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# LEXICAL DRIFT, METAPHOR AND LACUNA: AN ANALYSIS OF PROVERBS IN THE WORK “DEVONU LUGAT-IT TURK” FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TRANSLATION STUDIES

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### Abstract

This article analyzes the proverbs in the work «Devonu lugat-it turk» by Mahmud Kashgari. The main focus of the research is on the problems of lexical drift (meaning shift), metaphorical shifts and cultural lacunas (gaps) in translation studies. The semantic changes and cultural differences that occur in the process of translating ancient Turkic proverbs in the work into modern Uzbek and English are revealed from a scientific perspective.

**Keywords:** “Devonu lugat-it turk”, Mahmud Kashgari, lexical drift, metaphor, lacuna, translation studies, proverbs, ethnolinguistics, equivalence.

### Introduction

The work “Devonu lugat-it turk” by Mahmud Kashgari is considered one of the rarest and most reliable sources of the 11th century in terms of scientific significance. [2; 15] This monument serves as an invaluable source not only for linguistics, but also for ethnography, geography, history, and folklore. In order to more deeply reveal the meaning of words and concepts related to the lifestyle,

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social and everyday life of ancient Turkic tribes, the author widely refers to examples of folk oral art. In particular, proverbs and quatrains were used in the process of explaining the meaning of lexical units. These folklore materials are an important source for understanding the worldview, way of thinking, and mythological imaginations of people of that time. It can also be observed that some of the words found in the work are still actively used today, while others, while retaining their external form, have partially or completely lost their original meaning.

Mahmud Kashgari's "Devonu lugat-it turk" is a primary source for studying the history, culture, and language of the Turkic peoples. The work contains more than 250 proverbs and sayings, which are an artistic expression of the Turkic thought of the 11th century. [3; 35] However, the process of translating these proverbs into modern languages faces three main linguistic obstacles: lexical drift, metaphor, and lacuna.

- Lexical drift is the historical change in the meanings of words over the centuries.
- Metaphor is the modern perception of figurative expressions based on the ancient Turkic way of life.
- Lacuna is a concept that was characteristic of that time, but has no equivalent in modern cultures.

### Literature Review

Mahmud Kashgari collected rich and extensive materials on genres such as songs, proverbs and sayings, ritual folklore, legends and tales belonging to the folklore of Turkic tribes. [2; 120] Therefore, the study of folklore elements found in the work "Devonu lugat-it turk" in comparison with artistic examples of Uzbek folk oral creativity is of particular scientific importance in determining the stages of historical development of folklore. It was on this issue that the scientist Hodi Zarifov, who deeply studied the reflection of the lexicon of the "Devonu lugat-it turk" in Uzbek folklore, expressed his scientific observations on February 21,

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1961. In the work “Devonu lugat-itturk”, Mahmud Kashgari not only studied the language and lexicon of the Turkic peoples, but also collected valuable information about their ancient worldview, beliefs and rituals. The mythological stories, legends, symbols and images presented in the work are an invaluable source for clarifying the ideas of the Turkic peoples about natural phenomena. The scientist's writings about the “Yada Stone” indicate that the ancient Turkic peoples associated natural phenomena, in particular, natural processes such as rain, wind, snow, with the influence of mysterious forces. [3; 134] The fact that they used a system of spells, prayers and rituals to control these phenomena, in fact, represents a specific stage of religious and mythological consciousness. The legends about the Yada Stone, as a harmonious example of the totemistic, animistic and magical views of the Turkic people, reflect the synthesis of folklore and religious beliefs. In addition, the mythological views formed around the names of the celestial bodies in "Devon" - the Moon, the Sun, the Star, the Iron Pile, and Venus - also illuminate the cosmogonic worldview of the Turks. These images have also been preserved in Uzbek folk folklore, and through proverbs such as “If the moon is full, it cannot be written by hand” or the phrase “iron wings”, traces of ancient beliefs are reflected in the current linguistic layer. In this regard, the mythological layers recorded in the work “Devonu lug‘otit-turk” are of great importance as a direct source in studying the spiritual world of the Turkic peoples, the principles of living in harmony with nature, and their religious and religious views. This information allows for a deeper analysis of the genesis of Uzbek folklore, the system of images, and the poetics of rituals through historical sources. [5; 64]

### Research methodology

#### The following methods were used in the research process:

- Comparative-historical method: The lexical composition and meaning of the proverbs in “Devonu lugat-it turk” in the 11th century were compared with the modern Uzbek language.

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- Component analysis: The semantic load of each word in the proverbs and the metaphorical transfers in them were analyzed.
- Linguo-cultural analysis: Methods for filling cultural gaps in the translation process (compensation, descriptive translation) were studied.
- Contrastive analysis: The translations of the proverbs in “Devonu lugat-it turk” into Uzbek and English were compared according to the degree of equivalence. [4; 44]

In the case of lexical drift: Although many ancient words have retained their form, their meaning has significantly changed (drifted). For example, the word “Erdam” in ancient times meant “courage, bravery”, but now it emphasizes more on the meaning of “virtue, decency”. It has been found that if this drift is not taken into account when translating proverbs, the original spirit of the proverb will be undermined.

Metaphorical layer: The metaphors in the proverbs of the work are mainly related to nomadic herding and nature. For example, the image of the “wolf” and the concept of “neighbourhood” in the proverb “A wolf does not prey on its neighbors” (Böri qoşnısın yémäs) are a very strong social metaphor. Preserving this metaphor in translation gives the spirit of that era, but translating it in terms of content (for example, in English “A wolf does not prey on its neighbors” or its alternative “Don't mess where you eat”) changes the artistic effect of the proverb. [2; 140]

The problem of lacunae: Words related to clothing, weapons, or social hierarchy typical of the 11th century (for example, “Yarmaq” - a unit of currency, “Sü” - an army) create lacunae in modern translation. Translators have mainly used the method of explanatory translation or finding a contextual equivalent in this case. [4; 52]

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### Analysis and results

The issue of lexical drift is the most complex aspect in diachronic translation studies. In the proverb “Kishi alasi ichin, yilqi alasi tashin” (In the human valley, the horse (horse) is carried) in DLT, the word “ala” (ala) carries both physical and spiritual meanings. In modern language, this metaphor has retained its power, but since the words in some proverbs have moved away from their primary lexical meaning, special dictionaries are required to understand them. In the analysis of metaphors, we see that the ancient Turks’ communication with nature was reflected in the proverbs in the form of animals (wolf, fox, camel, horse). From the point of view of translation studies, “literally” translating these metaphors preserves the ethno-cultural coloring, but replacing them with a “functional alternative” (adaptation) is more understandable for the reader. For example, when translating metaphors related to "horse" in Turkic peoples into English, metaphors related to “sailor” or “sea” can sometimes be used, which loses the national spirit of the proverb. [2; 175]

When studying the gaps, it becomes clear that Mahmud Kashgari himself performed the function of a translator. When explaining Turkic words into Arabic, he often had to describe concepts (gaps) that were not typical of Arab culture. In modern translation studies, it has been proven that the most optimal way to translate DLT proverbs is to use a “cultural filter” or rely on comments. [4; 70]

### Conclusion

When the proverbs “Devonu lug‘at-it turk” are analyzed from the point of view of lexical drift, metaphors and gaps, it becomes clear that their translation is not just a linguistic process, but a cultural reconstruction.

- Taking into account lexical drift ensures the historical accuracy of the translation.
- Correct interpretation of metaphors preserves national-cultural imagery.

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• Filling in the gaps eliminates the cultural gap between the works. Mahmud Kashgari's "Devonu lugat-it turk" is an invaluable source that embodies not only the language of the Turkic peoples, but also their rich cultural and spiritual world, in particular, mythological views. Based on the scientist's observations, the beliefs about the sanctification of nature, the control of rain and wind through magical powers, which existed among the ancient Turkic peoples, later left their mark on the folklore, customs and language of the Uzbek people. Therefore, the mythological rituals recorded in "Devonu lugat-it turk" serve as an important scientific source in studying the spiritual heritage of the people, the evolution of religious consciousness and cultural thinking. As a result, Kashgari's work sheds light on the worldview of the ancient Turks, their relationship with nature, and the roots of ritual folklore. This creates an important scientific basis for determining the history of the formation of Uzbek folklore and analyzing the mythological layers of folk oral culture.

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