

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WHEN TRANSLATING INDEFINITE ARTICLES IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE

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Abstract. This article examines the linguistic and practical challenges involved in translating English indefinite articles (“a” and “an”) into the Uzbek language. English, as an article-based language, uses articles to convey specific grammatical and semantic meanings, such as indefiniteness, specificity, or countability. In contrast, Uzbek, a Turkic language, does not employ articles at all, which creates significant difficulties for translators and language learners when trying to preserve the meaning and nuance of the original text. The absence of direct equivalents often results in ambiguity or loss of information in translation, especially in contexts where the presence of an article in English signals new or nonspecific information. The paper explores how these issues can lead to misinterpretations and shifts in meaning and provides numerous examples from real translation cases to illustrate how such problems manifest. It also highlights the role of context, word order, and other grammatical markers that may partially substitute for articles in Uzbek. Furthermore, this study investigates strategies that can be used to compensate for the lack of articles, such as the use of demonstrative pronouns, quantifiers, or restructured sentences to preserve the intended meaning. Through analysis and comparison, the article aims to offer useful guidelines for linguists, translators, and language teachers to enhance their awareness and develop more accurate translation practices when dealing with indefinite articles. Ultimately, this work contributes to the broader field of contrastive linguistics and translation studies by shedding light on the structural differences

between English and Uzbek and offering practical solutions for one of the most common yet complex translation problems.

Keywords: *indefinite articles, Uzbek language, English grammar, translation issues, article omission, linguistic contrast, translation strategies, second language acquisition, grammatical differences.*

ПРОБЛЕМЫ ПЕРЕВОДА НЕОПРЕДЕЛЁННЫХ АРТИКЛЕЙ НА УЗБЕКСКИЙ ЯЗЫК

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Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются лингвистические и практические трудности перевода английских неопределённых артиклей (“a” и “an”) на узбекский язык. Английский язык, как артиклевый язык, использует артикли для выражения грамматических и семантических значений, таких как неопределённость, конкретность или исчисляемость. В противоположность этому, узбекский язык, принадлежащий к тюркской языковой семье, не имеет системы артиклей, что вызывает серьёзные затруднения у переводчиков и изучающих язык при попытке сохранить смысл и оттенки исходного текста. Отсутствие прямых эквивалентов часто приводит к двусмысленности или потере информации при переводе, особенно в случаях, когда артикли в английском указывают на новую или неопределённую информацию. В статье рассматриваются случаи неправильной интерпретации и смещения смысла, сопровождающиеся примерами из практики перевода. Также подчёркивается роль контекста, порядка слов и других грамматических маркеров, которые могут частично компенсировать отсутствие артиклей в узбекском языке. Кроме того, анализируются стратегии компенсации, такие как использование указательных

местоимений, количественных слов или перестроенных предложений для сохранения исходного смысла. Посредством анализа и сопоставления статья предлагает полезные рекомендации для лингвистов, переводчиков и преподавателей языка, с целью повышения точности при переводе неопределённых артиклей. В конечном итоге, данная работа вносит вклад в область контрастивной лингвистики и переводоведения, проливая свет на структурные различия между английским и узбекским языками и предлагая практические решения одной из самых распространённых и сложных переводческих проблем.

Ключевые слова: *неопределённые артикли, узбекский язык, грамматика английского языка, проблемы перевода, отсутствие артиклей, контрастивная лингвистика, переводческие стратегии, изучение второго языка, грамматические различия.*

NOANIQ ARTIKLLARNI O‘ZBEK TILIGA TARJIMA QILISHDA YUZAGA KELADIGAN MUAMMOLAR

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Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada ingliz tilidagi noaniq artikllar (“a” va “an”)ni o‘zbek tiliga tarjima qilishda yuzaga keladigan lingvistik va amaliy muammolar ko‘rib chiqiladi. Ingliz tili artikllarga asoslangan bo‘lib, artikllar aniqlik, umumiylik yoki sanaluvchanlik kabi grammatik va semantik ma’nolarni ifodalashda muhim rol o‘ynaydi. O‘zbek tili esa turkiy tillar oilasiga mansub bo‘lib, artikllar tizimiga ega emas. Shu sababli, tarjimonlar va til o‘rganuvchilar ingliz tilidan o‘zbek tiliga tarjima jarayonida asl matnning ma’no va nozik jihatlarini to‘liq yetkazishda qiyinchiliklarga

duch keladilar. Ingliz tilidagi artikllar yangi yoki noma'lum axborotni bildiruvchi belgilar sifatida xizmat qilgan hollarda, ularning o'zbek tilidagi bevosita muqobillari yo'qligi natijasida tarjimada ma'no noaniqligi yoki axborot yo'qolishi yuzaga keladi. Maqolada ushbu muammolar noto'g'ri talqinlar va ma'no siljishlariga qanday olib kelishi tahlil qilinadi va bu holatlar real tarjima misollarida yoritiladi. Shuningdek, o'zbek tilida artikllarning o'rnini qisman bosuvchi kontekst, so'z tartibi va boshqa grammatik vositalarning ahamiyati ko'rsatilgan. Maqolada artikllar yo'qligini qoplashda ishlatilishi mumkin bo'lgan strategiyalar – ko'rsatkich olmoshlar, miqdor bildiruvchi so'zlar yoki qayta tuzilgan gaplar orqali ma'noni saqlab qolish usullari ham o'rganiladi. Tahlil va taqqoslashlar asosida ushbu maqola lingvistlar, tarjimonlar va til o'qituvchilari uchun foydali tavsiyalarni taqdim etib, noaniq artikllarni tarjima qilishda aniqlikni oshirishga xizmat qiladi. Yakuniy natijada, bu ish ingliz va o'zbek tillari o'rtasidagi struktural farqlarni yoritish orqali qiyin tarjima muammolaridan biriga amaliy yechimlar taklif etgan holda kontrastiv tilshunoslik va tarjima tadqiqotlariga o'z hissasini qo'shadi.

Kalit so'zlar: noaniq artikllar, o'zbek tili, ingliz grammatikasi, tarjima muammolari, artikl tushib qolishi, tilshunoslik kontrasti, tarjima strategiyalari, ikkinchi tilni o'zlashtirish, grammatik farqlar.

INTRODUCTION

Languages differ greatly in how they express ideas, especially when it comes to grammar. One important grammatical feature in English is the use of *articles*. Articles like “a” and “an” are called *indefinite articles* because they refer to things that are not specific or are being mentioned for the first time. For example, in the sentence “I saw a dog,” the word “a” shows that the speaker is talking about one dog, but not a particular or known one. This small word gives extra meaning to the sentence.

However, in the Uzbek language, there are no articles at all. Uzbek speakers use other ways to show whether something is specific or general, such as word order, context, or using other words like demonstratives or numbers. Because of this big difference, translating English sentences that contain indefinite articles into Uzbek can

be very challenging. Sometimes, the meaning of the original sentence is lost, or the translated sentence becomes unclear or confusing.

This article explores the main problems that translators and learners face when dealing with English indefinite articles in translation. It focuses on how the absence of articles in Uzbek leads to difficulties in preserving the meaning and function of “a” and “an.” We also examine how context plays a big role in helping Uzbek speakers understand whether something is definite or indefinite. Real examples from translated texts will be included to show how these challenges appear in practice. Moreover, we will discuss different strategies that translators can use to deal with the lack of articles in Uzbek. These include using other words like demonstrative pronouns (“biror,” “biron”) or changing the sentence structure to keep the meaning clear. We will also explore how learners of English as a second language struggle with using indefinite articles correctly, and what teachers can do to help them improve.

By studying these issues, this article aims to give helpful advice to translators, language learners, and teachers. Understanding how English and Uzbek differ in this area can improve translation quality and language learning. This work also adds to the field of contrastive linguistics by comparing how two different languages express similar ideas in different ways.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of translating articles, particularly indefinite ones, from English into article-less languages such as Uzbek has been extensively discussed in translation theory and contrastive linguistics. English uses articles to express notions of definiteness, indefiniteness, generality, and countability¹. These grammatical features are absent in Uzbek, making direct translation highly problematic.

Lyons explains that languages without articles often rely on alternative grammatical tools such as word order, demonstratives, and contextual clues to express meaning². In Uzbek, there are no specific morphological markers that directly correlate

¹ Swan, Michael. *Practical English Usage*. Oxford UP, 2005.-P.87.

² Lyons, John. *Definiteness*. Cambridge UP, 1999.-P.67.

to English articles. According to Chesterman, this leads to ambiguity or semantic loss when translating from English into Uzbek³. Newmark emphasizes the need for adaptation strategies when translating into structurally different languages⁴. In the case of Uzbek, these may include using quantifiers like “bir” (a/one), or restructuring the sentence to emphasize newness or nonspecificity. Baker supports this by arguing that compensation through meaning is essential in translation, especially when dealing with grammatical gaps⁵. From a pedagogical perspective, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman discuss how learners from non-article languages often struggle with acquiring article usage, even at advanced levels⁶. Tashpulatova⁷ and Karimov⁸ have shown through local research that Uzbek-speaking learners frequently omit articles or use them incorrectly, often due to negative transfer from their native language.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at identifying and analyzing the major challenges involved in translating English indefinite articles (“a” and “an”) into Uzbek. The study relies heavily on contrastive linguistic analysis, comparing the structural and semantic roles of articles in English with the ways in which Uzbek expresses or omits such grammatical features. To conduct this analysis, a corpus of English texts rich in indefinite article usage was compiled from various sources, including literary works, ESL textbooks, dialogues, journalistic texts, and academic writings. These samples were then paired with their Uzbek translations (both official and student-generated) to identify patterns, translation strategies, and recurring challenges. The linguistic analysis focused on syntactic structures, noun phrase configurations, definiteness-indefiniteness distinctions, and referential meanings.

³ Chesterman, Andrew. *Memes of Translation: The Spread of Ideas in Translation Theory*. John Benjamins, 1997.-P.52.

⁴ Newmark, Peter. *A Textbook of Translation*. Prentice Hall, 1988.-P.21.

⁵ Baker, Mona. *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. Routledge, 2011.-P.112.

⁶ Celce-Murcia, Marianne, and Diane Larsen-Freeman. *The Grammar Book: An ESL/EFL Teacher's Course*. Heinle & Heinle, 1999.-P.53.

⁷ Tashpulatova, Nargiza. “Lingvistik Kontrastlarda Ingliz Artikllarining Tarjimasi.” *Language and Culture*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2015.-P.105.

⁸ Karimov, Aziz. “O‘zbek Talabalari uchun Ingliz Artikllarini O‘rganishdagi Qiyinchiliklar.” *Philology Today*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2017.-P.57.

Special attention was given to how English uses articles to mark new information, generalization, countability, and unspecified entities, whereas Uzbek tends to rely on word order, context, and lexical choices (e.g., the word “bir” for “one/a”) to convey similar meanings. Each example was annotated and categorized according to the function of the article and how its meaning was preserved or lost in the Uzbek translation.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The English indefinite articles “a” and “an” perform crucial grammatical and semantic functions, such as introducing new information, expressing countability, or identifying nonspecific nouns. In contrast, the Uzbek language lacks an article system entirely. This discrepancy results in various translation challenges, particularly related to meaning retention and contextual clarity. The analysis conducted in this study focused on several types of syntactic constructions, translation strategies, and the degree of meaning loss or transformation when translating from English to Uzbek. To illustrate these differences, we present Table 1, which compares common English sentences containing indefinite articles with their Uzbek translations and identifies the strategy used.

Table 1. Translation strategies for English indefinite articles in Uzbek

English Sentence	Uzbek Translation	Strategy Used	Notes
I saw a dog in the park.	Men bog‘da bir itni ko‘rdim.	Lexical substitution (bir)	“Bir” used to preserve indefiniteness; meaning largely retained.
She is a teacher.	U o‘qituvchi.	Omission	Uzbek relies on word order/context; no article or “bir” is used.
He bought a book yesterday.	U kecha bir kitob sotib oldi.	Lexical substitution (bir)	“Bir” adds clarity; equivalent meaning.

I need a pen.	Menga ruchka kerak.	Omission	No “bir” or equivalent; still understandable due to context.
A man walked into the room.	Xonaga bir odam kirdi.	Lexical substitution (bir)	Clear indication of new, nonspecific subject.
She has a dog and a cat.	Unda it va mushuk bor.	Omission	Omission acceptable; meaning still inferred, but definiteness lost.

From the table above, it is evident that Uzbek translators most often use three main strategies:

Lexical substitution using “bir” (meaning “one”) – This occurs when translators wish to emphasize the indefinite nature of the noun. However, “bir” can sometimes be interpreted numerically rather than grammatically, which can affect the subtlety of the message.

Omission – In many cases, the article is simply left out in the Uzbek version. While this is often sufficient due to the rich context of Uzbek syntax, meaning shifts or ambiguities can arise when context is limited.

Syntactic restructuring – Translators may also restructure the sentence, using modifiers or additional context to approximate the function of the article.

To deepen the analysis, let us examine the following example of ambiguity arising due to article omission. Example 1:

English: I spoke to a student who had an interesting question.

Uzbek: Men qiziqarli savol bergan talabaga gapirdim.

Here, the Uzbek version omits both “a” and “an.” While the translation is grammatically correct, it fails to emphasize the *non-specificity* of “a student” and the

newness of “an interesting question.” To preserve the original nuance, a more precise translation would be:

Improved Uzbek: Men bir qiziqarli savol bergan talabaga gapirdim. Example 2:

English: We need a plan before we proceed.

Uzbek (literal): Bizga reja kerak, keyin davom etamiz.

This sentence omits the article entirely, and while understandable, it could refer to any plan (specific or general). To preserve the indefinite and new nature of “a plan,” a clearer version would be: *Improved Uzbek: Bizga biror bir reja kerak, keyin davom etamiz.* This demonstrates how quantifiers like “biror bir” (any/some) can sometimes substitute for articles, especially in formal or written texts.

Table 2: Problems Arising from Article Omission in Translation

Problem Type	Example Context	Consequence in Translation	Recommended Strategy
Ambiguity	“A doctor entered the room.” → “Shifokor kirdi.”	Could imply known or specific doctor	Use “bir” to clarify indefiniteness
Meaning loss	“He gave a talk about science.”	No sense of novelty or generality in Uzbek	Restructure or use quantifiers
Overuse of “bir”	“He is a teacher.” → “U bir o‘qituvchi.”	Sounds awkward or numeric in Uzbek	Omit “bir” when profession is clearly stated

This table highlights that over-reliance on “bir” can lead to stylistic problems in Uzbek, while complete omission may result in semantic gaps. The translator must balance between the grammatical function of articles in English and the natural flow of Uzbek. The discussion also reveals that article translation difficulties are more prominent in texts where the noun phrase introduces new, unfamiliar, or generic entities. For example, in academic or narrative texts, article usage can strongly

influence whether something is interpreted as new information or shared knowledge.

In student translation samples, the most common errors included:

- Inserting “bir” unnecessarily in expressions like professions or roles.
- Omitting “bir” where it was needed to convey newness.
- Failing to differentiate between singular count nouns and mass nouns due to lack of article awareness.

To address these challenges, translation training programs should incorporate specific modules that focus on the functions of English articles and their Uzbek equivalents. Exercises involving back-translation, contextual guessing, and sentence restructuring can help learners develop intuition about when and how to indicate indefiniteness in Uzbek. The analysis demonstrates that translating indefinite articles into Uzbek is not merely a grammatical challenge but a semantic and pragmatic one. A deep understanding of the communicative role of articles is essential for accurate and meaningful translation. The findings reinforce the importance of contextual sensitivity, lexical creativity, and awareness of structural differences between languages in achieving high-quality translations.

CONCLUSION

Translating the English indefinite articles “a” and “an” into Uzbek is a difficult task because Uzbek does not have articles at all. This can cause confusion or loss of meaning when trying to show that something is new, unknown, or not specific. In some cases, the word “bir” (meaning “one”) can help, but it does not always work the same way as English articles. Sometimes, the article is simply left out in Uzbek, which may change the meaning or make the sentence unclear. To translate better, it is important to understand how articles work in English and use other tools like word order, context, or extra words in Uzbek to keep the original meaning. This article shows that careful thinking and smart strategies are needed to translate articles correctly and clearly between the two languages. This can help students, translators, and teachers do a better job and understand the differences between English and Uzbek grammar.

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