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**THE ISSUE OF EQUIVALENCE IN ENGLISH–AZERBAIJANI LITERARY
TRANSLATION: A FUNCTIONAL AND COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE
ABSTRACT**

This article explores equivalence in English–Azerbaijani literary translation through functional and cognitive perspectives. Based on E. Nida’s theories, examples from George Orwell’s “Nineteen Eighty-four” (“1984”) are analyzed. Findings show that while formal equivalence preserves structure and terminology, functional equivalence adapts expressions to elicit the same effect on target readers. The cognitive approach highlights translators’ mental processes such as conceptual mapping, problem-solving, and cultural schemas. The study concludes that combining functional and cognitive strategies helps preserve meaning, style, and aesthetic impact, ensuring effective intercultural communication.

Key words: equivalence, translation, target language, express, meaning, source language

Equivalence, which focuses on the study of semantic relations between source and target texts, constitutes an important part of translation theory. Equivalence is the similarity in the translation of a word or expression from one language into another; it is the relationship between the source and target texts or their segments.

The concept of equivalence explains the main features of translation studies. It remains a central yet contentious issue in translation studies, particularly in literary translation. Different schools of thought, such as structural, functional, and cognitive approaches, have attempted to redefine or expand this concept. Literary translation, in particular, challenges the notion of absolute equivalence due to the complexity of style, imagery, and cultural context. Therefore, equivalence should be regarded not as a fixed correspondence but as a dynamic and context-dependent relationship.

It is known that languages differ from one another both in terms of grammatical structure and semantic composition. Each language possesses certain unique features that give it a distinctive character, as well as a rich vocabulary in various fields such as culture, technology, and more. Some languages are rich in metaphors and modal particles, while others have extensive written and oral literary sources. So, the concept of equivalence has long been at the center of scholarly debate, particularly in the realm of literary translation, equivalence poses a complex challenge. The process becomes more intricate in the case of English–Azerbaijani literary translation, where not only the linguistic systems but also the literary traditions and cultural references of the two languages diverge significantly. This makes the translator’s task not only a linguistic transfer but also a cultural mediation. The pursuit of equivalence in such contexts often requires creative strategies that balance accuracy with aesthetic and cultural resonance. Consequently, equivalence in English–Azerbaijani literary translation should be understood as a flexible and context-sensitive practice rather than a rigid one-to-one correspondence. English, with its Indo-European roots and globalized literary heritage, differs fundamentally from Azerbaijani, a Turkic language deeply influenced by Persian, Russian, and Turkish, and shaped by its unique sociohistorical context. In order to establish effective intercultural communication, all the characteristics of the target language must be approached with respect. Taking all this into account, a translator should adjust the attitude toward the target language in order to achieve equivalence between texts. ” [2. p.3].

In literary translation several major approaches are used to understand and analyze the translation process. Each focuses on a different aspect of what translation is and how it works. It should be noted that there are no translations that are exactly equivalent to each other, but there are translations that are as close as possible to each other. E. Nida proposed two main types of equivalence: formal equivalence and dynamic or functional equivalence. [3. p.156]. In formal equivalent translation, it is essential that the target language message matches the source language message, that is, word by word, sentence by sentence, or certain concept by concept. This type of translation attempts to convey a number of formal elements, such as grammatical units, consistency in word usage, and the meaning of the source text into the target language. As a practical application of formal equivalent translation, let us consider the following examples from George Orwell’s “1984”

1. “Hate Week” [5.p.3]. – “Nifrət Həftəsi” [5.p.34]. This concept is Orwell’s artistic invention and has been translated literally, that is, through formal equivalence.

2. “Thought Police” [5.p.4]. – “Fikir Polisi” [5. p.35]. In this case, the translation fully preserves the exact formal equivalent of the original expression.

3. “Newspeak” – “Yeni Dil.” This term refers to the official language of Oceania. The translation employs the formal equivalent of “Newspeak” and adapts it appropriately to the text.

4. “Victory Mansion” [5.p.6]. – “Qələbə yaşayış evi” [5. p.37]. In English, mansion means “apartment building” or “large residential house.” The translator rendered this expression through formal equivalence.

Unlike the formal equivalent translation, dynamic or functional equivalent-oriented translation is based on the principle of equivalent effect. Here the translator tries to express a certain expression or concept in a way that is culturally appropriate to the target language. In this type of translation, the main focus is not on the source text, but on the readers of the target text and their reaction. In any case, it is essential to consider the linguistic and cultural relationships that exist between the source and target languages. In dynamic equivalence translation, achieving a natural expression in the target language is crucial, as the focus lies not on maintaining the original form but on eliciting a similar response from the target audience. As an example of dynamic (or functional) equivalence, let us consider several cases from George Orwell’s “1984”

1. “.... There was shallow alcove in which Winston was sitting” [5.p.7]. –“..... divarda o qədər də dərin olmayan girinti vardı” [5.p.39]. The word *alcove* has an exact formal equivalent in Azerbaijani—“*taxça*”, “*camaxatan*”. However, in the translation, the word “*girinti*” was used, most likely to emphasize primitive living conditions through a dynamic equivalent.

2. “A sense of helplessness had descended upon him” [5.p.9]. - “Bütün varlığına tam bir köməksizlik hissi hakim kəsilmişdi” [5.p.39]. Here, “*descended upon*” has been translated into Azerbaijani with a new dynamic equivalent as “*hakim kəsilmişdi*”.

3. They were nosers-out of unorthodoxy” [5.p.12]. “Onlar hər yerə baş vurub, mütləq bir nöqsan tapmağa çalışırdılar” [5.p.42]. In this sentence, the word “*unorthodoxy*” has been translated as “*nöqsan*” (fault), although “*unorthodoxy*” more commonly conveys the sense of “*heresy*”; the equivalent of “*nosers-out*” is the expression “*burnunu soxmaq*” (to poke one’s nose in); finally, “*they were nosers-out*” literally means “they poked their noses in,” i.e., the sentence is originally given in noun form, but in the translation, by adding the verb “*çalışıblar*” (tried), the overall structure of the sentence has been altered.

4. “He continued to feel a peculiar uneasiness” [5.p.12]. “Hər dəfə onu görəndə qorxu və düşmənçilik, çox qəribə hisslər keçirirdi” [5.p.42]. In this sentence, “*he continued*” has been translated as “*hər dəfə görəndə*” (whenever he saw him), and “*peculiar uneasiness*” as “*qorxu və düşmənçilik*” (fear and hostility). That is, dynamic equivalents derived from the overall context of the work have been applied here.

Although formal and dynamic or functional equivalence differ from each other, both hold equal importance in translation.

The analysis of English–Azerbaijani literary translation demonstrates that achieving equivalence is a complex and multifaceted process. Both formal and dynamic (functional) approaches play significant roles in ensuring that the meaning, style, and effect of the source text are effectively conveyed to the target audience. While formal equivalence preserves the structure and terminology of the original, functional equivalence emphasizes the target readers' reception, often adapting linguistic and cultural elements to create a natural and contextually appropriate text.

Preserving the meaning, style, and impact of the original text in literary translation is a complex issue due to significant linguistic, cultural, and stylistic differences. Functional and cognitive approaches provide useful frameworks for analyzing how translators address these challenges. In order to express the content of the source text in a way that is understandable and in accordance with the norms of the target language, the source text is not fully reflected in the target language in terms of form, that is, it undergoes certain changes. Since all languages differ in terms of form, it is natural to change the forms in order to preserve the content of the source text. [2.p.5]. Any information understood by speakers of the source language may not be fully or accurately comprehended by readers of the target language. In this regard, the translator should make any necessary formal adjustments to convey the message using the different structural forms of the target language. According to E. Nida, if the form is not regarded as a vital part of the message, then anything that can be expressed in one language can also be conveyed in another. [2.p.4]. Literary texts often serve emotive, poetic, and aesthetic functions, which must be preserved or adapted in translation. A translator may need to modify idioms, metaphors, or cultural references to achieve the same function in the target language.

The functional approach in literary translation focuses on the purpose that the translated text is meant to serve in the target language. This approach highlights how the translated text functions within the cultural, social, and literary environment of the target language, instead of focusing on word-for-word translation of the source text. A translator should take into account the intended purpose of the text. For instance, if the text is meant for entertainment, educational or other purposes, the translation should effectively fulfill that specific function. The translation text should be meaningful and understandable to the readers of the target language. If necessary, a translator should make appropriate changes to ensure that the translated text aligns with the cultural norms and expectations of the target audience. Literary translation is considered a creative process, as the translator may modify certain elements to preserve the feeling, tone, and style of the source text. In functional approach a translator's goal is not just to translate the words, but to deliver a similar experience to readers of the target language. So, the functional approach prioritizes how well the

source text functions in the target language rather than how it reflects the form of the original text.

While the functional approach emphasizes the purpose or function of the translation and its impact on the target audience, the cognitive approach focuses on how concepts, mental images and metaphors are interpreted and processed during translation. This approach considers the mental mechanisms involved in understanding the source text, mapping its concepts onto the target language, and reconstructing meaning in a way that preserves both semantic and cultural nuances. Cognitive translation studies examine how translators perceive, store, and manipulate linguistic and extralinguistic information, often relying on problem-solving strategies, inferencing, and adaptation to bridge gaps where direct equivalence is impossible. Furthermore, the cognitive approach highlights the role of the translator's prior knowledge, cultural competence, and mental schemas in shaping translation decisions, offering insight into both the challenges and the creative strategies employed in literary translation. By analyzing these mental processes, researchers can better understand how meaning is transferred across languages and how the interplay between language, thought, and culture influences the final translated text. Recent scholarship has also shown that cognitive processes are closely linked to the translator's emotional state and level of concentration. Eye-tracking and think-aloud protocols, for instance, have provided empirical evidence on how translators navigate textual complexity. In literary translation, these insights help explain the balance between fidelity to the source and creativity in the target text. The cognitive approach therefore bridges theoretical perspectives with empirical research, making it one of the most dynamic areas in translation studies. Ultimately, it sheds light not only on translation outcomes but also on the translator's cognitive journey during the act of translation.

The interplay of functional and cognitive strategies allows translators to navigate the linguistic, cultural, and stylistic differences between English and Azerbaijani, producing translations that are faithful to the original in both content and effect. By combining an understanding of linguistic structures with attention to the mental and cultural processes involved in translation, literary translators can achieve equivalence that preserves the integrity, emotive power, and literary artistry of the source text.

Scientific Result. The study demonstrates that equivalence in English–Azerbaijani literary translation is not limited to a linguistic correspondence between words and sentences, but is instead achieved through a combination of formal, functional, and cognitive approaches. By examining George Orwell's *1984*, the research highlights how translators employ both structural fidelity and cultural adaptation to convey meaning, style, and effect to the target audience.

Scientific Novelty. The novelty of this study lies in its integrated application of functional and cognitive approaches to the analysis of English–Azerbaijani literary translation. This article extends the discussion of formal and dynamic equivalence by emphasizing the cognitive processes—concept mapping, problem-solving, and cultural schemas—that underlie translation decisions. The combination of functional and cognitive perspectives offers a more comprehensive framework for understanding how equivalence is achieved in literary contexts.

Practical Significance and Economic Efficiency. The study provides translators, educators, and students with practical guidance on how to achieve equivalence between English and Azerbaijani in literary translation by combining functional and cognitive approaches. This contributes to improving translation quality, fostering intercultural communication, and enriching translator training programs. At the same time, the application of these strategies enhances the value and marketability of translated literature, expanding readership and supporting the publishing industry. In this way, the research not only has academic and cultural relevance but also creates tangible economic benefits for the field of translation and literature.

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İngilis–Azərbaycan bədii tərcüməsində ekvivalentlik məsələsi: funksional və kognitiv baxış

Xülasə

Məqalə ingilis–azərbaycan bədii tərcüməsində ekvivalentlik məsələsini funksional və kognitiv baxış bucağından araşdırır. E. Nidanın nəzəriyyələrinə əsaslanaraq Corc Oruellin “1984” əsərindən nümunələr təhlil olunur. Nəticələr göstərir ki, formal ekvivalentlik mənbə mətnin quruluşunu və terminologiyasını qoruyur, funksional ekvivalentlik isə ifadələri hədəf oxucuda eyni təsir yaratmaq üçün uyğunlaşdırır. Kognitiv yanaşma tərcüməçilərin konseptual xəritələşdirmə, problem həll etmə və

mədəni sxemlər kimi zehni proseslərini önə çəkir. Araşdırma nəticəsində müəyyən olunur ki, funksional və kognitiv strategiyaların birgə tətbiqi mənanı, üslubu və estetik təsiri qorumağa, həmçinin səmərəli mədəniyyətlərarası ünsiyyətə xidmət edir.
Açar sözlər: ekvivalentlik, tərcümə, hədəf dil, ifadə etmək, məna, mənbə dil

**РЗАЕВА Г.
ГАСЫМОВА А**

**ПРОБЛЕМА ЭКВИВАЛЕНТНОСТИ В
АНГЛИЙСКО-АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОМ ЛИТЕРАТУРНОМ ПЕРЕВОДЕ:
ФУНКЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ И КОГНИТИВНЫЙ ПОДХОД
АННОТАЦИЯ**

В статье рассматривается проблема эквивалентности в англо-азербайджанском художественном переводе с функциональной и когнитивной точек зрения. На основе теорий Ю. Найды анализируются примеры из романа Джорджа Оруэлла 1984. Результаты показывают, что формальная эквивалентность сохраняет структуру и терминологию исходного текста, тогда как функциональная эквивалентность адаптирует выражения для создания аналогичного эффекта у читателей целевого языка. Когнитивный подход подчеркивает мыслительные процессы переводчиков, такие как концептуальное картирование, решение проблем и культурные схемы. В заключение делается вывод, что сочетание функциональных и когнитивных стратегий помогает сохранить смысл, стиль и эстетическое воздействие оригинала, обеспечивая эффективную межкультурную коммуникацию.

Ключевые слова: эквивалентность, перевод, язык перевода, выражать, значение, язык оригинала

Rəyçi: f.e.d., prof. Azad Məmmədov