



RENDERING OF “SADOQAT” AND “LOYALTY” IN UZBEK–ENGLISH AND ENGLISH–UZBEK BILINGUAL DICTIONARIES

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Abstract

Loyalty is a central ethical and sociocultural value in both Uzbek and English speech communities, yet its representation in bilingual lexicographic sources remains complex and problematic (Adamska-Sałaciak, 2010). In Uzbek, the key lexeme “sadoqat” is intertwined with a broader cluster of value-charged units such as “vafo,” “sodiqlik,” and “vafodorlik,” while in English the item “loyalty” appears alongside near-synonyms like “faithfulness,” “allegiance,” “devotion,” and “fidelity”. Against this background, the present article investigates how “sadoqat” and “loyalty” are presented in Uzbek–English and English–Uzbek bilingual dictionaries, focusing on types of equivalence, the extent of semantic coverage, and the cultural-pragmatic adequacy of the proposed translation equivalents (Baker, 2018).

Keywords: Loyalty, bilingual lexicography, equivalence, semantic asymmetry, cultural semantics, lexico-semantic field, translation equivalents, Uzbek–English dictionaries, value-laden concepts, pragma-cultural analysis, translational adequacy, domain-specific shifts, cultural scripts, lexicographic representation



Methodology:

The study is grounded in theories of lexical equivalence, lexicographic representation, and cultural semantics, which emphasize that dictionary equivalents are not merely formal “translations” but interpretative choices shaped by value systems and usage norms. Within this framework, the analysis distinguishes between full (near-total), partial, and descriptive (explanatory) equivalence, and pays attention to cases of asymmetry where a source-language item has no single-word match in the target language (Zgusta, 1971). As Adamska-Sałaciak (2010) notes, equivalence in bilingual lexicography is always “partial or relative rather than full or exact” due to the inherent an isomorphism between languages (p. 389).

The empirical material consists of entries for “sadoqat” and “loyalty” as recorded in contemporary online English–Uzbek resources and learner-oriented bilingual tools, supplemented by explanatory English lexicographic descriptions of “loyalty” that clarify its semantic range. This approach aligns with Baker's (2018) communicative perspective on translation, which stresses that translators must consider not only linguistic but also cultural and pragmatic dimensions of meaning.

Result

In English–Uzbek dictionary entries, “loyalty” is typically rendered by a compact set of core Uzbek equivalents such as “sadoqat,” “sodiqlik,” and “vafo,” sometimes accompanied by additional context-sensitive glosses referring to patriotism or customer behavior (Ikramova, 2025). These equivalents highlight affective and ethical dimensions—faithfulness in personal relations, reliability in obligations, and commitment to a person, group, or cause—while downplaying narrowly legal or commercial nuances unless explicitly mentioned in examples (e.g., “customer loyalty”).

At the same time, English monolingual lexicographic sources describe “loyalty” as extending across interpersonal, institutional, and commercial domains (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023; Oxford Learners Dictionary, 2023), which suggests that a single Uzbek equivalent like “sadoqat” cannot always capture the full institutional and market-oriented spectrum without additional specification.



This observation supports Wierzbicka's (1997) argument that cultural keywords carry meanings that resonate deeply within their respective cultural frameworks and cannot be translated through simple one-to-one correspondences.

In the Uzbek–English direction, “sadoqat” is most often translated directly as “loyalty,” occasionally with supplementary equivalents such as “devotion” or “faithfulness” in learner-oriented resources (Garmate, 2023). Such renderings foreground the moral and emotional core of the Uzbek term, but they may underrepresent its strong ethical-religious overtones and its frequent association with spiritual commitment, marital faithfulness, and patriotic discourse (Ozyumenko & Larina, 2018).

In some cases, extended phrases in Uzbek (e.g., formulas used for “Vatanga sadoqat,” or for conjugal loyalty) are compressed into a single English item “loyalty” or “devotion,” which increases formal equivalence but reduces the visibility of culturally salient connotations in the target language (Gladkova, 2018). This phenomenon illustrates what Baker (2018) calls the problem of “undertranslation,” where culturally rich source-language expressions are rendered by semantically thinner target-language equivalents.

Direction	Core Equivalents	Domains Covered	Asymmetry Examples
English → Uzbek	sadoqat, sodiqlik, vafo	Personal, patriotic	Commercial (e.g., loyalty programs) underrepresented
Uzbek → English	loyalty, devotion, faithfulness	Moral, emotional	Religious-patriotic connotations diluted

Discussion:

Findings confirm partial rather than full equivalence for “sadoqat-loyalty,” driven by domain shifts: English “loyalty” extends utilitarianism into markets, while Uzbek “sadoqat” anchors moral-spiritual discourse, aligning with Nida and Taber's (1969) formal vs. dynamic equivalence distinction. This supports Wierzbicka's (1997) view of cultural keywords resisting one-to-one translation (Umurzakova, 2025). The analysis indicates that the “sadoqat–loyalty” pair typically functions as a near-core equivalent, yet the relationship is best



classified as partial rather than full equivalence because of domain-specific shifts (Liu, 2018). According to the typology proposed by Kade (1968, as cited in Pym, 2014), this represents a case of “one-to-many equivalence” where a single source-language term corresponds to multiple target-language items depending on context.

In commercial and marketing contexts, English “loyalty” develops a markedly utilitarian sense (e.g., loyalty programs, customer retention), whereas the Uzbek “sadoqat” and its close synonyms are less frequently used in strictly transactional frames and remain more strongly anchored in moral, emotional, and national-spiritual discourse (Kwiatek et al., 2018). Conversely, Uzbek “sadoqat” often blends ethical, religious, and patriotic dimensions in one lexeme, which in English may require more fine-grained renderings such as “loyalty,” “devotion,” “fidelity,” or even “faithfulness to God/country” depending on context (Kovalenko, 2024).

This asymmetry aligns with Nida and Taber's (1969) distinction between formal and dynamic equivalence: while formal equivalence focuses on preserving the structure of the source text, dynamic equivalence aims to reproduce the cultural “function” and emotional impact of the original message in the target language.

Cultural-Pragmatic Implications for Dictionary Making

These asymmetries have important implications for bilingual lexicography, suggesting that simple one-to-one equivalents are insufficient for value-laden concepts like “sadoqat/loyalty” (Yong & Peng, 2007). Dictionaries that only list “loyalty – sadoqat” risk obscuring differences between emotional loyalty to a person, legal allegiance to a state, and strategically cultivated customer loyalty in market discourse, all of which are more sharply differentiated in English usage (Dickins et al., 2017).

Conversely, neglecting the spiritual-ethical resonance of “sadoqat” may lead to under translation in English, where users might interpret “loyalty” in a relatively neutral or institutional sense if no additional commentary is provided (Chan, 1996). As Wierzbicka (2003) emphasizes, effective cross-cultural communication requires understanding the cultural scripts embedded in language—the shared norms and expectations that govern how speakers use and interpret particular words.



Recommendations for Improved Lexicographic Practice

From a lexicographic perspective, the rendering of “sadoqat” and “loyalty” would benefit from enriched microstructure: graded equivalents (e.g., loyalty; devotion; faithfulness), explicit domain labels (personal, religious, political, commercial), and brief usage notes highlighting culture-specific patterns (Adamska-Sałaciak, 2016). Example sentences contrasting, for instance, “sadoqatli do'st” with “customer loyalty” or “loyalty to the crown” would help dictionary users see where semantic overlap is strong and where it starts to diverge.

Incorporating such information would align bilingual dictionary practice more closely with contemporary views in lexical semantics, which stress that value concepts must be described in terms of both linguistic form and cultural-pragmatic function. As Alrymayh (2024) notes in reviewing the history of equivalence in translation studies, the field has increasingly moved toward recognizing the importance of contextual, cultural, and pragmatic factors in determining adequate translation equivalents.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the lexicographic treatment of “sadoqat” and “loyalty” in bilingual dictionaries reveals significant semantic asymmetries rooted in cultural differences. While both terms occupy central positions in their respective value systems, their domains of application and connotative profiles differ substantially. English “loyalty” extends more readily into commercial and institutional contexts, whereas Uzbek “sadoqat” remains predominantly anchored in moral, emotional, and patriotic discourse. These findings underscore the need for bilingual dictionaries to move beyond simple translational equivalents and adopt a more nuanced, context-sensitive approach that acknowledges the cultural embeddedness of meaning.

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