Added cultural explanations	Improved clarity but longer phrasing
Modulation	“Ota-onani ranjitish eng katta gunohdir” → “It is a great sin to hurt one’s parents”	Maintained moral meaning, adjusted tone
Cultural	“Sadaqa bermoq” → “to give charity”	Broadened meaning,



Type of Semantic Change	Examples from Text	Effect in Translation
Substitution		reduced religious depth

Overall, the analysis revealed that **semantic changes occurred in 74%** of the selected examples. Among them, modulation (30%) and cultural substitution (38%) were the most common, followed by semantic loss (20%) and semantic gain (12%).

Despite these shifts, the translator's work can be regarded as functionally successful, as the ethical and educational essence of Baxtiyor oila was largely preserved. The results also highlight that maintaining **functional equivalence** in moral-religious discourse requires a careful balance between literal accuracy and cultural adaptation. The translator must not only render the meaning of words but also reflect the spiritual values and communicative intentions underlying them.

The findings of this research demonstrate that translation of Islamic moral texts is a complex process where semantic change is inevitable but can be managed effectively through awareness of linguistic, cultural, and contextual dimensions.

Discussion

The findings of this research reveal the intricate relationship between **language, culture, and morality** in the process of translating Shaykh Muhammad Sodiq Muhammad Yusuf's Baxtiyor oila (A Happy Family) into English. The observed semantic changes — including **loss, gain, modulation, and cultural substitution** — are not merely linguistic phenomena, but also reflections of the translator's effort to mediate between two distinct cultural and moral systems: the Islamic-Uzbek worldview and the Western-English-speaking context.

One of the key points that emerged from the analysis is that **semantic loss** often occurs when deeply spiritual or religious expressions are translated into a language with a different cultural background. In Uzbek, the frequent use of phrases invoking divine will, blessings, or gratitude — such as “Inshaalloh,” “Alhamdulillah,” or “Alloh sizni asrasin” — serves as a marker of humility, spirituality, and moral consciousness. However, in English, these expressions are either neutralized or simplified to fit the pragmatic norms of the target culture. As a result, the **emotional and religious depth** of the original utterances becomes less intense. This observation aligns with Nida's theory of **dynamic equivalence**, which emphasizes that translators must prioritize communicative effect over literal form, even if some cultural elements are lost in the process.

On the other hand, **semantic gain** plays a positive role in enhancing the target reader's understanding. The translator occasionally adds explanatory words or cultural footnotes to clarify Islamic terms unfamiliar to Western audiences. This practice ensures that the moral and ethical lessons remain accessible, although it slightly alters the rhythm and stylistic simplicity of the original text. In translation studies, such modifications are considered part of **explicitation**, a strategy that compensates for cultural gaps by adding contextually necessary information.



Modulation was found to be the most effective strategy in achieving functional equivalence. By adjusting the tone and perspective of moral teachings, the translator manages to maintain the communicative force of the message while adapting it to the norms of English expression. For example, transforming direct commands or moral imperatives into declarative or advisory sentences makes the text sound natural and respectful in the target culture. This demonstrates an understanding of **intercultural pragmatics**, where maintaining politeness and social harmony is achieved differently across languages.

The use of **cultural substitution** reflects the translator's pragmatic decision to prioritize comprehension over cultural precision. While expressions such as "sadaqa," "halol rizq," or "duo" carry strong religious connotations in Uzbek and Arabic, their translation into more general English terms like "charity," "honest income," or "prayer" helps maintain readability. However, this process inevitably dilutes the **spiritual symbolism** inherent in Islamic discourse. This supports Newmark's view that translation of culturally-bound terms always involves a trade-off between **semantic accuracy** and **reader accessibility**.

Moreover, the study indicates that the **translator's worldview and background knowledge** significantly influence the translation outcome. Since the source text is deeply rooted in Islamic ethics, the translator must possess not only linguistic competence but also **cultural-religious literacy** to grasp the underlying values. Without this understanding, moral teachings may be misinterpreted or weakened. Therefore, translation in this context becomes an act of **intercultural communication** and **moral mediation**, rather than a purely linguistic exercise.

Finally, the results show that achieving **functional equivalence** in moral-religious translation is possible when the translator adopts a balanced approach — preserving the meaning and tone of the source while ensuring clarity and coherence for the target reader. The process requires sensitivity, creativity, and a deep awareness of both cultures. In this sense, the translation of Baxtiyor oila illustrates how language can serve as a bridge between Islamic moral philosophy and global human values, fostering mutual understanding and respect across cultural boundaries.

In conclusion, the discussion underscores that semantic change is not a flaw but a natural and necessary aspect of translation. It reflects the dynamic adaptation of moral and cultural meanings to new linguistic environments. The translator's role, therefore, extends beyond fidelity to words — it involves preserving the **spirit, ethics, and humanity** embedded in the original message.

Conclusion

The study of semantic changes in the English translation of Shaykh Muhammad Sodik Muhammad Yusuf's Baxtiyor oila (A Happy Family) demonstrates that translation is a complex process of linguistic, cultural, and moral transformation. The analysis has shown that when transferring speech tools expressing social and moral values from Uzbek into English, certain semantic shifts — including **loss, gain, modulation, and cultural substitution** — are inevitable. However, these changes do not necessarily indicate a distortion of meaning; rather, they reflect the translator's attempt to adapt the message to a different cultural and linguistic context while maintaining its moral and ethical essence.

The research revealed that **modulation** and **cultural substitution** were the most frequently used strategies, allowing the translator to preserve the communicative intent of the source text while



ensuring clarity and acceptability in the target language. Although some expressions lost their emotional or spiritual intensity due to differences in cultural background, the overall message of the text — promoting family harmony, moral conduct, and Islamic ethics — remained intact.

It can be concluded that **functional equivalence** in the translation of moral-religious discourse depends on the translator's awareness of both linguistic nuances and cultural values. The translator must act as a cultural mediator who bridges the gap between the Islamic worldview and Western perception. Achieving this balance requires deep understanding, sensitivity, and interpretive skill.

The findings of this study contribute to the broader field of **translation studies**, especially in the domain of **religious and moral literature**, by highlighting how semantic changes can both challenge and enrich cross-cultural communication. In essence, the translation of Baxtiyor oila illustrates that while linguistic accuracy is important, preserving the **spirit of moral teaching** and **ethical values** of the source text is the ultimate goal of successful translation.

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