



## ECUIVALENCE PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATION

*Egamberdiyeva Irodaxon*

*Associate professor of Andijan State Foreign Language Institute*

*Axmedova Xayriniso*

*Student of Andijan State Foreign Language Institute*

**Abstract:** This article explores the multifaceted concept of equivalence in translation, particularly the challenges it poses when translating between English and Uzbek. It examines theoretical perspectives from Nida, Newmark, and Catford, and highlights specific problems in lexical, grammatical, and cultural equivalence. Case studies from legal, literary, and religious texts illustrate practical difficulties and solutions. The paper also discusses effective strategies to address these problems and offers pedagogical suggestions for teaching equivalence in translation studies. The goal is to demonstrate that achieving equivalence is not about literal accuracy alone but about functional and cultural resonance.

**Keywords:** Equivalence, translation studies, dynamic equivalence, cultural translation, English-Uzbek comparison, lexical gaps, idioms, structural differences.

Translation is more than a mere transfer of words from one language into another. It requires cultural, contextual, and semantic considerations. One of the central concerns in translation studies is equivalence, which refers to the degree to which the translated text (target text) accurately reflects the meaning, style, and function of the original text (source text). Despite the attempts to create accurate and faithful translations, achieving equivalence between languages—especially structurally and culturally distinct ones like English and Uzbek—poses significant challenges. This article explores various problems associated with achieving equivalence in translation and analyzes the issue within the context of English-Uzbek language pairs.



Equivalence is a foundational concept in translation theory. It implies a relationship of similarity or equality between the source and target texts. There are different types and levels of equivalence that translators aim to achieve:

Linguistic equivalence – matching grammatical structures and vocabulary.

Semantic equivalence – conveying the same meaning.

Pragmatic equivalence – preserving communicative intent.

Cultural equivalence – reflecting culturally relevant references.

Functional equivalence – maintaining the function of the text in the target context.

The pioneering work of translation theorists such as Eugene Nida, Roman Jakobson, and Peter Newmark laid the foundation for understanding these nuances.

Eugene Nida introduced the concepts of formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence:

Formal equivalence focuses on maintaining the form and content of the original text.

Dynamic equivalence seeks to reproduce the same effect on the target audience.

For example: English (Formal): “Blessed are the meek.”

Uzbek (Formal): “Tavozeli bo‘lganlar baxtlidir.”

Uzbek (Dynamic): “Kamtarin odamlar baxtlidir.”

In this example, the formal version uses a more literal equivalent, while the dynamic version chooses a culturally familiar term.



Peter Newmark differentiates between semantic translation (closer to source language) and communicative translation (closer to target language). According to him, communicative translation is preferred in texts aimed at a general audience.

J.C. Catford focuses on shifts in translation—changes necessary due to structural differences between languages. These shifts can be level shifts (e.g., from grammar to lexis) or category shifts (e.g., class or structure changes).

Due to typological and cultural differences, equivalence problems between English and Uzbek are particularly prominent in the following areas: Some English words have no direct equivalent in Uzbek, and vice versa. For instance:

“Privacy” – Uzbek: Shaxsiy hayot daxlsizligi (no single word equivalent).

“Mehr” – Uzbek: A concept combining love, compassion, and care (no exact English word).

Idiomatic expressions often lack equivalents:

English: “It’s raining cats and dogs.”

Uzbek equivalent: “Yomg‘ir quyib yubordi.” (Literal translation would confuse Uzbek readers.)

Cultural equivalence is difficult to achieve when cultural concepts are absent in the target language:

English: “Thanksgiving” – no equivalent in Uzbek culture.

Uzbek: “Navro‘z” – may require footnotes or explanation in English.

English is an analytical language, while Uzbek is agglutinative. This causes issues in sentence structure, word order, and verb forms:

English: “I will go.”



Uzbek: “Men boraman.” (The future tense is conveyed through suffixes.)

These structural differences complicate one-to-one translation.

Legal documents require formal equivalence to avoid misinterpretation. For instance:

English: “This agreement shall remain in effect until terminated.”

Uzbek: “Ushbu kelishuv bekor qilinmaguncha amalda bo‘ladi.”

Legal equivalence involves not just words, but legal systems.

Literary texts prioritize dynamic and semantic equivalence to preserve emotional and aesthetic effects.

English poetry often employs metaphors that don’t translate directly:

“Her voice is music to my ears.”

In Uzbek: “Uning ovozi yuragimni eritar.” (Not literal, but contextually appropriate.)

Religious translations balance semantic and dynamic equivalence. For instance:

Qur’anic Translation: Requires preservation of both literal meaning and theological implications.

To solve equivalence problems, translators employ several strategies:

Adaptation: Changing culture-specific items.

Borrowing: Using original word with explanation (e.g., Privacy).

Paraphrasing: Explaining the meaning with different words.

Omission or condensation: Skipping non-essential elements when necessary.



These techniques must be applied carefully to maintain meaning and integrity.

For Uzbek students learning translation, understanding equivalence is vital. Classroom activities should involve:

Comparative translation exercises.

Analysis of existing translations.

Practice with different genres (legal, literary, journalistic).

Emphasis on cultural competence.

Equivalence in translation is a dynamic, context-dependent goal rather than a fixed standard. English and Uzbek differ significantly in vocabulary, structure, and culture, which leads to unique challenges in achieving equivalence. However, through thoughtful analysis and adaptive strategies, translators can bridge the gap and produce effective and meaningful translations. It is crucial for translation scholars and practitioners to embrace a flexible approach to equivalence, considering not only linguistic form but also cultural function.

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