

TRANSLATING TERMS IN THE SEMANTIC FIELD OF MA'NAVIYAT IN LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL PUBLIC DISCOURSE

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Abstract. This article examines translation relations involving terms and terminological expressions in the semantic field of *ma'naviyat* within formal legal and institutional public discourse. The material consists of the Uzbek and English versions of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and two language versions of an official report published on 19 January 2021. Six short pairs of expressions purposively selected from these documents are compared through contextual, componential, and pragmatic analysis. The analysis distinguishes correspondence in lexical form, conceptual scope, discourse function, and genre appropriateness. It identifies functional differences between the preamble and normative articles of the legal text and examines explanatory renderings of expressions associated with *ma'naviyat* in the official report. The observations provide a qualitative description of selected contexts rather than a statistical generalisation about entire genres. The article recommends avoiding the automatic classification of translation variants as either errors or fully equivalent renderings, recording document genre separately from internal discourse acts, and formulating hypotheses for testing in a broader parallel corpus.

Keywords: *ma'naviyat*, cross-genre discourse, parallel text, translation, semantic equivalence, legal term, publicistic discourse, explanatory rendering, context.

Introduction

The translation of items belonging to the semantic field of *ma'naviyat* can reveal the relationship between conceptual scope and textual function. Finding a dictionary equivalent does not establish that an item performs exactly the same function in the text. Acknowledging a value, guaranteeing a right, and encouraging the public to act in a particular way are different communicative acts. Analysis within a specialised parallel corpus must therefore go beyond placing words side by side and examine the discursive functions assigned to them.

Biber and Conrad's distinction between register and genre offers a methodological framework for comparing text types [1]. In this article, that distinction informs the separate analysis of genre at document level and the discourse function performed by a particular passage. The central question is how a concept associated with *ma'naviyat* is expressed in legal and public-facing institutional texts, and which aspects of that concept are made explicit in translation.

The study aims to describe translation relations using a small, verifiable sample from existing bilingual sources. It does not seek to revise the English versions or provide a legal assessment, but to explain their relationship to the Uzbek items in linguistic terms. Its contribution lies not in presenting individual examples as general regularities, but in demonstrating when meaning, genre, and pragmatic function need to be examined separately.

Theoretical Approach

Baker discusses the potential of corpus methods in translation studies, while Johansson explores how multilingual corpora can be used to investigate cross-linguistic similarities and differences [2; 3]. On this basis, a counterpart found in parallel texts is initially treated as an observed translation choice. Its suitability for other genres requires separate evidence. Publication on an official website establishes the institutional status of a translation, but does not in itself demonstrate that a universal terminological standard exists for every item.

The analysis distinguishes four aspects of equivalence: the concept being named, its semantic scope, the communicative function, and genre-appropriate expression. A translation may preserve the

general conceptual orientation while making one aspect more explicit. Another rendering may be very close in form yet strengthen or weaken the discourse effect. Reducing these distinctions to a simple opposition between correct and incorrect limits the explanatory value of the analysis.

Martin and White's approach to evaluative meaning in discourse provides a general basis for identifying the evaluative layer [4]. Within this article, evaluation is examined by identifying who or what is described positively or negatively. The relationship between positive vocabulary and the author's claim is then considered: naming a value, endorsing it, and mobilising an audience around it are not treated as the same phenomenon.

Materials and Research Methods

The first source pair comprises the Uzbek and English texts of the Constitution published on the official national portal. Items were selected from the preamble and Articles 35 and 52 [5; 6]. The second pair consists of the report on spiritual and educational work published on the President's official website on 19 January 2021 and its English version [7; 8]. The source texts were checked on 13 October 2026. The observations relate specifically to those web versions.

The sample consists of six pairs of short expressions. It is not a complete corpus covering all items in the field of *ma'naviyat*, but a small purposive sample demonstrating the analytical method. Items were selected on the basis of conceptual relevance, verifiable segment correspondence across the two languages, and their capacity to illustrate different discourse functions. Because the documents differ in publication date, text type, and production circumstances, the observed differences cannot be attributed to genre alone.

The official report is provisionally classified here as institutional publicistic material: it reports an event, includes excerpts from a speech, and communicates evaluative content to a public audience. This classification does not equate it with an independently produced newspaper analysis or a literary text. Although the Constitution is a formal legal document, its preamble and rights-establishing articles have different internal functions. The comparison therefore operates both between documents and within documents.

Table 1. Short parallel expressions selected from the examined sources

Code and source	Uzbek form	English form
H1. Preamble [5; 6]	<i>milliy va umuminsoniy qadriyatlariga</i>	national and universal values
H2. Article 35 [5; 6]	<i>vijdon erkinligi</i>	freedom of conscience
H3. Article 52 [5; 6]	<i>ma'naviy va madaniy salohiyatini</i>	spiritual and cultural potential
P1. Figurative speech excerpt [7; 8]	<i>ma'naviyatdir</i>	ethical enlightenment
P2. Organisational context [7; 8]	<i>ma'naviy-ma'rifiy ishlar</i>	spiritual and educational work
P3. Educational content [7; 8]	<i>fikr tarbiyasini</i>	nurturing of reason

Each item was first read in its own context and then compared with the corresponding English segment. Inflected forms from the original Uzbek text are retained in the table, while the subsequent commentary addresses their conceptual content. Where no separate evidence established translation direction, the existence of two versions was recorded without making assumptions about their order of production. Source numbers and article or passage locations are provided to make the analysis traceable.

The table does not present complete translations of independent sentences; it shows contextually established correspondences between short forms in the sources. The H codes identify items from the legal source, while the P codes identify items from the institutional report. The semantic and pragmatic assessments that follow are interpretations developed in this article, not conclusions supplied by the sources. In the P group especially, correspondence may involve a broader phrase or sentence rather than an isolated word.

Results: Functional Differences within the Legal Text

The location of H1 is crucial to the analysis: it occurs in the preamble within a context expressing commitment to shared values [5; 6]. In the interpretation proposed here, the expression signals the document's axiological orientation—that is, the values acknowledged as foundational. It should not be equated with a term defining the precise scope of a right or obligation. At this point, membership of the semantic field of *ma'naviyat* and status as a narrowly defined legal term must be distinguished. H2 is examined separately as an expression naming a specific right. Its context concerns the guarantee of that right and the relationship to belief [5; 6]. The primary function is not to praise a positive personal quality, but to name a protected legal concept. Assessment of the translation should therefore prioritise the preservation of conceptual scope and the normative relationship over imagery or rhetorical effect. The legal context provides the basis for determining the expression's terminological stability.

The juxtaposition of *ma'naviy* and *madaniy* in H3 indicates that the spiritual and cultural components should not be collapsed into a single meaning. The expression occurs in a sentence related to education and the upbringing of generations [5; 6]. On the interpretation supported by this context, the translation foregrounds the collective potential of a people rather than an individual's inner experience. This observation suggests that expressions associated with *ma'naviyat* should not automatically be interpreted solely in terms of individual religious experience.

Comparison within the H group shows that the formal legal genre does not involve a single uniform discourse function. Declarative acknowledgement of values, naming a right, and describing collective potential call for different analyses. Assigning all items a single translation strategy merely because they occur in a legal text would therefore be methodologically weak. A more appropriate solution is to include passage location and discourse act in corpus metadata alongside document genre.

Results: Explanatory Renderings in Institutional Public Discourse

In P1, *ma'naviyat* forms part of a figurative comparison concerning social life; the English version expresses the concept through a two-word rendering [7; 8]. In the interpretation proposed here, the translation makes the ethical and enlightenment-related orientation more lexically explicit. Greater explicitness, however, is not equivalent to full preservation of meaning. Because the broad scope of the Uzbek item in this speech depends on the entire paragraph, a final quality judgement cannot be based on the forms in the table alone.

Analysis of the figurative passage requires two levels. The first identifies which aspect of the concept is foregrounded in the counterpart. The second examines the imagery, comparison, and evaluation surrounding that concept. In principle, clarification at the first level may either preserve or alter the rhetorical effect at the second. The presence of an explanatory rendering therefore does not automatically mean that translation quality has improved or deteriorated.

P2 expresses a process associated with *ma'naviyat* in the context of organised activity. The English form presents spiritual and educational components separately [7; 8]. Comparison with P1 shows that lexical solutions within the same document can vary with function. This does not, however, justify a direct inference about the translator's conscious strategy. Such a claim would require translator commentary, an editing history, or other additional evidence.

In P3, the Uzbek expression conveys a meaning related to intellectual education, while the English counterpart foregrounds an aspect close to the development of reasoning [7; 8]. Under this

interpretation, the relationship between thought, reason, education, and development becomes the object of analysis. Rendering one word as a phrase, or a nominal form as an expression of process, is not inherently an error. The important question is how consistently the educational orientation established in the discourse is conveyed.

The solutions observed in the P group demonstrate the limitations of searching the field of *ma'naviyat* through a single English keyword. A search based on only one counterpart may fail to retrieve some corresponding segments. Corpus searches should therefore combine concept codes, translation variants, and contextual labels. At the same time, automatically adding every new variant as a synonym would be inappropriate: semantic proximity must be supported by manually checked examples.

Cross-Genre Comparison and Discussion

The principal difference in the sample is better explained through the function of each item in the text than through an increase or decrease in the number of words. In a context naming a right, precision of reference and normative scope is central, whereas public-facing information also requires analysis of evaluation, explanation, and rhetorical effect. This is not a statistical statement about legal or publicistic genres as a whole, but a conclusion drawn from a functional comparison of the selected passages.

Three questions are useful when recording semantic shifts. First, which semantic feature has been preserved, added, or backgrounded? Second, has the function of informing, persuading, or guiding the addressee been maintained? Third, can the change be explained by the grammatical and lexical resources of the other language, or does it affect conceptual scope? These questions help distinguish a translation transformation from a translation-quality error.

Rather than entering every occurrence of *ma'naviyat* under a single translation equivalent, the article proposes a terminology record linked to genre and context. The record should retain a concept description, the selected counterpart, the source segment, the discursive function, usage restrictions, and the status of the counterpart. Observed translations, expert recommendations, and candidates for future verification must be kept distinct. This prevents the corpus from conflating descriptive evidence with prescriptive advice.

The findings are limited by the small sample and its reliance on only two document pairs. Six items cannot cover all translation variants, historical periods, or the internal diversity of either genre. Moreover, several items come from the same document and therefore cannot be treated as independent observations for statistical analysis. Frequencies, percentages, and the strength of any genre effect were not calculated; deriving them from these observations would be unjustified.

For subsequent research, the article proposes a testable hypothesis concerning the demand for conceptual precision in expressions naming legal norms and the co-occurrence of explication and evaluation in public-facing explanatory texts. Testing it would require independent documents from different organisations, authors, and periods within each genre. Genre labels alone cannot support causal conclusions unless translation direction and editorial conditions are also controlled.

Conclusion

The qualitative analysis of six examined parallel items indicates that lexical correspondence and discursive correspondence within the semantic field of *ma'naviyat* need to be assessed separately. Within the legal text itself, declarative expressions of values, the naming of a specific right, and descriptions of collective potential perform different functions. Items in the institutional report occur in figurative statements, descriptions of organised activity, and educational explanations. These distinctions require separate annotation of document genre and segment function.

In practical terms, translation counterparts should be stored together with their concepts and contexts. Explanatory expansion should not automatically be treated as an error, and a form found in an official source should not be recommended across all genres without further examination. The interpretations

offered here apply to a limited sample and do not constitute general genre regularities. Their principal value lies in generating research questions and explicit annotation criteria for testing in a larger specialised parallel corpus.

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