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PRAGMATIC EQUIVALENCE OF ENGLISH DIALECTAL UNITS IN UZBEK TRANSLATIONS OF BRITISH FICTION

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Abstract. The paper investigates the problem of pragmatic equivalence in the translation of English dialectal implicit units into Uzbek. It argues that the dialectal node functions as a pragmatic act — a stance-taking device — rather than as a lexical item, and that equivalence must therefore be measured at the level of perlocutionary effect and social indexing, not at the level of formal correspondence. Through comparative analysis of source-text fragments and their Uzbek renderings, recurrent loss patterns are identified (neutralisation of social index, loss of humour, register flattening) and a set of equivalence-oriented techniques is proposed, including prosodic compensation, syntactic stylisation and the calibrated use of Uzbek colloquial markers. The results confirm that pragmatic equivalence is attainable, though always partially, and that its degree correlates with the translator's awareness of the implicit layer.

Keywords: pragmatics; equivalence; dialect; implicit meaning; translation loss; stance; British fiction; Uzbek.

Language variation is one of the fundamental characteristics of literary communication. In British fiction, dialectal expressions frequently function as markers of regional identity, social class, educational background, cultural affiliation, emotional involvement, and interpersonal relationships. Writers employ dialect not only to reproduce the speech patterns of particular communities but also to establish narrative authenticity, differentiate characters, create humour, express social criticism, and challenge dominant linguistic norms. Consequently, dialect is not merely a linguistic deviation from standard English; it is a meaningful literary resource that contributes to the ideological, aesthetic, and pragmatic organisation of a fictional text.

The translation of dialect presents a particularly complex problem when the source and target languages belong to different sociolinguistic and cultural systems. British English encompasses a wide range of regional varieties, including Cockney, Yorkshire English, Scottish English, Geordie, and other local forms. These varieties differ in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and pragmatic conventions. Their literary representation may communicate information about a character's geographical origin, social experience, education, group membership, or attitude towards other participants in a conversation. However, Uzbek does not possess direct equivalents for every British regional variety, and a dialectal feature associated with a specific British locality may not have a corresponding geographical or social meaning in Uzbek.

Pragmatic equivalence provides a productive framework for investigating this problem. It shifts attention from the formal correspondence between linguistic structures to the communicative effects produced by those structures in particular contexts. Nevertheless, pragmatic equivalence should not be interpreted as the mechanical reproduction of an identical response in every reader. Readers of British fiction and Uzbek translations possess different cultural knowledge, linguistic expectations, and associations with non-standard speech. Therefore, the translator's task is to reconstruct the most significant functions of the original dialectal unit while respecting the norms and expressive resources of Uzbek literary discourse.

In sociolinguistics, dialect is generally understood as a language variety associated with a particular geographical region or social group. Dialectal variation may occur at phonological, lexical, grammatical, and discourse levels. Trudgill (2000) demonstrates the importance of regional and social variation in understanding how language reflects community membership and

social relationships. From this perspective, dialect cannot be reduced to a collection of unusual words or incorrect grammatical forms. It constitutes a systematic variety whose features acquire meaning through social use.

In literary discourse, dialectal features frequently perform several functions simultaneously. They may establish a character's regional background, distinguish one character from another, represent social inequality, create a sense of oral immediacy, or challenge the authority of standard language. Their significance therefore extends beyond linguistic description to include literary characterisation and ideological positioning.

A distinction should be made between regional dialect, social dialect, and register. Regional dialect is associated primarily with geographical origin, whereas social dialect relates to social-group membership and stratification. Register, in contrast, concerns variation according to communicative situation, purpose, and degree of formality. Although these categories may overlap in literary dialogue, they are not interchangeable. A working-class character may use regional dialect in one situation and relatively standard English in another, depending on the interlocutor and communicative objective.

This distinction is important for translation because a translator may preserve informality while losing regional identity, or preserve social hierarchy while introducing an inaccurate geographical association. A successful analysis must therefore establish which dimension of variation is most relevant in a particular passage.

Pragmatics investigates how meaning is interpreted in relation to speakers, listeners, communicative purposes, and contextual assumptions. Leech (1983) highlights the relationship between linguistic choices and interpersonal communication, while Levinson (1983) provides a systematic account of contextual meaning and pragmatic interpretation.

In literary dialogue, pragmatic meaning is not always explicitly encoded in the words themselves. It may emerge from the relationship between interlocutors, the circumstances of the conversation, shared knowledge, implied attitudes, and the broader narrative context. Consequently, the same dialectal expression may function as a friendly greeting, a sign of social solidarity, an insult, or a deliberate challenge, depending on the situation.

For example, the use of a non-standard grammatical form may be neutral within a character's speech community but socially marked in the eyes of another character. Similarly, an informal address term may communicate solidarity among friends but appear disrespectful when directed towards a socially superior person.

The translator must therefore distinguish between the linguistic form of an expression and the pragmatic meaning it acquires in context. The primary question is not simply what a dialectal unit denotes, but what it does in a particular interaction.

The concept of equivalence has occupied a central position in translation theory. Nida (1964) distinguishes formal correspondence from dynamic equivalence, emphasising the importance of the relationship between a translated message and its intended effect on the target audience. Although the precise conditions of equivalence remain debated, this distinction is useful for dialect translation because literal reproduction may preserve linguistic form while failing to convey social and communicative meaning.

Baker (2018) examines equivalence at different linguistic levels and discusses the difficulties associated with non-equivalence, including differences in expressive meaning and pragmatic conventions. Her approach supports the view that translation decisions must be made with regard to the communicative function of an expression rather than its lexical meaning alone.

Newmark (1988) distinguishes semantic and communicative approaches to translation. In the context of dialectal dialogue, a communicative orientation can help the translator reproduce the intended interpersonal effect without imposing an artificial dialect on the target text. Nevertheless,

communicative effectiveness should not become an excuse for disregarding the source text's cultural specificity or literary style.

Pragmatic equivalence in the present study is defined as the degree to which a translated dialectal unit preserves the principal contextual meanings and communicative functions of its source expression. These functions may include social identification, interpersonal positioning, emotional evaluation, humour, irony, and character differentiation.

Pragmatic equivalence is therefore treated as multidimensional. A translation may preserve the propositional meaning of an utterance while partially losing its regional associations. Conversely, it may reproduce informality and interpersonal warmth while changing the precise linguistic structure. The adequacy of a translation must be evaluated in relation to the communicative priorities of the passage.

Literary translators face a fundamental dilemma when transferring dialect. Reproducing source-language dialect through an existing target-language dialect may create an inappropriate geographical or social association. For instance, translating a Yorkshire expression into a dialect associated with a particular Uzbek region could suggest that a British character originates from that Uzbek-speaking community. Such a choice may preserve the general impression of regional speech but distort the cultural setting of the novel.

On the other hand, translating every dialectal expression into standard Uzbek may eliminate differences between characters and reduce the stylistic diversity of the source text. The resulting translation may communicate the plot accurately but weaken characterisation and narrative authenticity.

Agha (2003) demonstrates that linguistic forms acquire social meanings through processes of enregisterment, whereby particular ways of speaking become associated with recognisable social identities and cultural images. This perspective is relevant to literary translation because the social meaning of a dialectal form cannot be assumed to transfer automatically between languages.

The theoretical framework of the present study therefore combines sociolinguistic variation, pragmatic interpretation, and functional approaches to translation. It assumes that dialectal units should be analysed according to their linguistic form, contextual meaning, literary function, and cultural associations before a translation strategy is selected.

Analysing passages from Hardy, Lawrence and Kelman, the study isolates three recurrent pragmatic functions of dialectal nodes. The identificatory function anchors the character in a community and a landscape; its loss dissolves the novel's social geography. The solidary function marks in-group belonging and intimacy, often realised through dialect lexis and phonetic spelling; its loss makes peasant or working-class characters sound like neutral narrators. The attitudinal function carries irony, self-deprecation or defiance encoded in dialectal choice itself; it is the subtlest and the most frequently lost.

In the corpus, Uzbek translations preserved the identificatory function in roughly two-thirds of cases (typically via toponyms and realia), the solidary function in about one-third (via colloquial particles and address forms), and the attitudinal function in fewer than one-fifth — an asymmetry that quantifies where translation loss concentrates.

Three techniques proved most effective in restoring pragmatic force. Prosodic compensation transfers the rhythmic and melodic profile of dialect speech into Uzbek through sentence segmentation, exclamatory syntax and intonation-loaded particles (ku, ana, eshittizmi), which Uzbek uses far more freely than English. Syntactic stylisation deploys non-standard word order, ellipsis and pronominal patterns of Uzbek colloquial speech to signal low formality without pinning the character to a specific Uzbek region. Calibrated colloquialism introduces socially marked but regionally neutral lexis, allowing the reader to register social difference without false geographic cues.

Each technique is partial, and the article insists that partiality is not failure: pragmatic equivalence is a gradient, and even a shifted effect — say, rural colouring where the original has urban — may preserve the essential work of positioning the character socially.

The study demonstrates that pragmatic equivalence for English dialectal implicit units in Uzbek translation is achievable in degrees, and that its achievement depends on treating the dialectal node as a stance act rather than a lexical item. The proposed techniques — prosodic compensation, syntactic stylisation and calibrated colloquialism — offer the translator an operational toolkit consistent with the dissertation's model of adequacy as pragmatic, not formal, correspondence.

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