Journal of Analytical Synergy and Scientific Horizon ISSN: 3060-5261 Impact Factor 10.5 / 2026
Volume 2, Issue 5

FORMAL AND SEMANTIC EQUIVALENCE IN LITERARY TRANSLATION: INTERPRETATION, TRANSFORMATION, AND LINGUOPOETIC CORRESPONDENCE

Timirova Sevara Xusan qizi
Karshi International University
Master degree student
e-mail: timirovasevara55@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article examines the relationship between formal and semantic equivalence in literary translation through interpretative, linguistic, semiotic, and linguopoetic approaches. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which translators reconstruct lexical meaning, syntactic structures, imagery, rhythm, emotional intensity, and authorial intention in the target language. The study focuses on selected passages from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, considering their English originals alongside Uzbek translation variants attributed to Cho‘lpon, Maqsud Shayxzoda, G‘afur G‘ulom, and Jamol Kamol in the research material. Using comparative textual analysis, the article investigates lexical substitution, semantic expansion, omission, compensation, and pragmatic adaptation as mechanisms of translation transformation. It also distinguishes direct translation from literal translation and indirect translation from free translation, emphasizing the importance of methodological precision in translation studies. The findings suggest that literary equivalence cannot be determined solely by formal similarity or lexical correspondence. Instead, an adequate translation requires a context-sensitive balance between semantic accuracy, pragmatic function, stylistic organization, cultural associations, and aesthetic effect. The article proposes an integrated analytical framework for evaluating formal and semantic correspondence in literary translation.

Keywords: literary translation, formal equivalence, semantic equivalence, translation transformations, interpretation, linguopoetics, Shakespeare, Uzbek translation, pragmatic adaptation, aesthetic correspondence.

ФОРМАЛЬНАЯ И СЕМАНТИЧЕСКАЯ ЭКВИВАЛЕНТНОСТЬ В ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОМ ПЕРЕВОДЕ: ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯ, ТРАНСФОРМАЦИЯ И ЛИНГВОПОЭТИЧЕСКОЕ СООТВЕТСТВИЕ

Journal of Analytical Synergy and Scientific Horizon ISSN: 3060-5261 Impact Factor 10.5 / 2026
Volume 2, Issue 5

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье исследуется взаимосвязь формальной и семантической эквивалентности в художественном переводе на основе интерпретативного, лингвистического, семиотического и лингвопоэтического подходов. Материалом исследования служат отдельные фрагменты трагедий Уильяма Шекспира *«Гамлет»*, *«Отелло»* и *«Ромео и Джульетта»*, а также представленные узбекские варианты их перевода. Рассматривается влияние лексической замены, семантического расширения, опущения, компенсации и прагматической адаптации на соотношение формы и содержания. Обосновывается необходимость разграничения прямого и буквального перевода, а также косвенного и свободного перевода. Результаты показывают, что оценка художественного перевода требует комплексного учета семантической точности, прагматической функции, стилистической организации и эстетического воздействия.

Ключевые слова: художественный перевод, формальная эквивалентность, семантическая эквивалентность, интерпретация, переводческие трансформации, лингвопоэтика, прагматика, эстетическое соответствие.

INTRODUCTION

Literary translation represents a complex form of intercultural communication in which linguistic structures, cultural meanings, artistic images, and aesthetic intentions are transferred from one language into another. Unlike the translation of purely informational texts, literary translation requires the translator to reproduce not only what the original text communicates but also how its meaning is artistically organized.

The relationship between form and meaning has consequently remained one of the central problems of translation studies. A translator may preserve the lexical structure of an original passage while weakening its emotional intensity. Conversely, a translation may depart from the grammatical arrangement of the source text yet successfully reproduce its communicative function and aesthetic effect.

This tension becomes particularly evident in poetry and drama, where meaning is inseparable from rhythm, intonation, imagery, syntactic parallelism, and the expressive possibilities of individual words.

The translation of William Shakespeare's dramatic works into Uzbek provides valuable material for examining these issues. Shakespeare's tragedies contain philosophical reflections, emotionally charged dialogues, metaphorical expressions, and culturally specific references. Their translation requires careful decisions concerning lexical choice, stylistic correspondence, pragmatic meaning, and poetic organization.

The Uzbek translations associated with Cho‘lpon, Maqsud Shayxzoda, G‘afur G‘ulom, and Jamol Kamol illustrate different approaches to reconstructing Shakespeare's dramatic language. These translations also belong to different historical periods, making it necessary to consider the literary conventions and linguistic expectations of their respective contexts.

Translation equivalence should therefore not be understood as mechanical identity between two texts. Rather, it involves a relationship between the linguistic and artistic properties of the original and the communicative possibilities of the target language.

Eugene Nida distinguishes between formal and dynamic equivalence, emphasizing the difference between correspondence in linguistic form and the communicative effect produced by translation [8]. His approach provides an important theoretical foundation for understanding how translators negotiate the relationship between textual structure and reader response.

Roman Jakobson similarly demonstrates that translation involves interpretation through linguistic signs and that complete equivalence between individual code units is not always attainable [5]. This observation is particularly relevant to literary translation, where semantic content is frequently distributed across several interacting linguistic elements.

Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutic perspective further suggests that understanding is historically situated and interpretative in nature [3]. From this viewpoint, literary translation is not simply the substitution of words but a process through which meaning is reconstructed within a different linguistic and cultural horizon.

Gideon Toury's descriptive approach adds another dimension by treating translations as products shaped by the norms of the receiving culture [10]. This perspective is especially important when comparing Uzbek translations produced during different literary and historical periods. Despite the extensive theoretical discussion of equivalence, a methodological problem remains: formal, semantic, pragmatic, and aesthetic correspondence are often treated as separate phenomena, although they function simultaneously in literary texts. The present study addresses this problem by examining how translation transformations affect the interaction between form and meaning.

The aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between formal and semantic equivalence in literary translation and to identify how lexical, syntactic, pragmatic, and linguopoetic transformations influence the reconstruction of meaning in Uzbek translations of selected Shakespearean passages.

The research pursues four objectives: to clarify the theoretical relationship between formal and semantic equivalence; to identify major translation transformations in selected

literary passages; to examine their effects on meaning, style, and aesthetic expression; and to formulate an integrated framework for evaluating literary correspondence.

The study proceeds from the assumption that successful literary translation depends not on the absolute preservation of linguistic form but on the justified coordination of semantic accuracy, artistic function, and contextual appropriateness.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary analytical material consists of selected passages from three Shakespearean tragedies: *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.

The study focuses on passages that present identifiable problems of formal and semantic correspondence, including philosophical opposition, pragmatic politeness, character relationships, emotional intensity, and poetic organization. The Uzbek versions examined are those reproduced in the supplied research material and attributed there to Cho‘lpon, Maqsud Shayxzoda, G‘afur G‘ulom, and Jamol Kamol. These examples are treated as a limited comparative sample rather than a complete corpus of Shakespeare translations. Since the exact editions and page references of several Uzbek renderings have not been established, conclusions concerning individual translators remain provisional until the quotations are checked against published primary sources.

This distinction is methodologically significant. A comparison may demonstrate differences between textual variants, but it cannot conclusively establish the historical intentions, translation procedures, or overall artistic achievement of a translator without reliable textual and bibliographical evidence.

Research methods

The study employs a qualitative comparative methodology combining several complementary procedures. **Comparative textual analysis** is used to identify similarities and differences between the source text and the Uzbek translation variants at lexical, syntactic, semantic, and stylistic levels. **Semantic analysis** examines the preservation, modification, expansion, or reduction of meanings expressed by particular lexical units and constructions. **Pragmatic analysis** investigates how speech acts, communicative intentions, interpersonal relationships, and emotional attitudes are represented in translation. **Linguopoetic analysis** focuses on rhythm, imagery, repetition, contrast, expressive syntax, and other devices contributing to the artistic organization of literary discourse. **Translation transformation analysis** identifies such procedures as substitution, addition, omission, restructuring, and compensation. Finally, **interpretative analysis** examines the translator's choices as context-dependent attempts to reconstruct the meaning and aesthetic significance of the original.

Journal of Analytical Synergy and Scientific Horizon ISSN: 3060-5261 Impact Factor 10.5 / 2026
Volume 2, Issue 5

RESULTS

One of the most widely discussed passages in Shakespearean drama is Hamlet's philosophical question:

"To be, or not to be, that is the question." [9] The sentence contains a binary opposition between existence and non-existence. Its expressive force derives from syntactic parallelism, lexical economy, and the philosophical ambiguity of the verb *to be*. The research material presents three Uzbek versions: Cho'lpon: *"Yo hayot, yo o'lim, masala shunda."* Maqsud Shayxzoda: *"Tirik qolmoq yo o'lmoq? Shudir masala!"* Jamol Kamol: *"Yo hayot, yo momot: masala shundoq."* Although all three versions preserve the general existential conflict, they differ in their lexical and syntactic organization. Cho'lpon's version expresses the opposition through the nouns *hayot* and *o'lim*. This transformation converts the English infinitival construction into a nominal opposition.

The principal semantic contrast remains recognizable, but the grammatical structure changes. The resulting expression is concise and compatible with Uzbek rhetorical patterns. Shayxzoda's version employs verbal constructions: *tirik qolmoq* and *o'lmoq*. The use of a question mark and an exclamation mark creates a more explicitly dramatic intonational pattern. The phrase *tirik qolmoq* may also suggest survival rather than existence in its broad philosophical sense. This represents a possible semantic narrowing that requires interpretation within the surrounding monologue.

Jamol Kamol's version uses the opposition *hayot–mamot*, a conventional expressive pairing in Uzbek literary discourse. Its rhythmic compactness and phonetic relationship create a marked rhetorical effect. However, the presence of this conventional pairing does not automatically establish greater overall fidelity to the original. The three versions demonstrate that the same semantic opposition can be reconstructed through different grammatical and stylistic resources. The analysis suggests that translation equivalence should be evaluated through several simultaneous questions: whether the existential conflict is preserved, whether the philosophical ambiguity remains accessible, and whether the translated sentence produces an appropriate dramatic effect. Consequently, formal correspondence and semantic correspondence cannot be reduced to a single hierarchy.

Another significant example occurs in Othello's final speech: *"Soft you, a word or two before you go."* [9] The expression *Soft you* functions as an appeal for attention and restraint. Its meaning depends on the dramatic situation rather than on the isolated lexical meaning of *soft*. The supplied material presents the following Uzbek renderings. G'afur G'ulom: *"Ozgina to'xtang, ketar ekan ikki og'iz so'zim bor."* Jamol Kamol: *"Jindek sabr qilinglar, ikki og'iz so'z aytaman ketish oldidan."* Both versions reproduce the essential

communicative intention: the speaker asks the listeners to pause and allow him to speak. Nevertheless, the two translations differ in their pragmatic realization. The expression *ozgina to‘xtang* foregrounds the physical act of stopping, whereas *jindek sabr qilinglar* emphasizes patience and temporary restraint. Both choices are contextually plausible because the original utterance combines an appeal for attention with a request to delay departure. The second component, *a word or two*, is rendered through the Uzbek idiom *ikki og‘iz so‘z*. This expression is an example of functional correspondence rather than mechanical word-for-word equivalence. It reproduces the conventional meaning of a brief statement while maintaining naturalness in Uzbek. The example demonstrates that pragmatic equivalence may be achieved through lexical expressions that differ from those of the original. It also shows why the source language of a translation should not be used as the sole criterion of quality. A translation produced through an intermediary language may preserve an utterance's communicative function, while a direct translation may still contain semantic or stylistic inaccuracies. The decisive issue is the relationship between the source utterance and its target-language realization.

The final lines of *Romeo and Juliet* provide another important example: *“For never was a story of more woe Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.”* [9] The concluding phrase *Juliet and her Romeo* is particularly significant because it places Juliet's name before Romeo's and introduces a possessive relationship through *her*. The research material presents the following Uzbek variants. Maqsud Shayxzoda: *“Romeo va Julyettaning qissasidan ham, G‘amli qissa ko‘rgan emas tarixda olam!”* Jamol Kamol: *“Romeo va Julyettaning ishqidek, evoh, Qayg‘uli bir muhabbatni ko‘rmamish dunyo!”* Both versions retain the tragic meaning of the original conclusion. They communicate the exceptional sorrow associated with the lovers' story.

However, both also reproduce the conventional order *Romeo and Juliet*, rather than Shakespeare’s final formulation *Juliet and her Romeo*. This modification is not necessarily evidence of a complete loss of meaning. Nevertheless, it removes a potentially significant feature of the original's syntactic and interpersonal organization. The possessive expression *her Romeo* creates a relationship that is not fully represented by the coordinated construction *Romeo va Julyetta*. The difference may influence the way readers interpret the final emphasis placed on the characters. It would be methodologically excessive to conclude, solely from this word order, that Shakespeare deliberately establishes Juliet's superiority over Romeo. Such an interpretation would require broader textual and literary evidence.

A more defensible conclusion is that the translations preserve the central tragic proposition while modifying the final line's relational and stylistic configuration. This example demonstrates that semantic equivalence includes not only propositional content but also the distribution of emphasis and interpersonal meaning.

The comparative analysis identifies several recurring transformation types.

Transformation	Description	Potential effect
Lexical substitution	Replacement of a source expression with a contextually appropriate target-language unit	May preserve meaning while changing stylistic associations
Grammatical restructuring	Modification of sentence structure or grammatical category	May improve naturalness while altering rhetorical organization
Semantic expansion	Addition of explicit meaning not directly expressed in the source	May clarify interpretation but introduce additional emphasis
Omission	Removal of a lexical, syntactic, or cultural element	May simplify the text but reduce semantic or aesthetic detail
Compensation	Reproduction of a lost effect through another linguistic device	May preserve overall artistic function despite local differences
Pragmatic adaptation	Adjustment of an expression to target-language communicative conventions	May strengthen contextual appropriateness

The analysis indicates that transformations should not automatically be classified as errors. Their value depends on the function they perform and the extent to which they preserve or modify the relevant features of the original. For example, grammatical restructuring may be necessary when the source and target languages differ in syntactic organization. Conversely, an unnecessary omission may weaken the original's imagery or remove a culturally significant reference. Translation transformations must therefore be interpreted functionally rather than evaluated solely according to their formal distance from the source text.

CONCLUSION

The study has examined formal and semantic equivalence in literary translation through selected examples from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Romeo and Juliet* and their Uzbek translation variants. The findings demonstrate that the relationship between form

and meaning is multidimensional. Lexical correspondence, grammatical similarity, semantic accuracy, pragmatic function, and aesthetic effect may coincide in some translation solutions but diverge in others. The analysis of Hamlet's philosophical question shows that a central semantic opposition can be preserved through different grammatical and rhetorical structures. The translation of Othello's appeal demonstrates that pragmatic correspondence may be achieved through target-language expressions that are not formally identical to the source. The concluding lines of *Romeo and Juliet* illustrate how the preservation of general propositional meaning may coexist with modifications in relational emphasis and stylistic organization.

The investigation also establishes the importance of distinguishing direct translation from literal translation and indirect translation from free translation. These categories describe different aspects of the translation process and should not be used interchangeably. Translation transformations, including lexical substitution, grammatical restructuring, expansion, omission, compensation, and pragmatic adaptation, are not inherently positive or negative. Their significance depends on how they affect the semantic, communicative, and artistic properties of the original. The article consequently argues for an integrated approach to literary translation assessment. Such an approach considers semantic accuracy, formal organization, pragmatic functionality, linguopoetic effect, and cultural correspondence as mutually related analytical dimensions. The study’s contribution lies in bringing these dimensions together within a consistent comparative framework and demonstrating their relevance to selected English–Uzbek literary translation problems. At the same time, the findings are limited by the size of the textual sample and the need for further bibliographical verification of the Uzbek quotations. Future research should employ a systematically compiled corpus of original and translated texts, identify the precise editions used, and examine a wider range of literary genres and translation periods.

Ultimately, literary translation should be understood not as the mechanical reproduction of linguistic forms but as a contextually responsible reconstruction of meaning and artistic function. The translator's task is to negotiate the relationship between textual fidelity and creative expression without losing sight of the semantic and aesthetic identity of the original.

REFERENCES

[1] Bassnett, S. (2014). Translation Studies (4th ed.). Routledge.

[2] Catford, J. C. (1965). A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics. Oxford University Press.

[3] Gadamer, H.-G. (2004). Truth and Method (2nd revised ed., J. Weinsheimer & D. G. Marshall, Trans.). Continuum.
[4] House, J. (2015). Translation Quality Assessment: Past and Present. Routledge.
[5] Jakobson, R. (1959). On linguistic aspects of translation. In R. A. Brower (Ed.), On Translation (pp. 232–239). Harvard University Press.
[6] Newmark, P. (1988). A Textbook of Translation. Prentice Hall.
[7] Peirce, C. S. (1931–1958). Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce (Vols. 1–8). Harvard University Press.
[8] Nida, E. A. (1964). Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating. E. J. Brill.
[9] Shakespeare, W. (2016). The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works: Modern Critical Edition (G. Taylor, J. Jowett, T. Bourus, & G. Egan, Eds.). Oxford University Press.
[10] Toury, G. (1995). Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond. John Benjamins.
[11] Venuti, L. (1995). The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation. Routledge.
[12] Vinay, J.-P., & Darbelnet, J. (1995). Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation (J. C. Sager & M.-J. Hamel, Trans. & Eds.). John Benjamins.