

Classification of Terms Used in International Logistics and Their Translation Challenges

Bozorbekov Ahmadbek Sohijjon ugli

(PhD) Doctor of Philosophy in Philological Sciences, DSc student

Email: abozorbekov@gmail.com

Abstract:

The dynamic evolution of the logistics sector is a key guarantee for the smooth and continual movement of goods in international turnover of goods. The functional and semantic aspects of logistics terminology combine to make a very diverse and intricate system that expands across many disciplines. The article also analyzes the main directions of modern logistics, as well as semantic and functional classification of different definitions widely used in international trade, such as Bill of Lading (B/L), FOB, CIF, Incoterms and Freight Forwarding. It also looks into the problems of translation and interpretation of these terms explaining in detail the need for a correct translation of these terms in connection with the Uzbek language. An interdisciplinary approach and systems based on international standards for ensuring clarity and mutual understanding of such terminology are required.

Keywords: Logistics, terminology, bill of lading (B/L), FOB, CIF, Incoterms, freight forwarding, functional classification, semantic classification, international trade, translation challenges, intercultural communication.

Introduction

Logistics terminology encompasses specific information essential for the successful execution of international trade operations. These terms describe crucial factors that interact at each stage of a transaction. For instance, terminology used in areas such as transportation, customs procedures, trade contracts, and document management plays a vital role in ensuring clear agreements between parties. Terms like "Bill of Lading" (B/L) or "FOB" (Free on Board) clearly define the responsibilities and rights between exporters and importers, facilitating the implementation of mutual agreements. For example, under an "FOB" contract, the exporter must prepare the goods at the loading port for shipment onto a vessel or other means of transport. Under such terms, the exporter only handles the placement of goods at the port, while all subsequent risks and costs transfer to the importer. The correct and precise application of such terms ensures the efficient conduct of all trade operations, as each party understands its responsibilities and duties.[1]

Moreover, other terms widely used in international trade simplify trading processes. For instance, the term "**CIF**" (**Cost, Insurance, and Freight**) denotes the exporter's obligation to deliver goods to a specified port, pay transportation costs, and provide insurance. The semantic aspects of this term are clear, as the exporter is responsible for covering all transportation and insurance costs prior to the delivery of goods. The importer, upon the goods' arrival at the port, is freed from the associated risks and responsibilities. Another significant example is the term "Freight Forwarding," which encompasses services that manage the processes of transporting goods, including operations such as customs clearance and transport provision. Freight Forwarding companies typically play a crucial role in international trade by preparing import and export documents and arranging cargo placement in the most suitable means of transport. From a linguistic perspective, the interpretation and correct usage of such terms ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of terminological processes. Thus, modern logistics terminology not only clarifies practices but also ensures their clear and consistent understanding from a linguistic standpoint, which is an important task for all linguists.[2]

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach enriched with aspects of terminological and comparative analyses. Abstract: This paper investigates the category and translation difficulty of international logistics terms, especially the representative and popular terms in the practice of international logistics and trade, like Bill of Lading (B/L), FOB, CIF, Incoterms, EXW, DAP etc.

The main method used in this research is semantic analysis, which is a way to detect the key and peripheral meanings of logistics concepts in their practical context. In turn, each term was analysed in light of its functional role within international trade documentation and contract practice. The study further employs functional classification of logistics, which is used to classify logistics terms in terms of their semantic and functional contribution, such as logistics involving transport operations, risk allocation, insurance obligations, custom formalities and delivery responsibility.[3]

Moreover, comparative study on English logistics terminology and their equivalents in Uzbek was conducted. This comparison has been made to spot lexical gaps, polysemy, tendencies in descriptive translation and possible semantic distortions. The theoretical bases of the study will draw mainly on terminology studies and translation theory, especially some general theories on terminology, functionalist approaches to translation and intercultural communication.

The analysis relies on documents; standards for international trade; and terminological dictionaries. Because the research is at the stage of conceptual clarification/linguistic embedding here no quantitative statistical methods or anything were used. The implementation of this methodological framework provides a systematized and scientific investigation of logistics lexicon and translation difficulties in the Uzbek language.[4]

Logistics terms are notoriously difficult to translate in the field of international trade — ambiguous, context-dependent, and an example of cross-cultural differences between languages make them

some of the most challenging terms to translate accurately and precisely. The first issue lies in the polysemy of terms, that is, terms that can be both same but have different contexts. As a specific example, Free on Board (FOB) and Cost, Insurance and Freight (CIF) are quite common terms in international trade, however, I can not think of an expression in Uzbek that is directly equivalent to them. FOB and CIF are not only related to its transportation conditions but also all responsibility of delivery goods. For "FOB", for instance, using its descriptive equivalents — "Port Loading" or "Shipping Responsibility" — doesn't bring the right ideas and misses to some extent its generality as a part of international trade. Likewise, the translation of "CIF" may in turn be more descriptive, taking the longer forms of "Transportation, Insurance, and Freight" but there it draws on careful definition of obligations under a contract. In such cases, translators have to look for exact ideas and words, which creates even more problems in terms of terminology precision. The second question relates to cultural and linguistic differences in/in perception of and usage of these terms. The trade and logistics practices of every country are unique, and so, its language has evolved to keep up with those processes. For instance, while the term "FOB" and "CIF" are very common terms in English, such terms shows different interpretation problems in other languages, specifically, Uzbek. Translators should not separate terms from their cultural context, as this would overlook correct and precise translation of these terms into Uzbek. In the case of "FOB", for example, not only does it refer to part of a transportation term but also the responsibility of all logistics of getting goods delivered. Thus, translation cannot often be done word-for-word; it needs to rely on context. Therefore, given the cross-cultural differences, one should appropriately interpret each term.

Results

The study results suggest international logistics terminology may be classified within a partially organized, partially amorphous lexicon — in which narrow clarity of immediate denotation still requires context to establish overall meaning. The study also validates that several logistics terms serve two purposes, both as words that provide substance to a language and as terms of a contract that hold legal binding power. Express conditions of transportation, terms such as FOB, CIF or EXW are even more than that, as they distribute risk and cost, but foremost responsibility between two contracting parties.[5]

The study shows that the main translation problem in the Uzbek environment is the lack of direct lexemes for most standardized units of English trade terms. For this reason, descriptive translation strategies are often used by translators. These methods, however, do not always inspire the same legal and procedural connotation as the original terms. Descriptive renderings of FOB or CIF, for example, may describe transport conditions but, even if not used, might not reflect transfer of risk or contractual liability.

Their results also show that the presence of polysemy and the high dependency of meaning on context have a major role in how and when interpretations were accurate. There are terms like Bill of Lading and Clean B/L which have meanings at several levels all mixed in the same word palette, with a documentary, financial, and legal level. When translation occurs without the knowledge of context, it can lead to loss of meaning or misrepresentation.[6]

In addition, the Document refers to the Incoterms system as a well-ordered semantic structure, but points out that the right application of such a system in Uzbek requires both the standardization of terminology and interdisciplinary competence. In conclusion, the findings field the need for unifying the constraints of linguistic accuracy with awareness of international trade regulations to deliver precise and functionally adequate translation results.[7]

Furthermore, it creates another layer of challenges around cross-border connection and translation of terms like Incoterms system and Bill of Lading (B/L). Clearly laying out parties responsibilities for each contract is vital to international trade, hence the importance of the Incoterms system. In this framework, some words such as FOB and CIF find their way in, in helping to determine what the conditions of trade are. Likewise with the term Bill of Lading (B/L)

as transport document in worldwide exchange, the significance of the correct understanding of this term is extremely imperative. When translating "Bill of Lading" (B/L), we often use words such as "cargo acceptance document" or "bill of lading," but this kind of translation does not fully reflect its semantic implication. [8] For example, the word Clean B/L can be translated as Clean Bill of Lading, but from the aspect of the specific meaning, it only means the cargo condition and does not imply anything else. [9] So translators should not do literal translation, but rather they should know what these terms mean in the realm of international trade. Part of the meaning behind each term in the Incoterms system, the accurate decoding of which facilitates mutual understanding in cross-border trade. [10] A good example is the terminology-exw (ExWorks) and dap (Delivered at Place) used in different countries, and found in Uzbek is not always easy. EXW stands for Ex Works meaning a lot of times they translate it into From the manufacturer but what this truly means is that the exporter is prepared to make the goods available only and exclusively at their factory or warehouse. The term DAP (Delivered at Place) on the other hand means that we have to deliver the goods to the destination and perform all the duties of the contract. This translation includes the name of terms as the terms of the Incoterms system and a Bill of Lading that in turn is both linguistically and in the process of course of factual trade big points, etc. [11] [12]

For translators, considering the correct interpretation and interconnection of such terms requires not only accurate translation of words but also an understanding of their role in international trade and their interrelationships.[13] This approach helps ensure clear and correct interpretation of terms, as well as strengthening mutual understanding and agreements in international trade.[14]

Although international logistics terminology has been widely studied in global contexts, there remains a limited systematic analysis of its semantic-functional classification and translation challenges within the Uzbek linguistic environment. In particular, the absence of standardized Uzbek equivalents for Incoterms and transport documentation terminology creates inconsistencies in interpretation and professional usage. Future research may focus on developing a unified terminological database, corpus-based analysis of logistics discourse, and interdisciplinary collaboration between linguists and trade specialists to strengthen terminological standardization.[15]

Conclusion

Modern logistics terminology is essential in international trade, and its translation performs a significant role in the implementation of all trade operations. Terms like FOB, CIF, Bill of Lading, and Incoterms mentioned below in this article itself make sure that there are no mutual misunderstandings on any front with regard to International trade. However, the translation between these words are difficult because of vague and cross-cultural problems. The right understanding of each term reinforces the communication of the negotiation between the trading parties; therefore, such terms are not simply translated literally, but are based on contextual and semantic analysis. Translators should also draw upon systems- and interdisciplinary approaches based in international standards to ensure that logistics terms are interpreted correctly. Thereby aiding in streamlining global trading practices, whilst also augmenting bilateral receptivity.

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