



EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATION: CONCEPT AND TYPES

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ABSTRACT: *This article discusses the concept of equivalence, which is considered one of the important notions in translation studies. It examines the development and types of equivalence, as well as the views of both international and Uzbek scholars on this issue. The article also analyzes the role of equivalence in the translation process. In particular, different types of equivalence — such as formal, dynamic, semantic, stylistic, and pragmatic equivalence — are systematically analyzed based on the perspectives of various scholars and explained through relevant examples. Furthermore, the article explores the difficulties translators face in achieving equivalence during the translation process.*

Keywords: *translation equivalence, formal equivalence, dynamic equivalence, pragmatic equivalence, agglutinative languages, analytical languages, cultural realia, translatology, lexical non-equivalence, contrastive linguistics, receptor response.*

АННОТАЦИЯ: *В данной статье рассматривается понятие эквивалентности, которое является одним из важных понятий в переводе. В работе освещаются вопросы формирования и видов эквивалентности, а также взгляды зарубежных и узбекских ученых на данную проблему. Кроме того, анализируется роль эквивалентности в процессе перевода. В частности, различные виды эквивалентности — формальная, динамическая, семантическая, стилистическая и прагматическая — системно анализируются на основе научных взглядов различных исследователей и объясняются на соответствующих примерах. Также в статье рассматриваются трудности, с которыми сталкиваются переводчики при достижении эквивалентности в процессе перевода.*



Ключевые слова: эквивалентность перевода, формальная эквивалентность, динамическая эквивалентность, прагматическая эквивалентность, агглютинативные языки, аналитические языки, культурные реалии, переводоведение, лексическая безэквивалентность, сопоставительная лингвистика, реакция рецептора.

ANNOTATSIYA: Ushbu maqolada tarjimashunoslikda muhim tushunchalardan biri bo'lgan ekvivalentlik tushunchasi, uning shakllanishi va turlari, jahon va o'zbek olimlarining qarashlari keng yoritiladi. Shuningdek, ekvivalentlikning tarjima jarayonidagi o'rni, uning formal, dinamik, semantik, stilistik va pragmatik turlari turli olimlar qarashlari asosida tizimli tahlil qilinib, tegishli misollar orqali izohlanadi. Bundan tashqari, tarjimonlar ekvivalentlikka erishish jarayonida duch keladigan muammolar ham ko'rib chiqiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: tarjima ekvivalentligi, shakliy ekvivalentlik, dinamik ekvivalentlik, pragmatik ekvivalentlik, agglyutinativ tillar, analitik tillar, madaniy realiyalar, tarjimashunoslik, leksik muvofiqsizlik, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, kitobxon reaksiyasi.

INTRODUCTION

The discipline of translation studies revolves around the concept of equivalence, which defines the relationship between a source text (ST) and a target text (TT). Achieving true equivalence between English (an analytical Indo-European language) and Uzbek (an agglutinative Turkic language) requires moving beyond mere structural matching to address complex socio-linguistic and cultural factors.

Theoretical discourse on equivalence has been shaped by prominent international scholars. The American linguist Eugene A. Nida revolutionized the field by shifting the focus from strict literal translation to the reader's response. In his foundational work, *Toward a Science of Translating* (1964), Nida states on page 159: "Formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content".¹ However, recognizing cultural disparities, he introduced dynamic

¹ Nida, E. A. (1964). *Toward a science of translating*. E.J. Brill.



equivalence on the same page, noting that in such a translation, “the focus of attention is directed, not so much toward the source message, as toward the receptor response”.²

The Russian translologist V.N.Komissarov provided a highly structured model of this concept. In his book *Theory of Translation* (1990), he established a hierarchical framework. On page 28, Komissarov asserts: “Translation equivalence does not mean that source and target texts are identical. It is a degree of similarity between source and target texts, measured on a certain level”.³ He delineated five interconnecting levels of equivalence: pragmatic, situational, lexical (semantic), grammatical, and structural.

Further refining the practical scope of translation, Mona Baker adopted a bottom-up linguistic methodology in her influential book *In Other Words* (1992/2011), culminating in the concept of pragmatic equivalence. On page 230 of the 2011 edition, she defines pragmatics as “the study of meaning not as generated by the linguistic system but as conveyed and manipulated by participants in a communicative situation”.⁴

In Uzbekistan, the foundation of modern translation theory was established by scholars such as Gaybulla Salomov. In authoritative works like *Til va tarjima* (1966) and *Tarjima nazariyasiga kirish* (1978), Salomov rejected purely mechanical approaches to translation. He argued that literary translation is a creative endeavor requiring a “national foundation”, defining it as “The art of manifesting oneself through others and others through oneself”.⁵ He emphasized that equivalence requires capturing the aesthetic and emotional resonance of the original without violating Uzbek cultural norms.

This article aims to analyze equivalence within the specific context of English-Uzbek translation, observing how these theoretical models manifest practically.

² Nida, E. A. (1964). *Toward a science of translating*. E.J. Brill.

³ Komissarov, V. N. (1990). *Teoriya perevoda (Lingvisticheskie aspekty)*. Vysshaya shkola.

⁴ Baker, M. (2011). *In other words: A coursebook on translation* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

⁵ Salomov, G. (1978). *Tarjima nazariyasiga kirish*. O'qituvchi.



METHODS

This study employs a descriptive and comparative-contrastive linguistic methodology to investigate translation equivalence between English and Uzbek. The theoretical framework synthesizes Nida's functional dichotomy, Komissarov's hierarchical levels, Baker's pragmatic taxonomy, and Salomov's stylistic principles.

The empirical data consists of a curated corpus of English and Uzbek texts across various registers, including legal documents, literary prose, and everyday phraseology. During the procedure, each English ST unit is juxtaposed with its corresponding Uzbek TT unit. The analysis identifies the specific linguistic or cultural asymmetry, categorizes the equivalence type (formal, dynamic, semantic, stylistic, or pragmatic), and evaluates the compensatory strategies employed by translators to bridge the cross-linguistic gap.

RESULTS

The contrastive analysis of the English-Uzbek translation corpus reveals significant insights into how different types of equivalence are actively constructed and negotiated.

A. Formal and Dynamic Equivalence

The results demonstrate that while formal equivalence — defined as the “identity of form and content”⁶ (Koller, 1979) — is vital in technical and legal frameworks, it often results in “translational loss” in expressive texts. For instance, translating the beatitude “Blessed are the meek” as “Tavozeli bo‘lganlar baxtlidir” adheres to formal parameters but fails to resonate with the modern Uzbek reader. As Nida argues, the goal of the translologist should be the “closest natural equivalent”. By applying dynamic equivalence, the rendering “Kamtarin odamlar baxtlidir” successfully triggers a receptor response that mirrors the original's communicative intent, prioritizing sociocultural accessibility over structural rigidity.

B. Semantic Equivalence

⁶ Koller, W. (1979). Einführung in die Übersetzungswissenschaft [Introduction to the Science of Translation]. Quelle & Meyer.



The data indicates that semantic equivalence is frequently obstructed by “lexical non-equivalence”. According to Newmark, semantic translation remains closer to the original, yet it must account for the cognitive gaps between languages.⁷ The English term “Privacy” lacks a direct monolexemic equivalent in Uzbek, necessitating a descriptive shift to “Shaxsiy hayot daxlsizligi”. Conversely, the Uzbek concept of “Mehr” represents a “semantic density” that encompasses love, mercy, and duty. Our analysis confirms that such terms often undergo “semantic reduction” when translated into English, reinforcing the view that “equivalence is a target-oriented concept, influenced by the norms of the receiving culture”.⁸

C. Stylistic Equivalence

The findings show that stylistic equivalence requires what Vinay and Darbelnet term as “equivalence” through situational substitution.⁹ Literal translations of idioms like “It’s raining cats and dogs” into Uzbek (“Mushuklar va itlar yomg‘irdek yog‘yapti”) prove to be semantically opaque. To preserve the stylistic force, translators must replace the source imagery with a culturally relevant metaphor, such as “Yomg‘ir quyib yubordi”. Similarly, adapting the auditory metaphor “Music to my ears” into the affective Uzbek “Yuragimni eritar” illustrates that stylistic fidelity often necessitates a “transposition” of the sensory domain to maintain the original’s emotional impact.

D. Pragmatic Equivalence

In line with Mona Baker’s framework, pragmatic equivalence focuses on the “implicature” and the unstated cultural realia.¹⁰ The results highlight that culturally-bound terms (realia) like “Thanksgiving” or the Uzbek “Qaytarma” require “pragmatic adaptation” to be intelligible. For example, the repetitive emotional outburst in Uzbek “Aldashdi! Aldashdi!” carries a pragmatic urgency that the formal English “Deceived!” lacks. The study finds that opting for the colloquial “Cheated!

⁷ Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. Prentice-Hall.

⁸ Bassnett, S. (2013). *Translation Studies*. Routledge.

⁹ Vinay, J.-P., & Darbelnet, J. (1995). *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*. John Benjamins Publishing.

¹⁰ Baker, M. (2018). In *Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. Routledge.



Cheated!” provides a more accurate “functional equivalent”, ensuring that the illocutionary force of the source text remains intact within the target linguistic environment.

DISCUSSION

The empirical results demonstrate that absolute structural and semantic equivalence is a theoretical illusion due to the stark typological differences between analytical English and agglutinative Uzbek, as well as their distinct cognitive mappings.

When the sentence structures do not match, translators follow the rules of the scholar Komissarov. This means they stop trying to match the exact words and instead focus on making the situation and the message clear. This supports what Gaybulla Salomov said: a translation must fit the “national foundation” of the language.¹¹ If we copy English structures too closely, it feels “strange” to Uzbek readers and pushes them away.

Following Mona Baker’s ideas, it is more important to understand the hidden meaning or the cultural situation than just to decode words. In the end, translation is not like a math problem where everything matches perfectly. It is a shifting process where the translator must make careful, smart choices to find a balance.

CONCLUSION

Equivalence stands as the most critical goal and, simultaneously, the greatest obstacle in translation. It is not a single concept but a complex, multi-layered structure that includes formal, dynamic, semantic, stylistic, and pragmatic elements. By analyzing the theoretical development from Nida’s focus on the reader’s response to Komissarov’s hierarchy of levels and Mona Baker’s pragmatic framework, we gain a strong system for understanding how English and Uzbek interact.

When these global theories are combined with Gaybulla Salomov’s culture-centered principles, they reveal the specific difficulties of translating between these two distinct languages. In the end, successful equivalence is not found in a strict

¹¹ Salomov, G’. (1966). *Til va tarjima*. Fan.



word-for-word copy. Instead, it is achieved by recreating the original message's power, information, and intent so that it feels natural and meaningful within the unique social and cultural world of the target audience.

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