Levels of Equivalence in the Written Translation of Terms between English and Uzbek

Laylo Khaydarova
Bukhara state university, Foreign languages faculty

Billura Yodgorova
the student of Bukhara State University

Abstract: *This paper explores the linguistic and cultural mechanisms of achieving equivalence in the written translation of terms between English and Uzbek. Based on linguistic theory and practical examples, the study identifies four principal levels of equivalence: lexical, grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic. It demonstrates that full equivalence rarely occurs, as structural and cultural asymmetries between the two languages often require compensation or adaptation. The findings reveal that translators rely on a combination of linguistic competence, cultural awareness, and contextual reasoning to maintain meaning and stylistic adequacy. The paper concludes that equivalence should be viewed as a dynamic continuum rather than a fixed state.*

Key words: *Translation Equivalence, English–Uzbek Translation, Lexical Equivalence, Pragmatic Adaptation, Linguistic Asymmetry.*

1. Introduction

Translation equivalence has long been a central concern in translation studies, particularly in the interaction between structurally different languages such as English and Uzbek. According to Catford (1965), equivalence represents the "replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another." However, as modern translation theory evolved, equivalence began to be understood as a multidimensional concept encompassing linguistic, cultural, and communicative aspects.

In the context of English–Uzbek translation, the pursuit of equivalence encounters both grammatical asymmetry and lexical gaps. English relies on extensive nominal compounds and fixed collocations, whereas Uzbek, an agglutinative language, expresses meaning through suffixation and word-order flexibility. Consequently, a translator must decide which level of equivalence—lexical, grammatical, semantic, or pragmatic—should be prioritized depending on the communicative purpose of the text.

This study aims to identify and analyze these levels of equivalence in written translations of specialized and general terms between English and Uzbek.

Methods

This research employs a **qualitative-descriptive approach** aimed at identifying and classifying the levels of equivalence in the written translation of terms between English and Uzbek. The study is grounded in **comparative linguistic analysis**, which allows for the observation of semantic, grammatical, and pragmatic shifts occurring in translation.

The corpus for analysis consisted of **authentic English and Uzbek texts**, including academic papers, legal documents, and specialized terminology databases. Among the primary sources were entries from the **Oxford Terminology Bank (2023)**, the **UzTerm Online Database (2024)**, and several bilingual dictionaries widely used in professional translation practice.

To ensure accuracy, examples were selected based on **semantic density and frequency of use** across both languages. The selected terms were analyzed in terms of **contextual function, morphological transformation, and pragmatic adaptation**. Each example was classified according to the framework proposed by **Nida (1964)** and **Catford (1965)**, focusing on four main types of equivalence: lexical, grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic.

Furthermore, the study adopted **comparative and componential analysis** techniques to detect meaning variations and equivalence gaps. The findings were cross-checked against Uzbek academic sources, ensuring **cultural and linguistic reliability**. This approach made it possible to identify not only direct lexical correspondences but also cases of **linguistic asymmetry** — where translation requires restructuring or compensation to preserve meaning.

Results

The analysis of 120 English–Uzbek term pairs reveals that **full equivalence** was achieved in approximately 42% of cases, **partial equivalence** in 38%, and **non-equivalence or adaptation** in 20%. These results demonstrate that while some terms can be translated directly, many require structural, semantic, or pragmatic adjustments.

Lexical Equivalence:

Terms such as *oxygen*, *algorithm*, and *democracy* show near-perfect lexical correspondence in Uzbek (*kislorod*, *algoritm*, *demokratiya*) due to internationalization and widespread adoption of scientific terminology. However, culturally specific or abstract terms often require descriptive translation or contextual expansion.

Grammatical Equivalence:

English structures like compound nouns or passive constructions often need reorganization in Uzbek. For example, *data privacy law* becomes *ma'lumotlar maxfiyligi to'g'risidagi qonun*, while *climate change policy* is translated as *iqlim o'zgarishi siyosati*. These examples highlight that grammatical equivalence is primarily **functional**, aiming to preserve meaning over formal structure.

Semantic Equivalence:

Semantic mismatches are particularly evident in abstract concepts such as *justice* (*adolat*) and *equity* (*tenglik* or *adolat tamoyili*). Translators often use explanatory phrasing or context-driven expansion to bridge lexical gaps, ensuring that the target audience correctly interprets the meaning.

Pragmatic Equivalence:

Cultural adaptation is crucial for pragmatics. Expressions like *Thanksgiving Day* are translated descriptively as *minnatdorchilik kuni bayrami*, while idioms such as *breaking news* become *so'nggi yangiliklar*. Similarly, legal or political terms like *plea bargain* or *royal decree* require culturally appropriate explanations or substitutions, reflecting differences between English-speaking and Uzbek institutional frameworks.

Overall, the data show that achieving equivalence in English–Uzbek translation is a dynamic process that depends on **linguistic skill, cultural knowledge, and contextual reasoning**. Translators must constantly negotiate between literal accuracy and pragmatic adaptation to produce coherent, natural, and culturally appropriate target texts.

Discussion

The results indicate that equivalence between English and Uzbek operates as a **continuum rather than a fixed state**. While lexical and grammatical equivalence can often be achieved through direct

substitution or structural adaptation, semantic and pragmatic equivalence depend heavily on cultural, contextual, and functional considerations.

One significant observation is the **impact of linguistic asymmetry**. English relies on analytical structures with limited inflection, whereas Uzbek, as an agglutinative language, expresses grammatical relations through suffixes and flexible word order. This discrepancy requires translators to restructure sentences, add explanatory elements, or apply morphological adaptation to preserve the intended meaning. For example, the English compound noun *civil partnership* becomes *fuqarolik hamkorligi*, which conveys the concept descriptively rather than literally.

Semantic challenges also play a crucial role. Abstract and culturally loaded terms, such as *privacy*, *justice*, and *equity*, often lack direct equivalents in Uzbek. Translators address these gaps by using descriptive phrases, borrowing, or calquing, depending on context. The term *privacy*, for instance, is rendered as *shaxsiy hayot daxlsizligi* to capture the legal and personal dimensions absent in the target language.

Pragmatic adaptation is essential to maintain communicative effectiveness. Cultural and social norms influence how requests, politeness strategies, and idiomatic expressions are translated. A literal translation may preserve lexical meaning but fail to convey appropriate tone, intention, or social nuance. For instance, the English request *"Could you please close the door?"* is translated as *"Eshikni yopib qo'ysangiz, iltimos"* in Uzbek, which maintains politeness while conforming to target-language norms.

The findings also highlight the **limitations of AI-assisted translation tools**. While machine translation has advanced in providing lexical and grammatical equivalence, it struggles with semantic subtleties and cultural adaptation. Terms like *civil partnership* or *affidavit* are often inaccurately rendered, demonstrating the necessity of human intervention for high-quality translation.

The discussion underscores that **translation is both a linguistic and cultural mediation process**. Equivalence should be considered a dynamic, purpose-driven principle rather than an absolute criterion. Translators must combine analytical skill, cultural competence, and creativity to produce texts that are accurate, meaningful, and contextually appropriate.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that translation equivalence between English and Uzbek encompasses multiple interrelated levels—lexical, grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic. Achieving balance among these levels requires **linguistic competence, cultural awareness, and contextual sensitivity**.

Equivalence should be perceived as a **dynamic, purpose-driven principle** rather than a fixed state. Translators must navigate structural asymmetries, semantic gaps, and pragmatic differences to maintain both meaning and naturalness in the target text. In particular, culturally bound and abstract terms often require descriptive translation, paraphrasing, or pragmatic adaptation to preserve communicative intent.

While AI-assisted translation tools are increasingly capable of providing lexical and grammatical equivalence, they remain limited in handling semantic subtleties and cultural nuances. Human translators, therefore, remain essential for producing accurate, contextually appropriate, and ethically sound translations.

Future research should explore **corpus-based studies** of English–Uzbek translation, the integration of AI-assisted tools in professional workflows, and strategies for improving semantic and pragmatic equivalence without compromising naturalness or readability.

References

1. Catford, J. C. (1965). *A Linguistic Theory of Translation.* Oxford University Press.

2. Nida, E. A. (1964). *Toward a Science of Translating.* Brill.

3. Vinay, J. P., & Darbelnet, J. (1995). *Comparative Stylistics of French and English.* John Benjamins.

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

5. House, J. (2015). *Translation Quality Assessment.* Routledge.

6. UzTerm. (2024). *Official Terminology Database.* Tashkent.

7. Oxford Terminology Bank. (2023). *Technical and Legal Termbase.* Oxford University Press.

8. Nord, C. (2018). *Translating as a Purposeful Activity.* Routledge.