



Global Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation

Hosted Online from Berlin, Germany

Date: 2nd June, 2026

Website: <https://econferencia.com>

EQUIVALENCE AND ADEQUACY ISSUES IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF 20TH-CENTURY UZBEK PROSE

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Abstract:

This article examines the issues of equivalence and adequacy in the English translations of twentieth-century Uzbek prose. It explores the linguistic, cultural, stylistic, and pragmatic challenges encountered in translating nationally specific elements, idiomatic expressions, historical references, and artistic imagery. Particular attention is paid to the strategies employed by translators to preserve the semantic content, aesthetic value, and cultural identity of the original texts. The study highlights the significance of achieving both semantic equivalence and communicative adequacy in literary translation while maintaining the national and cultural uniqueness of Uzbek prose. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of translation theory and practice in the context of intercultural literary communication.

Keywords: literary translation, equivalence, adequacy, Uzbek prose, English translation, translation strategies, cultural realia, pragmatics, stylistics, intercultural communication.

Introduction

The globalization of literature and the growing interest in intercultural communication have significantly increased the importance of literary translation



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as a means of introducing national literary heritage to the international readership. In this context, the English translation of twentieth-century Uzbek prose occupies a special place, as it enables the global community to become acquainted with the historical experiences, cultural values, social traditions, and artistic worldview of the Uzbek people. However, the translation of literary works is not merely a linguistic process; it is a complex intercultural activity requiring the accurate transfer of semantic, stylistic, and cultural meanings embedded in the source text. One of the central issues in contemporary translation studies is the relationship between **equivalence** and **adequacy**. Although these concepts are closely related, they represent different dimensions of translation quality. Equivalence generally refers to the preservation of semantic and functional correspondence between the source and target texts, whereas adequacy concerns the translator's ability to achieve the communicative purpose of the original while adapting it appropriately to the linguistic and cultural norms of the target language. The successful translation of Uzbek prose into English therefore requires a careful balance between linguistic accuracy and cultural adaptation.

Twentieth-century Uzbek prose, represented by such prominent writers as Abdulla Qodiriy, Oybek, Abdulla Qahhor, and Shukur Kholmirezayev, is characterized by a rich use of national realia, culture-specific vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, folklore elements, and historically marked linguistic units. These features often lack direct equivalents in English, creating considerable challenges for translators. As a result, various translation strategies—including transliteration, descriptive translation, functional equivalence, cultural substitution, and explanatory translation—are employed to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps.

The theoretical foundations for analyzing equivalence and adequacy have been developed by prominent translation scholars such as Eugene Nida, Peter Newmark, Lawrence Venuti, Mona Baker, and Werner Koller. Their theoretical models



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provide valuable methodological tools for examining the linguistic and cultural dimensions of literary translation and for assessing the quality of translated texts.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the problems of equivalence and adequacy in the English translations of twentieth-century Uzbek prose by analyzing the translation of culturally specific elements, stylistic devices, and pragmatic meanings. The research also seeks to identify the most effective translation strategies that ensure the preservation of the artistic integrity and national identity of the original literary works while making them accessible to English-speaking readers.

The translation of twentieth-century Uzbek prose into English presents one of the most challenging areas of literary translation because it requires the translator to preserve not only lexical meaning but also the cultural, stylistic, and pragmatic functions of the original text. Literary translation is considered successful only when the target text recreates both the artistic effect and communicative intention of the source text. Consequently, the concepts of **equivalence** and **adequacy** have become central categories in modern translation studies.

According to Eugene Nida, equivalence should not be understood as a word-for-word correspondence but rather as the reproduction of an equivalent response in the target audience. In literary translation, therefore, dynamic equivalence is often more valuable than formal equivalence because it enables readers from another culture to experience the text in a similar way to the original audience [1].

One of the major challenges in translating Uzbek prose is the rendering of **culture-specific realia**.

For example, in Abdulla Qodiriy's novel the sentence "Mahallaning oqsoqollari maslahat uchun yig'ildilar."

may be translated literally as

"The old men of the neighborhood gathered for discussion."



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Although grammatically correct, this translation fails to communicate the cultural significance of the word **oqsoqol**. In Uzbek culture, an oqsoqol is not simply an elderly man but a respected community leader whose authority is recognized socially and morally.

A more adequate translation would be

"The respected community elders gathered to discuss the matter."

or

"The mahalla elders assembled to settle the issue."

Here, semantic equivalence is combined with pragmatic adequacy because the social function of the cultural concept is preserved.

Another important issue concerns the translation of **national institutions**.

Consider the sentence

"Mahalla butun to'y tashvishini zimmasiga oldi."

A literal translation

"The neighborhood took responsibility for the wedding."

does not fully represent the institutional meaning of **mahalla**.

A culturally adequate version is

"The entire mahalla community took responsibility for organizing the wedding."

The addition of community enables English readers to understand that **mahalla** represents a traditional social institution rather than merely a geographical location.

Peter Newmark emphasizes that translators should preserve national coloring whenever possible instead of replacing unfamiliar concepts with domestic ones [2]. Therefore, transliteration accompanied by brief explanation often proves to be the most effective strategy.

Another common problem involves **idiomatic expressions**.

For instance,

"Yuragi orqasiga tortdi."



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If translated literally as

"His heart moved to his back."

the sentence becomes incomprehensible in English.

Instead, translators seek functional equivalence:

"He was terrified."

or

"His heart sank with fear."

Although the metaphor changes, the emotional effect remains equivalent, illustrating dynamic equivalence rather than formal correspondence.

Pragmatic adequacy becomes even more significant when translating dialogue.

For example,

"Qani, dasturxonga marhamat!"

A literal rendering

"Please come to the tablecloth."

is linguistically incorrect because **dasturxon** refers not merely to a cloth but to the traditional Uzbek meal setting and the cultural practice of hospitality.

A pragmatically adequate translation would be

"Please join us for the meal."

or

"Please come and share our table."

The communicative intention—the invitation expressing hospitality—is successfully preserved.

National food names also illustrate the complexity of equivalence.

Example:

"Onam palov tayyorladi."

Literal translation:

"My mother cooked pilaf."



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Although pilaf is internationally recognized, many contemporary translators prefer "My mother prepared traditional Uzbek plov."

or

"My mother prepared plov, the traditional Uzbek rice dish."

This strategy preserves both lexical meaning and cultural identity.

Lawrence Venuti argues that excessive domestication may erase the cultural uniqueness of the original text [3]. In Uzbek prose, preserving words such as **mahalla**, **plov**, **sumalak**, **doppi**, and **Navruz** through foreignization enables international readers to encounter authentic Uzbek culture instead of culturally neutral substitutes.

Stylistic equivalence represents another essential aspect of literary translation. Uzbek prose frequently employs repetition, parallel constructions, and emotionally expressive vocabulary to create artistic rhythm.

For example,

"U kutdi, yana kutdi, umid bilan kutdi."

A literal translation

"He waited, waited again, waited with hope."

is grammatically acceptable but stylistically weak.

A more literary rendering might be

"He kept waiting—again and again—with unwavering hope."

The translator recreates the stylistic intensity instead of mechanically reproducing lexical repetition.

Mona Baker notes that complete equivalence is rarely achievable because languages conceptualize reality differently [4]. Therefore, translators should pursue **functional adequacy**, ensuring that the translated text performs the same communicative and aesthetic functions as the original.



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An analysis of English translations of twentieth-century Uzbek prose demonstrates that successful translators rarely rely on a single strategy. Instead, they combine transliteration, descriptive translation, functional equivalence, pragmatic adaptation, and explanatory techniques according to the cultural significance and stylistic role of each lexical unit. Such an integrated approach enables the preservation of the artistic originality, national identity, and communicative effectiveness of Uzbek literary works while making them accessible to international readers.

The present study demonstrates that achieving equivalence and adequacy in the English translations of twentieth-century Uzbek prose is a multidimensional process that extends beyond linguistic correspondence. Successful literary translation requires preserving not only the semantic content of the source text but also its stylistic features, pragmatic functions, emotional impact, and national-cultural identity. The analysis confirms that culture-specific realia, idiomatic expressions, historical references, and stylistic devices constitute the most challenging elements in the translation of Uzbek prose into English.

The research findings indicate that no single translation strategy is universally effective. Instead, translators should adopt a flexible and context-sensitive approach by combining transliteration, descriptive translation, functional equivalence, pragmatic adaptation, and explanatory translation according to the communicative purpose of the text. Such an integrated strategy enables translators to maintain the artistic value of the original work while ensuring its accessibility and comprehensibility for English-speaking readers.

Furthermore, the study confirms that complete linguistic equivalence is rarely attainable in literary translation because every language reflects its own cultural worldview. Therefore, translation adequacy should be regarded as the primary criterion for evaluating literary translations, as it allows the translator to preserve



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the author's communicative intention, aesthetic effect, and cultural authenticity without sacrificing readability in the target language.

In conclusion, the English translation of twentieth-century Uzbek prose plays an important role in promoting Uzbek literary heritage and strengthening intercultural dialogue. High-quality translations not only introduce international readers to the richness of Uzbek culture but also contribute to the global recognition of Uzbek literature. Future research may focus on corpus-based analyses, the application of artificial intelligence in literary translation, and comparative studies of multiple English translations of the same Uzbek literary works to further improve translation quality and theoretical understanding of equivalence and adequacy in intercultural communication.

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