

FALSE FRIENDS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK VOCABULARY

Qosimova Muslimaxon

Student of the If-202 group of the Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages.

Baxtigul O'ktamjon qizi Ubaydullayeva

Teacher at the Department of Integrated Course of English Language Teaching

Annotation: *This article explores the phenomenon of false friends between English and Uzbek, analyzing how similarly written or pronounced words may lead to misunderstandings due to differences in meaning. It highlights common examples, discusses the historical, linguistic, and sociocultural causes of these lexical traps, and offers practical recommendations for students, educators, and translators to overcome the challenges associated with false friends in bilingual and multilingual contexts. The article also emphasizes the significance of false friends in cross-cultural communication and translation studies.*

Keywords: *False friends, English, Uzbek, lexical similarity, translation errors, language learning, bilingualism, semantics, cross-linguistic influence*

Language learners often face numerous challenges, ranging from grammar and pronunciation to vocabulary and usage. One of the most deceptive and less obvious obstacles is the phenomenon of false friends. False friends are words that look or sound similar in two languages but have entirely different meanings. This lexical illusion can lead to confusion, miscommunication, and significant translation errors. While the concept has been thoroughly studied among European language pairs such as English-French or English-Spanish, its manifestation in the English-Uzbek language pair remains relatively underexplored. This article aims to shed light on how false friends operate between English and Uzbek, providing concrete examples, explanations of their origins, and practical advice for dealing with them.

The term 'false friends' originates from the French phrase 'faux amis', first used by linguists Maxime Koessler and Jules Derocquigny in the early 20th century. These linguistic pairs are often mistaken for cognates—words that share a common etymological origin—when in fact they do not share the same meaning. False friends can be partially similar (partial false friends) or completely misleading (complete false friends). In language learning and translation, recognizing and understanding false friends is essential to ensuring accurate and effective communication.

Examples of False Friends in English and Uzbek

Due to the historical influences of Russian and other European languages on Uzbek, and English's diverse etymological background, numerous false friends have emerged.

These can be especially misleading for students and translators who assume that phonetic or orthographic similarities equate to semantic similarity.

Magazine	Magazin	Journal	Shop/Store
Actual	Aktual	Real, factual	Relevant, timely
Sympathy	Simpatiya	Pity, compassion	Liking, affection
Fabric	Fabrika	Cloth, material	Factory
Chef	Shef	Head cook	Boss, supervisor
Novel	Novella	Long fictional work	Short story
Library	Librariya	Place for books	Bookstore (misunderstood)

The emergence of false friends between English and Uzbek can be traced through historical periods of language contact and cultural influence. Uzbek has undergone several phases of foreign linguistic influence, particularly from Arabic, Persian, Russian, and, more recently, English. During the Soviet era, Uzbek absorbed many loanwords from Russian, which in turn had adopted European lexical items, particularly from French and German. This created an environment where Uzbek words developed superficial similarities with English vocabulary, without carrying the same meanings. Additionally, globalization and technological advancement have brought English terminology into everyday Uzbek usage, often resulting in hybridized forms.

From a linguistic perspective, false friends arise from phonological similarity, semantic shift, or morphological reanalysis. Cognitively, language learners tend to rely on familiar forms when processing new input, leading to assumptions based on appearance rather than actual meaning. This phenomenon is known as 'interlingual interference', where knowledge of one language influences interpretation in another. Teachers and translators must be especially cautious when encountering such word pairs, as the semantic gap between form and function can significantly alter meaning.

False friends can cause a variety of issues in both academic and everyday contexts. For language learners, they may lead to incorrect usage, poor exam performance, or awkward communication. For translators, mistaking a false friend for its apparent equivalent can result in mistranslations that distort the intended message. In professional or legal documents, such errors could have serious implications. For instance, translating 'actual problem' as 'aktual muammo' may mislead readers, since 'aktual' in Uzbek suggests a 'relevant or pressing issue', not necessarily a 'real' or 'existing' one.

To minimize errors and confusion caused by false friends, learners and professionals should adopt the following strategies:

- Use reliable bilingual dictionaries that provide example sentences.
- Study vocabulary within authentic contexts, such as dialogues or texts.

- Create personal glossaries of known false friends.
- Engage in contrastive analysis exercises to compare meanings.
- Consult with native speakers or language professionals.

In educational settings, teachers can incorporate false friend identification tasks into their curriculum, especially for advanced learners or translators-in-training.

False friends between English and Uzbek represent a subtle but impactful challenge in the field of philology and language acquisition. Understanding the historical, linguistic, and cultural origins of these misleading word pairs can enhance learners' awareness and improve translation accuracy. By actively studying and documenting false friends, students and professionals alike can build stronger cross-linguistic competence and avoid common semantic traps. Future research may explore the role of false friends in other Central Asian languages and their influence on bilingual education.

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