

Functional-Semantic Analysis of the Uzbek
Translation of Metaphors in Goethe's
Die Wahlverwandtschaften

MARGUBA KHOSHIMOVNA BUIKOVA
Andijan State Medical Institute, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the features of rendering metaphors from Goethe's Die Wahlverwandtschaften in the Uzbek translation. The aim of the study is to determine the extent to which the semantic, stylistic, and linguocultural aspects of metaphorical units in the source text are preserved in translation. The research employs comparative-analytical, contextual, semantic, and functional approaches; metaphorical units in the German original and their Uzbek equivalents are comparatively analyzed. The findings show that metaphors are translated through several strategies: full equivalence, functional equivalence, metaphorical substitution, cultural adaptation, and expressive intensification. In some cases, the original imagery is preserved, while in others the conceptual center shifts or is replaced by culturally specific expressive means. The results demonstrate that in literary translation it is more important to preserve the artistic function, emotional impact, and pragmatic load of a metaphor than to translate it literally.

Keywords: Metaphor, literary translation, functional equivalence, semantic transformation, linguocultural approach, cognitive metaphor, translation analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Without figurative devices, it is difficult to imagine a literary work and its imagery. Metaphor, as one of such devices, serves

in translation as a means of expressing and evaluating the author's original idea. Therefore, in translating metaphors, it is essential to preserve not only lexical meaning but also imagery, emotional impact, and cultural connotations an issue that remains one of the key challenges in translation studies. Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* is rich in metaphorical layers, where figurative units actively convey characters' psychology, philosophical views, and social relations. To effectively communicate meaning to the reader, the translator must first correctly interpret the figurative devices of the source text and then find adequate equivalents in the target language.

Aristotle views metaphor as the artistic power of language. To him, metaphor is a unique transfer of the meaning of a word. According to another definition: metaphor (from Greek, "metaphora" – "transfer") means transferring a characteristic or action of one thing to another based on their similarities. In an author's works, the use of a word in a meaning other than its literal one that is, in a figurative sense – is considered a metaphor.

Besides literary studies, other fields such as philosophy, linguistics, logic, and psychology have also examined metaphor either from a scientific perspective or within the scope of their own interests. In literary studies, this figurative device - metaphor – began to be examined not only as a mere figure of speech, but also in terms of its role in artistic works and literary thought, as well as its characteristics that define creative style. In Uzbek linguistics, starting from the 1970s, a number of scholarly works emerged dedicated to the study of figurative devices, polysemy, and the transferred meanings of words. In this regard, the linguist M. Mirtojiyev, in his scientific research, includes metaphor among the means that create transferred meanings and focuses on identifying the distinctive features of metaphor within the system of such devices, differentiating it from others. The linguist Gulbahor Kobuljonova defines metaphor and its linguistic nature as follows: "The transfer of a name in metaphor is based on the broad similarity between objects, qualities, actions, and states. Structurally, metaphors are divided into

simple and expanded, as well as artistic and linguistic metaphors.”

The aim of this study is to analyze how metaphors in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* are rendered in Uzbek and to evaluate their functional-semantic characteristics. The object of the study is the German original and its Uzbek translation, while the subject is the transformation of metaphorical units in translation. The novelty of the research lies in analyzing metaphors not simply as “preserved” or “lost,” but through functional equivalence, semantic shift, and linguocultural adaptation.

METHODS

The study applies comparative translation analysis, contextual analysis, semantic analysis, and a linguocultural approach. First, metaphorical units in the original text were identified; then they were compared with their Uzbek translations, analyzing their meaning, imagery, and stylistic function.

Metaphors were classified according to full equivalence, functional equivalence, metaphorical substitution, expressive intensification, and cultural adaptation.

In the analysis, the artistic function and impact of metaphor on the reader were prioritized over its formal structure. Therefore, in some examples, the lack of literal equivalence in translation was not considered a flaw but was evaluated from the perspective of artistic adequacy.

RESULTS

According to a number of research findings, metaphor is one of the most powerful figurative devices in literature. In linguistics, the study of metaphors differs from philosophical analysis in that it directly examines the grammatical, semantic, lexical, and stylistic features of the metaphorized word. For this reason, every word in the text holds significant importance. Modern linguistics focuses on the cognitive aspects of metaphor, viewing the relationship between language and thought as a crucial factor in understanding the mechanisms of new idea formation in the

human mind. The study of these phenomena helps to comprehend important stages and criteria of human development. From the perspective of modern linguistics, metaphor is one of these mechanisms.

As a result of our research analysis, several main methods of metaphor translation were identified.

The first method is rendering metaphor with metaphor. For example, *eine Flamme der Leidenschaft* is translated as *ishqolovi* (the flame of passion). In this example, both the original phrase *eine Flamme der Leidenschaft* and its Uzbek equivalent *ishqolovi* are based on metaphorical nomination, where an abstract emotional state is conceptualized through the concrete natural phenomenon – fire. Lexically and semantically, these units manifest as metaphors, while cognitively they represent the parallel expression of the “passion/desire – fire” conceptual model in two languages – that is, the semantic components of fire (burning, heat, intensification) are transferred to the concept of passion. From the standpoint of translation studies, this example is considered a successful case of rendering metaphor with metaphor, as the image in the original is not neutralized in translation; rather, the component *Flamme* is equivalently recreated as *olov*, thereby preserving meaning, emotional-expressive load, and poetic impact simultaneously. Thus, not only the general meaning but also the internal conceptual structure of the image corresponds between the original and translation, ensuring linguistic and poetic adequacy.

The second method is functional equivalence. For example, the original phrase *in sichselbstzurückkehren* denotes a return to one’s inner spiritual world, while in translation it is rendered as *o‘zo‘ylarigag‘arqbo‘lib* (immersed in one’s thoughts) – conveying the same psychological state through a different image but with a similar stylistic effect. Thus, the image changes slightly in translation, but its function is preserved: both expressions indicate the character’s detachment from the external world and immersion in inner experience. Therefore, this example can be evaluated as a translation based on functional equivalence. Another notable example is *das durch die Seelefuhr* and its Uzbek equivalent *yuragigaog‘irbotdi* (his heart was

heavily impacted). In the original, the emotional impact is expressed through a dynamic image – “passing through the soul” – while in translation it is recreated as “weighing heavily on the heart.” In both cases, the emotional blow is conceptualized through physical sensation, making it scientifically justifiable to interpret these units as metaphors. For this reason, this passage can be assessed as an example of translation where the functional-pragmatic effect of metaphor is preserved.

The third method is metaphoric substitution. In this approach, a metaphor from the original text is rendered in translation using a different conceptual model. For example, the phrase *ein Stein vom Herzen fallen* is translated as *yelkasidanmisoli tog' qulagandaybo'ldi* (it was as if a mountain had fallen from his shoulders). While the image of heaviness is preserved, the translation shifts the concept from “heart” to “shoulders,” resulting in a conceptual displacement.

The fourth method – expressive intensification. In some cases, translation introduces additional imagery not present in the original, thereby amplifying the emotional impact of the text. For instance, the phrase *sein Herz brannte* is rendered as *uningyuragiolovbo'libyondi* (his heart burned like fire). Here, the original metaphor – the heart's “burning” – compactly conveys the subject's intense emotional state. In translation, the addition of *olovbo'lib* (like fire) intensifies the metaphor both semantically and emotionally. As a result, an implicit image in the source text becomes explicit in the target text, making the character's inner experience more dramatic, visual, and impactful. Therefore, this translation strategy can be evaluated as a transformation that prioritizes linguistic-poetic adequacy and expressive effect over formal equivalence.

The table below scientifically organizes the examples provided according to the types of metaphor translation. The main criterion for this classification is the degree to which the original image is preserved, altered, or intensified in translation.

Originality	Translation	Visual means	Type of translation	Scientific explanation
<i>Eine Flammeder Leidenschaft</i>	<i>ishqolovi</i>	Metaphor	Metaphor expressed through another metaphor	The image of <i>Flamme</i> (flame) in the original is preserved in translation as <i>olov</i> (fire); the image, semantic core, and poetic effect remain almost unchanged between source and target language
<i>insichselbstzurückkehren</i>	<i>o'zo'ylariga g'arqbo'lib</i>	Metaphor in translation	Functional equivalence	In the original, the introspective state is expressed more neutrally, while in translation the image of <i>g'arqbo'lish</i> (drowning) is used, conveying the same psychological state through a different metaphorical model; the image has changed, but the function is preserved
<i>das durch die Seele fuhr</i>	<i>yuragigaog'irboidi</i>	Metaphor	Metaphorical substitution	In the original, the emotional blow is expressed through the model <i>jon/ruhdano'tibketi sh</i> (lit. passing through the soul), while in translation it is rendered with the model <i>yurakkabotish</i> ; the semantic effect is preserved, but the image has been replaced

<i>ein Stein vom Herzen fallen</i>	<i>yelkasidanmi soli tog' qulagandayb o'ldi</i>	Metaphor in the original, simile-like image in translation	Expressive intensification	The metaphor <i>yurakdan tosh tushdi</i> in the original is translated with a stronger, more dramatic image <i>tog' qulaganday</i> (like a mountain collapsing); emotional relief is intensified, but both the image and form have changed.
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The examples provided demonstrate that in literary translation, metaphors are not always recreated using the same method: in some cases, they are directly preserved as equivalent metaphors, in others, they are replaced with functionally appropriate images, and in certain situations, the translator either substitutes the image or enhances its expressiveness to recreate the poetic effect of the original in the target language. Therefore, when evaluating metaphor translation, it is necessary to consider not only lexical equivalence but also the semantic core of the image, its stylistic function, and pragmatic impact together.

Additionally, the text contains examples where certain metaphors are translated with near-complete equivalence. For instance, the phrase *den silbernen Streifen des Flusses* rendered as *daryoningkumushtasmasi* (the silver ribbon of the river) shows that imagery, visuality, and aesthetic effect are largely preserved, and the metaphor from the original is fully recreated in translation through an equivalent metaphorical expression. In this unit, the river is poetically renamed as a silver ribbon, combining color, shine, and elongation into a single compact image. In translation, this semantic-imagery complex is fully preserved, ensuring linguopoetic adequacy.

DISCUSSION

The results indicate that the successful transfer of metaphors in literary translation often relies not on formal correspondence but on functional and pragmatic correspondence. Many metaphors from Goethe's works are recreated in Uzbek through national images, highlighting the importance of linguocultural adaptation in translation. In some cases, the translator softens the original image, while in others, they intensify it, resulting in a translation that feels more natural and impactful for the Uzbek reader.

However, not all examples are equally successful. For instance, the rendering of "eingeübtesAuge" as "nazarito'q" is semantically debatable, since the German expression primarily conveys the meaning of attentiveness and experience, whereas the Uzbek variant emphasizes contentment. Similarly, units like *sicher sein* or *grausam* should not be rigidly classified as metaphors in all contexts; it is more scientifically appropriate to carefully express their figurative or contextual semantic possibilities.

The analyses in the article reveal another important aspect: in metaphor translation, "meaning" and "effect" do not always transfer in the same way. In some cases, the meaning is relatively preserved, but imagery diminishes; in other instances, imagery is intensified, yet the conceptual center shifts slightly. Therefore, when evaluating literary translation, the criterion of "to what extent it is adequate" is more effective than making a rigid judgment of "correct" or "incorrect."

In conclusion, the metaphors in Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* are recreated in the Uzbek translation using various strategies, among which functional equivalence, cultural adaptation, and metaphoric substitution play a leading role. In the translation process, the semantic core of metaphors is often preserved, but in some examples, conceptual shift or expressive intensification is observed. This demonstrates the necessity of applying semantic, stylistic, and linguocultural criteria together in the analysis of metaphor in literary translation. The results of this research confirm that in evaluating metaphor translation, one should rely more on artistic function

and factors affecting the reader than on formal correspondence. In this regard, the translation of Goethe's work serves as an important material that exemplifies the complex balance between artistic adequacy and national expressive possibilities.

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MARGUBA KHOSHIMOVNA BUIKOVA
 INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER,
 ANDIJAN STATE MEDICAL INSTITUTE,
 UZBEKISTAN.