



## A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SEMANTIC AND STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ORIGINAL AND TRANSLATED TEXTS: THE CASE OF A. KUNANBAEV'S POETIC LEGACY

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**ABSTRACT:** The relevance of this study stems from the need to examine semantic and structural differences in translated texts to ensure their effective adaptation for international audiences. This process must take into account the cultural characteristics of the target readership to prevent misunderstandings and cultural loss. The primary aim of this study is to analyse the structural and semantic features of poetic texts by A. Kunanbaev as translated into Russian and English. By comparing semantic and structural changes across translations, the study identifies key trends in literary translation. These changes are traced through lexical translation techniques such as concretisation, generalisation, semantic development, holistic transformation, contextual substitution, omission, and intonational substitution. The analysis reveals that translations into English tend to favour generalisation and structural transformation, while Russian translations more often employ concretisation, contextual substitution, and retention of poetic form. This distinction reflects broader linguistic and cultural proximities between Kazakh and Russian. The study also considers how cultural realia are treated across target languages, highlighting differences in domestication and foreignization strategies. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how semantic and structural shifts mediate the transmission of cultural and poetic meaning in translation.

**KEYWORDS:** fiction, non-equivalent vocabulary, cultural realities, lexical units, mentality.

## **ANÁLISIS COMPARATIVO DE LAS DIFERENCIAS SEMÁNTICAS Y ESTRUCTURALES ENTRE TEXTOS ORIGINALES Y TRADUCIDOS: EL CASO DEL LEGADO POÉTICO DE A. KUNANBAEV**

*RESUMEN:* La relevancia de este estudio radica en la necesidad de examinar las diferencias semánticas y estructurales en los textos traducidos para garantizar su adaptación eficaz a audiencias internacionales. Este proceso debe tener en cuenta las características culturales del público destinatario para evitar malentendidos y pérdidas culturales. El objetivo principal de este estudio es analizar las características estructurales y semánticas de los textos poéticos de A. Kunanbaev traducidos al ruso y al inglés. Al comparar los cambios semánticos y estructurales entre las traducciones, el estudio identifica las tendencias clave en la traducción literaria. Estos cambios se rastrean a través de técnicas de traducción léxica como la concretización, la generalización, el desarrollo semántico, la transformación holística, la sustitución contextual, la omisión y la sustitución entonacional. El análisis revela que las traducciones al inglés tienden a favorecer la generalización y la transformación estructural, mientras que las traducciones al ruso emplean con mayor frecuencia la concretización, la sustitución contextual y la retención de la forma poética. Esta distinción refleja las proximidades lingüísticas y culturales más amplias entre el kazajo y el ruso. El estudio también examina cómo se tratan los elementos culturales reales en las lenguas de destino, destacando las diferencias en las estrategias de domesticación y extranjerización. Los resultados contribuyen a una comprensión más profunda de cómo los cambios semánticos y estructurales median en la transmisión del significado cultural y poético en la traducción.

*PALABRAS CLAVE:* ficción, vocabulario no equivalente, realidades culturales, unidades léxicas, mentalidad.

## **ANALYSE COMPARATIVE DES DIFFÉRENCES SÉMANTIQUES ET STRUCTURELLES ENTRE LES TEXTES ORIGINAUX ET LES TEXTES TRADUITS : LE CAS DE L'ŒUVRE POÉTIQUE D'A. KUNANBAEV**

*RÉSUMÉ :* La pertinence de cette étude découle de la nécessité d'examiner les différences sémantiques et structurelles dans les textes traduits afin de garantir leur adaptation efficace à un public international. Ce processus doit tenir compte des caractéristiques culturelles du lectorat cible afin d'éviter les malentendus et la perte culturelle. L'objectif principal de cette étude est d'analyser les caractéristiques structurelles et sémantiques des textes poétiques d'A. Kunanbaev traduits en russe et en anglais. En comparant les changements sémantiques et structurels entre les traductions, l'étude identifie les principales tendances en matière de traduction littéraire. Ces changements sont retracés à l'aide de techniques de traduction lexicale telles que la concrétisation, la généralisation, le développement sémantique, la transformation holistique, la substitution contextuelle, l'omission et la substitution intonationale. L'analyse révèle que les traductions en anglais ont tendance à privilégier la généralisation et la transformation structurelle, tandis que les traductions en russe recourent plus souvent à la concrétisation, à la substitution contextuelle et à la conservation de la forme poétique. Cette

distinction reflète les proximités linguistiques et culturelles plus larges entre le kazakh et le russe. L'étude examine également la manière dont les réalités culturelles sont traitées dans les langues cibles, en soulignant les différences entre les stratégies de domestication et d'étrangisation. Les résultats contribuent à une meilleure compréhension de la manière dont les changements sémantiques et structurels influencent la transmission du sens culturel et poétique dans la traduction.

*MOTS-CLÉS* : fiction, vocabulaire non équivalent, réalités culturelles, unités lexicales, mentalité.

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## 1. Introduction

Abay Kunanbaev (1845–1904) was a Kazakh poet, writer, philosopher, composer, translator, and public figure whose contributions significantly shaped Kazakhstan's cultural and literary heritage. Writing in the classical Kazakh poetic style, he introduced new themes centered on morality, education, spirituality, and national identity, integrating traditional Kazakh values with Western philosophical thought. As the first Kazakh intellectual to bridge Eastern and Western ideas, his works emphasized enlightenment, ethical responsibility, and harmony with nature. Kunanbaev enriched the Kazakh language, expanded its expressive capacity, and fostered cultural growth through both his original works and translations of Russian and European writers. He also composed music that reflected his deep emotional and philosophical insight, contributing to the preservation of Kazakh folk traditions. Honoured through institutions and landmarks bearing his name, his legacy endures in Kazakhstan's national consciousness, with his works translated into ten languages, including English, Chinese, Arabic, and Russian (Saishanhuli et al., 2024).

The relevance of studying the semantic and structural differences in the translation of A. Kunanbaev's poetry into Russian and English is determined by several key aspects. As a central figure in Kazakh literature, A. Kunanbaev's works possess profound philosophical depth and embody the national identity of the Kazakh people. The increasing international interest in Kazakh culture necessitates high-quality translations of his works to reach a wider audience (Bedelbayeva et al., 2024; 2023). By drawing attention to A. Kunanbaev's poetry within an international context, a greater number of readers will be able to familiarise themselves with Kazakh culture as a whole, gaining insight into the national mentality and core values.

The study of structural semantics is essential for understanding how lexical units, such as words, phrases, and sentences, are formed, conveyed, and interpreted within a language. By examining the organization and interaction of linguistic elements, structural semantics enhances our knowledge of language structure, supports the development of cognitive linguistics by linking speech patterns to human thought, and informs translation studies by clarifying how meaning is transferred across languages. It also contributes to improving communication, advancing linguistic technologies, and creating more accurate lexicographic resources.

In artistic translation, it is crucial to preserve not only the content but also the rhythm, rhyme, metaphors, and other artistic devices (Kanecki, 2025). The study of semantic and structural changes in translation provides a deeper understanding of how cultural and aesthetic contexts are conveyed from one language to another. Analysing the translation strategies used to adapt Abay Kunanbaev's poetry for a foreign-language audience allows for the identification of common challenges and effective methods that help maintain the artistic value of the text. Consequently, this topic is relevant not only to translation studies but also to cultural and literary studies, as research on the translations of A. Kunanbaev's works contributes to a broader understanding of intercultural communication and the role of translation in preserving cultural heritage.

Examining structural and semantic changes through lexical transformations – such as concretisation, generalisation, semantic development, holistic transformation, contextual substitution, omission, and intonational substitution – is essential for understanding the linguistic and cultural characteristics of Kazakh, Russian, and English. These transformations can be observed in the literary works of the Kazakh poet and philosopher Abay Kunanbaev. Thus, the study of structural-semantic changes simultaneously facilitates an exploration of linguistic and cultural patterns in the Kazakh language and their transmission into Russian and English.

The issue of linguistic and cultural differences between languages has been extensively studied by researchers such as A. Akkaliyeva et al. (2021), K. Nurgali et al. (2022), and T.R. Imami et al. (2021). In his study, A.A. Mohammed (2022a) examined linguistic and cultural challenges in translation and proposed possible solutions. The research conducted by A. Akkaliyeva et al. focused on translation as a communicative strategy for representing national culture. This study explored the challenges associated with translating literature into an intermediate language and analysed culturally specific lexemes through the lens of intercultural communication. Linguistic and cultural differences in artistic translation, particularly within the Kazakh-Russian language pair, were examined in the work of K. Nurgali et al. This

study investigated the historical foundations of Kazakh-Russian interactions using examples from fiction.

Similarly, the study by T.R. Imami et al. (2021) addressed linguistic and cultural challenges in translation, specifically examining rhyme, wordplay, context, geographical and socio-cultural factors, and other elements. Thus, from a future research perspective, comparative studies of original and translated texts will continue to be of significant importance.

The study of semantic-structural shifts has been explored in the works of researchers such as T. Meier et al. (2020), P. Båk (2022), and J. Chen et al. (2023). P. Båk's research examined imagery and structural changes in translation, offering insights into a linguistically grounded approach to literary translation challenges. The study also discussed how transposition influences invariance in translation. Similarly, T. Meier et al. investigated the difficulties of translation in semantic and structural terms, focusing on principles that facilitate the selection of the most accurate semantic meanings. Additionally, the study by J. Chen et al. explored the tracking of lexical-semantic changes through distributional semantics using English and Chinese datasets. The analysis revealed that social contexts play a significant role in lexical and semantic shifts. However, it should be noted that these studies did not sufficiently examine structural and semantic changes in translated literary texts, particularly in poetic translations.

The development of innovative translation technologies has been addressed in the works of H. Liu (2022), and R. Youdale and A. Rothwell (2022). H. Liu's research investigated literary translation through an improved optimisation model, analysing how syntax is transformed using intelligent translation techniques. Meanwhile, R. Youdale and A. Rothwell focused on computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, translation memory, and literary translation, specifically examining the role of CAT tools. Their study emphasised the significant value of CAT tools in the translation process. The study and advancement of innovative tools for translation analysis and target text processing remain highly relevant.

The aim of this study is to examine the structural and semantic changes in the translation of the artistic texts of the poet and philosopher Abay Kunanbaev into Russian and English. To achieve this, the following objectives have been established: to analyse the nature of poetic texts in the Kazakh language and to compare the structure and semantics of poetic texts in Kazakh, Russian, and English.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The materials used for the selective literary analysis of poetry in this study included a collection of original texts by Abay Kunanbaev (1945; 2024) and collections of literary translations into Russian and English. This study employed a qualitative, comparative analysis of selected poetic texts by Abay Kunanbaev and their respective translations into Russian and English. A total of five poems were chosen based on three key criteria: availability of officially published translations in both Russian and English to ensure comparability, thematic and stylistic diversity to represent a broad spectrum of Kunanbaev's poetic legacy, and richness in culturally specific and metaphorical language, which allows for the observation of structural and semantic transformations in translation. The poems analyzed include "Жаз" ("Summer"), "Қыс" ("Winter"), "Күз" ("Autumn"), "Ғашықтың тілі – тілсіз тіл" ("The Language of Love"), and "Өлсе өлер табиғат, адам өлмес" ("If Nature Dies, Man Does Not"). These texts were chosen to ensure coverage of diverse thematic content and a range of lexical and structural challenges. The analysis focused on identifying and categorizing structural-semantic transformations through lexical strategies such as concretisation, generalisation, semantic development, holistic transformation, contextual substitution, omission, intonation replacement, and sentence restructuring. Both near-literal and interpretative translations were examined to assess how each language renders poetic devices and cultural references from the original Kazakh texts.

Initially, this study explored theoretical aspects related to post-editing, the concept of unpredictability in translation, strategies for addressing lexical gaps, analysis of translation techniques, comparative studies of different languages, the use of domestication and foreignisation strategies, the application of expansion techniques in translation, equivalence in translation, and context-dependent models in translation. Additionally, structural and semantic changes in translation into target languages were examined. The study also considered key aspects of Abay Kunanbaev's contributions as a poet, composer, philosopher, translator, and public and cultural figure. Furthermore, the relationship between linguacultural and structural-semantic aspects was explored. The specific challenges of literary text translation were analysed in conjunction with the implementation of translation strategies, while the main issues related to literary translation, as investigated in contemporary scientific practice, were also examined.

Following an examination of theoretical aspects related to translation strategies, this study selected contexts from Abay Kunanbaev's poetic works to analyse the application of various structural and semantic changes. These changes were conveyed through lexical transformations such as specification, generalisation, holistic

transformation, contextual substitution, semantic development, intonation substitution, and omission. The study also investigated the characteristics of translations into Russian and English, focusing on the frequency of specific structural-semantic changes. The fundamentals of adapting literary texts into Russian and English were explored through the analysis of poetic texts. In addition to examining semantic shifts, attention was given to the challenges of using metaphorical expanders and culturally sensitive elements in translation. Quantitative data on the use of various structural-semantic changes in translations into Russian and English were also presented.

This study further explored the relationship between structural-semantic changes and the linguacultural nature of literary texts – both the original Kazakh texts and their translated versions in Russian and English. Thus, the research not only investigated structural-semantic patterns but also examined the pragmatics of their application. Additionally, the study addressed the practical use of lexical transformations – such as concretisation, generalisation, holistic transformation, contextual substitution, semantic development, intonation substitution, and omission – for conveying non-equivalent vocabulary and linguacultural realities.

### 3. Results

When comparing the poetry of Abay Kunanbaev in the original Kazakh text with its English and Russian translations, the translation process inevitably involves compromises between preserving the original content and style while adapting the text for a foreign-language audience. Translators must consider cultural differences, semantic nuances, and structural requirements, which often result in modifications to the original text. However, despite these changes, it is essential to maintain the spirit and emotional depth of Abay's poetry, a challenge that remains central to literary translation.

The translation of A. Kunanbaev's poetry into other languages can lead to semantic and structural differences due to variations in cultural contexts, linguistic systems, and poetic traditions. In the original Kazakh texts, specific cultural references frequently appear, such as the names of traditional dishes, customs, or household items (Jiao, 2024). In Russian translations, some of these cultural elements may be adapted to be more familiar to Russian-speaking readers, whereas in English translations, they may either be replaced with more general terms or retained with explanatory notes. Additionally, to convey metaphors and symbols unique to Kazakh culture, translators may employ either universal imagery or adapted equivalents that align with the target language's cultural framework.

The Kazakh language is rich in words with polysemantic connotations (Kostrysia et al., 2019; Malyk, 2024). In Russian, which also possesses an extensive vocabulary, it is relatively easy to find corresponding words with similar connotative nuances. However, in English, a translator may need to expand the translation to convey all the semantic shades, which can alter the verse's rhythmic and stylistic balance. Abay Kunanbaev's poetry is often imbued with metaphors deeply rooted in the Kazakh worldview. When translating into Russian, the cultural proximity allows many of these metaphors to be conveyed with minimal loss. However, in English, due to significant cultural and conceptual differences, some metaphors may either be difficult to interpret or perceived differently by readers.

The translation of A. Kunanbaev's works into English and Russian plays a crucial role in introducing the global audience to Kazakh culture and literature. These translations enhance understanding of the Kazakh worldview, traditions, and philosophy, contributing to the preservation and promotion of Kazakh culture. They facilitate intercultural dialogue, support the dissemination of humanistic values, and foster deeper research in world literature. Furthermore, they inspire new generations of writers and artists while strengthening Kazakhstan's national identity.

When translating the poetic heritage of Abay Kunanbaev (1945), it is essential to preserve the musicality of the original, even if this requires modifications to the rhythmic structure in the target texts. Such adjustments often lead to structural changes in sentences, alterations in intonation patterns, and shifts in rhythm within translations. Therefore, a compromise must be made between maintaining the accuracy of the content and preserving the poetic form. Additionally, an important aspect of translation is the retention of the emotional tone of the poetry. In some cases, it may be necessary to depart from a literal translation to effectively convey the intended emotions.

Structural and semantic changes in translation are achieved through lexical transformations (Li and Siew, 2022; Periti, 2023). Lexical transformations refer to modifications made during translation to convey the meaning of lexical units from the source language to the target language. These transformations are essential for preserving meaning, stylistic nuances, and functional adequacy when the language structure undergoes changes. Lexical transformations can occur at the word and phrase levels when direct translation is either impossible or ineffective due to semantic, cultural, or grammatical differences (Panchenko, 2016).

Features of lexical transformations: the need to adapt the meaning, cultural differences, contextual dependence, avoidance of literalness. Lexical units (words and phrases) can have different meanings in different languages depending on the context (Polishchuk and Bambura, 2020; Doszhan, 2023). Transformations are required to

convey the meaning accurately. Words that carry specific cultural significance often require adaptation or replacement with an equivalent in the target language that will be understandable to native speakers of that culture. Lexical transformations often depend on the context in which the word or phrase is used. The same word can be translated differently depending on the situation, style, or genre of the text. Direct, literal translation of lexical units does not always preserve the meaning or style of the original. Lexical transformations help to avoid such errors and ensure the adequacy of the translation. Figure 1 shows the main lexical transformations found in translations of Abay's texts into Russian and English.

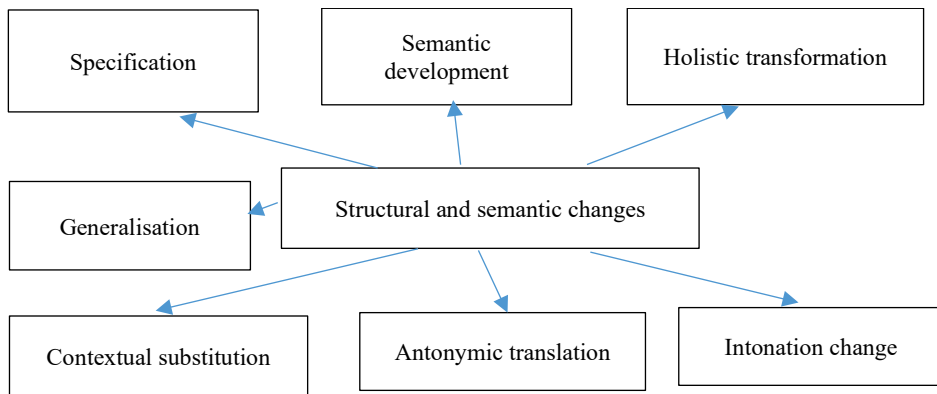


Figure 1. Types of lexical transformations in translations.

Concretisation is a type of semantic shift in which a more general term in the source language is replaced by a more specific term in the target language. This occurs when the general concept of the original text becomes too abstract or unclear for the target language. The main functions of concretisation are as follows: ensuring clarity and precision, increasing information content, enhancing emotional impact on the reader, ensuring persuasiveness and credibility, bringing the text closer to real life, improving artistic expressiveness, and maintaining the reader's attention.

In the Russian translation of the poem “Жаз” (Summer), the concretisation of the phrase “қыз-келіншек” (bride) is applied. In Kazakh, this term translates as “девчата и молодухи” (girls and young women), whereas in the Russian translation, it is rendered with an added specification of nationality as young Kazakh women. Additionally, in this context, there is a specification of the word “үй” (house), which in the Russian translation appears as yurt: the original phrase “Қыз-келіншек үй тірер...” literally translates as “Девчата и молодухи строят дом...”, while the

Russian translation is “Молодые казашки юрты ставят...” (Kunanbaev, 1995). In the English translation, instead of the Kazakh үй (house), the phrase “felt tents” is used: “The girls set up the felt tents...” (Kunanbaev, 1945; 2024). The findings of this study indicate that specification was most frequently employed when translating from Kazakh into Russian, rather than from English into Russian.

Generalisation is the opposite process of concretisation, in which a specific term in the original text is replaced by a more general one in the translation (Grushko, 2016; Brait et al., 2025). This approach can be useful when the translator seeks to avoid unnecessary clarifications or when the target language lacks an equivalent term for a specific concept. The main objectives of generalisation include: conveying content without excessive detail: Generalisation allows the core idea to be communicated without unnecessary specifics that may be irrelevant or uninteresting to the target audience; adaptation to cultural features: It enables the replacement of specific concepts or cultural references that may be unfamiliar or insignificant to the target audience; maintaining stylistic conformity: generalisation helps preserve the style of the original text when an overly detailed translation might create stylistic dissonance or disrupt the rhythm and harmony of the text; avoiding ambiguities or misunderstandings: using more general terms can prevent potential confusion when a direct translation may be unclear; optimising lexical resources of the target language: generalisation ensures that translation remains natural and coherent within the linguistic norms of the target language.

An example of generalisation is the use of the phrase “gaily blooming flowers” in the English translation of the poem “Жаз” instead of the word “бәйшешек” (snowdrop): “...Көкорай шалғын, бәйшешек...” (literal translation: “...на местах с хорошей травой начинают увядать подснежники...”; English translation: “...When gaily blooming flowers begin to fade...”) (Kunanbaev, 1945; 2024; 1995). It should be noted that generalisation is more common in translations into English than into Russian. This is primarily due to the greater semantic gap between English and Kazakh, as well as the closer linguistic and cultural relationship between Kazakh and Russian.

Semantic development is a lexical transformation that involves translating a word or phrase whose meaning corresponds to the logical development of the meaning of the unit being translated (Kharchenko, 2020). The goals of semantic development may include the use of descriptive translation, where instead of one word or phrase, a description is introduced to explain the meaning, as well as explicitness, which involves adding explanations to make hidden information in the original understandable in the translation. Additional information may also include explanations related to cultural and historical realities.

It should also be noted that semantic development is always related not to a single lexeme but to an entire semantic group. For example, the context “От жақпаған үйінің сұры қашып, Ыстан қорыққан қазақтың құрысын заңы” (literal translation: “Это закон казаха, который боится огня и без огня убегает из дома”) is translated into English as follows: ‘The autumn’s damp, but as bad customs say, To light a fire is a mortal sin And so it’s dark in tents both night and day’ (poem – “Күз”) (Kunanbaev, 1945; 2024). Semantic development is also essential for constructing an intonation pattern. Thus, while semantic development is characteristic of translations into both Russian and English, it is more frequently applied when translating into English.

Holistic transformation should be considered a lexical transformation that involves a change in the plane of expression using linguistic units that are significantly different in content from the original text. The main goals of holistic transformation are to preserve the general content and idea of the text, adapt it to the cultural and linguistic norms of the target audience, maintain stylistic conformity, convey emotional and expressive impact, eliminate language barriers and ambiguities, compensate for translation losses, and ensure the logical and grammatical coherence of the text. This lexical transformation can also be used to maintain the rhythm and various forms of rhyme in the target text. For example, in the poem “Жаз”, the original context: “Жаздыгүн шілде болғанда, Көкорай шалғын, бәйшешек, Ұзарып өсіп толғанда; Күркіреп жатқан өзенге...” (Literal translation: “When in summer, July, when the meadow becomes full; To the roaring river...”) is translated into English as: “When summer in the mountains gains its peak, When gaily blooming flowers begin to fade, When nomads from the sunshine refuge seek, Beside a rapid river...” (Kunanbaev, 1945; 2024).

When translating Abai's maxims into Russian, the most frequently used lexical transformation was holistic transformation. By replacing some lexical elements and varying the structure, translators manage to convey the emotional background of a certain phrase and at the same time make it understandable to readers. Since the adaptation of various kinds of maxims occurs with the help of holistic transformation, this lexical transformation is typical for both Russian and English translations.

Contextual substitution (occasional correspondence) is associated with the translation of a unit of the original text that is applicable only in a certain context. The main purposes of using contextual substitution may be the following: conveying culturally specific elements (replacing realities or concepts unfamiliar to the target audience), ensuring equivalence of content (conveying semantic equivalence under the condition that a literal translation would be incorrect or distort the content), avoiding calques and maintaining style (replacing terms or phrases that may look

unnatural in translation), optimising emotional impact (replacing words or phrases to achieve the emotional effect intended in the original), maintaining lexical and stylistic correspondence.

The phrase “Үсті-басы ақ қырау түсі суық, Басқан жері сықырлап келіп қалды” (literal translation – “Голова белая, цвет холодный”) is translated as “...Он спускается сверху морозною мглой” (poem – “Қыс”). Thus, the Russian translation uses the metaphorical construction “морозная мгла” (Kunanbaev, 1945; 1995). Contextual substitution is usually used to make the target text more readable, that is, to make it more understandable for the recipient. With the help of occasional correspondences, phraseological units and speech patterns that are understandable only to the Kazakh reader are most often conveyed. Contextual substitution is used in both Russian and English translations.

An antonymous translation is the replacement of one concept with its opposite or the substitution of one part of a sentence with a segment that carries the opposite meaning (Strilets, 2021; Hoff and Barboza, 2025). In antonymous translation, the utterance is entirely restructured to recreate the content of the original text. The functions of antonymous translation are as follows: Maintaining stylistic correspondence (the use of antonyms helps preserve the tonality, intonation, or style of the original when a direct translation would appear unnatural or stylistically inappropriate); conveying emotional expression (antonymous translation enables the recreation of the original emotional or expressive effect when a direct translation cannot adequately reflect the required level of intensity or mood). Antonymous translation is also employed to adapt to linguistic and cultural norms, eliminate ambiguity and enhance clarity, preserve the logical structure of the text, and optimise linguistic resources.

When translating the context “Өлсе, өлер табиғат, адам өлмес Ол бірақ қайтіп келіп, ойнап – күлмес “Мені” мен “менікінің” айрылғанын “Өлді” деп ат қойыпты өңкей білмес (literal translation: “Если он умрет, умрет природа, а человек нет. Но он вернулся и заиграл – он не смеялся, он не знал, что разделение “я” и “мое” называется смертью”) from the poem “Өлсе өлер табиғат, адам өлмес”, an antonymous translation was used in the English version: “Maybe nature is mortal, but man is not, Though there’s no coming back, When he draws his last breath. The separation of I and Mine. The ignorant only regard as death” (Kunanbaev, 1945; 1995). The technique of antonymous translation is most frequently used when translating from Kazakh into English due to the significant structural differences in sentence construction between these languages. However, it can also be applied when translating into Russian. This is evident in the context of the poem “Күз”: “Жасыл шөп, бәйшешек жоқ бұрынғыдай, Жастар күлмес, жүгірмес бала

шулай” (literal translation: “Нет зеленой травы и травы, как раньше. Молодежь не смеется, дети не бегают”), which was translated into Russian as: “Цветы увяли и поникли травы, Смех молодых не слышен, шум детей”, and into English as: “No grass, no tulips. Silent everywhere, Are children’s noisy games and young lads’ mirth”.

Omission (introduction) of lexical units is associated with the use of new lexical units arising from the context or with the omission of some lexical elements. The main functions of omission are as follows: brief transmission of information, preservation of rhythm and intonation, focusing attention on important elements, approximation to colloquial language, emphasising the emotional state, saving language resources, creating mystery or intrigue. The main functions of introducing additional lexical units are as follows: transmission of colour and authenticity, enrichment of vocabulary, expression of the author's position or style, emphasis on intertextuality, creation of an emotional effect or tonality, playing with readers. In the Russian translation of the poem “Жаз”, in the context “Сабадан қымыз құйдырып, Ортасына қойдырып, Жасы үлкендер бір бөлек Кеңесіп, күліп сылқылдап” (literal translation: “Наливаем кумыс из сабы, ставим его посередине, пожилые люди разговаривают отдельно и смеются” the translation in Russian is “И кызымка кумыс из саба налила, ставит в центр достархана”, where the word “достархан” was added (Kunanbaev, 1945). The omission and introduction of lexical units is used in both Russian and English translations but is more often applied in English translations due to more significant structural differences between these languages.

Since the Kazakh language differs from Russian and English in its use of metaphorical and allegorical imagery, there is a dissonance in translation. In particular, original metaphors may be omitted, conveyed inaccurately, or translated literally. For example, in the context of “Сөз айттым әзірет Әлі, айдаһарсыз, Мұнда жоқ алтын иек, сары ала қыз”, a comparison is made between a beautiful girl and a golden crescent. However, as the translator is unfamiliar with the full range of metaphors in the Kazakh language, this phrase was translated literally: “Али-азрету не слагаю гимн, Красавиц с подбородком золотым...” (from the poem “Мен жазбаймын өлеңді ермек үшін”). Omission often results in the elimination of key elements, including national symbols and traditions, which are fundamental to Kazakh culture (Kunanbaev, 1945; 2024).

Substitution of intonation is another lexical transformation that involves modifying structural elements within a poem. This lexical transformation is used for the following purposes: creating an emotional effect, emphasising specific lexical units, altering the communicative purpose of an utterance, creating a stylistic effect,

maintaining the rhythm and melody of speech, and incorporating humour and irony. For example, in the original text, two intonations are used (exclamatory and non-exclamatory): “Соныға малды жайып, күзетіндер, Ұйқы өлтірмес, қайрат қыл, бұз камалды! Ит жегенше Қондыбай, Қанай жесін, Құр жібер мына антұрған кәрі шалды”, whereas in the English translation, only one intonation is present: “The horses in vain try to shatter the ice – The hungry herd scarcely shuffle their feet. Greedy wolves – winter’s henchmen – bare their fangs; Watch, or disaster your flocks may meet!” (poem “Қыс”). Changes in the intonation pattern are primarily associated with shifting the poem from a rhetorical structure to an affirmative one. It should also be noted that phrases with interrogative intonation can be transformed into statements in translation (Kunanbaev, 1945; 2024).

Translations also feature grammatical transformations. Changes in sentence structure are often necessary to preserve intonation patterns. The main functions of grammatical transformations are as follows: focusing attention on key elements, ensuring the logic and coherence of the text, creating rhythm and melody, expressing an emotional state or mood, approximating natural speech, enhancing artistic expressiveness, creating the effect of tension or surprise, and supporting interactivity. For example, in the original text of the poem “Ташықтың тілі – тілсіз тіл”, incomplete sentences may be used: “Ташықтың тілі – тілсіз тіл...” (literal translation: “Язык любви – это язык без языка...”), whereas in the target language (for example, English), they may be replaced by complete sentences: “The language of love lives without words”. Example of context: “Ғашықтың тілі – тілсіз тіл, Көзбен көр де, ішпен біл. Сүй, жан сәулем, тағы да сүй, Жылы жүрек – сөзге дил (literary translation: “Язык влюбленных – это язык без языка, смотрите глазами и знайте нутром. Люби, душа моя, люби снова, Горячее сердце – говори”), translation into English: “The language of love lives without words. In it, half-speak and half-glance – An irreplaceable basis, Of two explanations at random. As were the secret creations, Of this alphabet important to us. Now, alas, its knowledge, Of regret, I do not need.” Changes in sentence structure are typical when translating from Kazakh into both Russian and English. Changes in sentence structure are typical when translating from Kazakh into both Russian and English.

Table 1 highlights selected structural elements from Abay Kunanbaev’s original Kazakh poems with their Russian and English translations.

Table 1. Structural Features of Poetic Texts in Translation

Poetic Feature	Kazakh Original (Example)	Russian Translation (Approach & Example)	English Translation (Approach & Example)	Observed Pattern / Commentary
<b>Rhyme &amp; Rhythm</b>	“Жаздыгүн шілде болғанда, Көкорай шалғын, бәйшешек...”	Retains meter and rhyme: “Когда июль — знойный зной, / Зеленеют травы, цветы — красотой...”	Modified rhythm, freer verse: “When summer in the mountains gains its peak, / When gaily blooming flowers...”	Russian maintains original prosody; English sacrifices form for semantic clarity.
<b>Metaphorical Imagery</b>	“Қыз-келіншек үй тігер” (Girls set up homes — symbolic of tradition/family)	Concretisation: “Молодые казашки юрты ставят”	Generalisation: “The girls set up the felt tents”	Russian includes cultural context (Kazakh women/yurts); English omits ethnicity and generalises dwelling type.
<b>Elliptical Syntax</b>	“Ғашықтың тілі – тілсіз тіл” (The language of love is a silent language)	Retains poetic brevity: “Язык влюбленных — без слов”	Expanded to full sentence: “The language of love lives without words.”	Russian maintains original structure; English completes sentence for grammatical clarity.
<b>Intonation / Emphasis</b>	“Ит жегенше Қондыбай, Қанай жесін” (Let Kanay eat rather than the dog)	Exclamatory tone preserved	Shifted to affirmative: “Greedy wolves – winter’s henchmen – bare their fangs”	Russian retains emotional tone; English often neutralises or softens rhetorical intensity.
<b>Sentence Structure</b>	Long, complex syntactic flow	Often split into shorter phrases	Often restructured and reordered for clarity	Russian preserves syntactic patterns; English prioritises clarity and readability.

The analysis indicated that Russian translations typically aim to maintain the original poetic structure, partly due to the linguistic and prosodic affinities between Russian and Kazakh. Conversely, English translations often employ more flexible frameworks, emphasising semantic clarity rather than formal characteristics. These disparities illustrate overarching trends in translating strategy, specifically, a focus on maintaining form and content in Russian, contrasted with a propensity for adaptation and elucidation in English. The structural changes depicted in the table highlight the difficulties translators encounter in preserving both the artistic integrity and cultural character of the source texts.

Among the grammatical transformations, one can also identify the unification or division of sentences in the original text. In the Kazakh text, for example, a single sentence may be presented as a whole, whereas in the Russian translation, it may be conveyed as three separate sentences. In other words, a single syntactic structure in the original is divided into three autonomous syntactic structures in translation. This type of grammatical transformation is used in target texts to establish appropriate intonation and rhythmic patterns.

The number of contexts in which lexical and grammatical transformations were used is shown in Table 2. In particular, in translations into Russian, the primary lexical transformations included:

- generalisation (10 contexts);
- intonation replacement (10 contexts);
- semantic development (9 contexts);
- change in sentence structure (9 contexts);
- omissions, which were used less frequently (6 contexts);
- holistic transformations (6 contexts);
- contextual substitution (5 contexts);
- concretisation (5 contexts).

In translations into English, the most frequently used lexical transformations were the following: intonation replacement (9 contexts); holistic transformation (8 contexts); generalisation (8 contexts); less frequent lexical transformations, such as contextual substitution (6 contexts).

Table 2. Use of lexical and grammatical transformations in translated texts in Russian and English

Name	Translation into Russian	Translation into English
Concretisation	5	7
Generalisation	10	8
Semantic development	9	7
Holistic transformation	6	8
Contextual substitution	5	6
Omission	6	7
Replacement of intonation	10	9
Changing the structure of sentences	9	7

Among the semantic-structural changes expressed through lexical transformations frequently employed in the translation of A. Kunanbaev's poetic heritage, one can identify specification, generalisation, semantic development, holistic transformation, contextual substitution, omission, intonational substitution, and changes in sentence structure. Notably, when translating Abai's texts into English, generalisation, changes in sentence structure, and holistic transformation are more commonly used. In contrast, translations into Russian predominantly employ lexical transformations such as specification, contextual substitution, intonational substitution, and changes in sentence structure.

Based on known theoretical frameworks in translation studies, the lexical and structural modifications in the translations of Abay Kunanbaev's poetry can be analysed through the concepts of domestication, foreignization, and equivalence. For example, the use of generalisation in English translations—such as replacing the culturally specific “бәйшешек” (snowdrop) with “gaily blooming flowers”—reflects a domesticating strategy aimed at making the text more accessible to a general English-speaking audience. Conversely, the retention of culturally specific items, such as “felt tents” or references to traditional customs, leans toward foreignisation, preserving elements of the source culture to expose the reader to the Kazakh worldview.

Similarly, Russian translations often employ concretisation, as seen in the translation of “кыз-келіншек” with a culturally embedded image of “young Kazakh women building yurts”, which can also reflect domestication, albeit within a closer cultural-linguistic proximity that makes such adaptation feel more “natural.” Where translations retain poetic structures or metaphors with minimal alteration, equivalence, particularly formal and dynamic, is better preserved. However, instances

where sentence restructuring, omission, or semantic development significantly alter the poetic form suggest that equivalence is challenged for the sake of stylistic or cultural clarity.

By applying these frameworks systematically, the study demonstrates that English translations tend to favour domestication and functional equivalence, often at the expense of stylistic fidelity, while Russian translations strike a more nuanced balance between foreignisation and formal equivalence due to linguistic and cultural proximity. These findings contribute to a deeper theoretical understanding of how translation strategies reflect broader cultural and communicative priorities, thereby reinforcing the study's relevance to both translation theory and practical translation practice.

Russian translations tend to preserve the original cultural and national nuances, as Russian and Kazakh cultures share historical and geographical ties. However, translators may adapt the text to enhance comprehension for a Russian-speaking audience, sometimes simplifying or omitting certain cultural allusions. In contrast, translators working into English often face challenges due to the lack of cultural relevance. They must convey the essence of poetic imagery and idioms, which can result in a partial loss of deeper meaning and the original tone of the work. Regarding stylistic differences, Russian translations typically adhere to a more traditional approach, striving to maintain the verse structure, rhythm, and rhyme to keep the text as close to the original as possible. English translations, however, often adopt a freer structure, allowing for modifications to rhythm and rhyme in order to preserve the overall meaning and emotional nuance of the work.

The Russian language shares a greater number of common words and expressions with Kazakh, which facilitates the transmission of certain concepts. In English, due to cultural differences and the absence of some Kazakh concepts in the English-speaking world, translators often rely on analogies or explanatory structures. In Russian, many cultural realities can be preserved without significant modifications, as the audience is generally familiar with them. However, in English, additional explanations or the substitution of cultural references with more widely understood concepts may be necessary, potentially altering the original content. Thus, this study has revealed that the structural and semantic differences in translations into English and Russian are influenced not only by linguistic factors but also by cultural considerations, which impact both the accuracy and the method of conveying the original meaning of the works.

Based on the findings, many pragmatic recommendations can be provided for translators and educators engaged with Kazakh poetic literature. Translators must meticulously evaluate the appropriate moments to implement domestication or

foreignization tactics, especially with cultural realia and metaphorical expressions, to achieve a balance between accessibility and cultural authenticity. In circumstances where cultural allusions are pivotal to meaning, maintaining original terminology with succinct contextual elucidations may aid in preserving cultural identity without estranging the reader. Moreover, it is essential to preserve the rhythm and emotional tone of the original, particularly in languages with distinct prosodic systems, by innovative rearrangement instead of direct translation. The comparative analysis of translations between languages can be a great pedagogical tool for educators to illustrate the complexities of poetic form, semantic shifts, and intercultural communication. These tactics enhance translation quality and cultivate a greater appreciation of Kazakh literary legacy among international readers.

#### 4. Discussion

In examining the translation of A. Kunanbaev's (1945) texts from Kazakh into Russian and English in this study, it became evident that a key priority is the development of new technologies for literary translation that can replace conventional templates in the target text, particularly when translating non-equivalent vocabulary. The primary focus of the article by S. Castilho and N. Resende (2022) was on the impact of post-editing on the style, tone, and literary features of a text when creating an artificial version that diverges from the original work. The article explored the challenges translators face during the post-editing of literary works, the strategies for preserving the author's style and intent, and the ways to prevent the introduction of unnatural elements into the text. Using the study by A. Piper and M. Erlin (2022) as an example, we can examine the concept of predictability in literary translation. Specifically, the study investigated the extent to which a translated text can be considered predictable based on various factors, analysed certain translation patterns or templates, and discussed how translators can mitigate predictability to preserve the uniqueness and originality of the text.

The study of the translation of A. Kunanbaev's (1945) literary texts into Russian and English revealed that semantic and structural changes such as semantic development, holistic transformation, contextual substitution, and the omission (or addition) of phrases were employed to address gaps in the original text. In the work of R. Sankaravelayuthan (2020), the issue of lexical gaps and untranslatability in the translation process was explored. Various strategies used by translators to overcome lexical gaps – such as borrowing, calquing, description, and contextual adaptation – were examined. Particular emphasis was placed on how lexical gaps and untranslatability impact translation quality and influence readers' perception of the text. Similar issues were addressed in the study by P. Kuusi et al. (2022), which

investigated the process of filling lexical gaps when working with languages that have a limited vocabulary or lack equivalents for certain modern concepts. Additionally, translation strategies and challenges were discussed in the work of Z. Turhan and C. Bernard (2022), which specifically focused on key issues in translation from Turkish to English.

Using the translation of A. Kunanbaev's (1945) literary texts as an example, this study examines structural and semantic changes, as the original text undergoes transformation through the application of various translation strategies. The article by L. Leonardi (2024) explored literary translation as a tool for language teaching and skill development, discussing various approaches to integrating literary translation into the educational process. These approaches included analysing renowned literary works, comparing different translations of the same text, and employing translation exercises.

When examining the translations of A. Kunanbaev's (1945) texts, the study focused on key differences in sentence semantics and structure across Kazakh, Russian, and English, thereby considering cultural differences through the lens of structural and semantic transformations. The study by Y. Guo and H. Yu (2023) addressed the difficulties and challenges translators encounter when striving to preserve the original meaning, style, and cultural specificity of a text. It also explored the issue of intercultural competence, particularly in the translation of culturally rich texts. Similarly, the work of H. Zhu et al. (2022) provided an analysis of translation strategies used to convey cultural realities across various genres. Among the key transformations of cultural realities, the study considered transposition, calquing, and adaptation, which were applied depending on the genre of the text. Additionally, the study by Y. Sun (2022) examined the role of literary translation in intercultural communication, highlighting its function as a medium for exchanging ideas, values, and traditions. The translator was portrayed as a mediator facilitating dialogue between cultures.

The handling of cultural realia in Russian translations of Abay Kunanbaev's poetry offers a significant opportunity to explore the interplay between cultural preservation and adaptation. Due to the historical, geographic, and linguistic closeness between Russian and Kazakh, numerous culturally ingrained references, such as traditional terminology (e.g., *dastarkhan*, *kumys*, *yurt*), are frequently preserved or minimally modified in Russian translations. This method enables a level of foreignization that maintains essential elements of Kazakh cultural identity, permitting Russian-speaking readers to confront and interact with unfamiliar cultural symbols. Selective adaptation or partial substitution, especially with the intent of enhancing readability, may inadvertently domesticate the text, obscuring culturally

distinctive references that could otherwise provoke curiosity or inquiry. This has two implications: accessibility is enhanced, but the depth and distinctiveness of the source culture may be compromised. Thus, these translation decisions influence the representation and perception of Kazakh national identity internationally. A translation that emphasises the preservation of realia enhances cultural difference and fosters intercultural understanding, whereas one that simplifies or substitutes culturally specific terms may unintentionally lead to cultural homogenisation. The examination of Russian translations reveals the intricate equilibrium translators must maintain between clarity and fidelity in conveying cultural memory.

The results of the study on the poetic heritage of A. Kunanbaev (1945) revealed that when translating into English, lexical transformations such as generalisation, changes in sentence structure, and holistic transformation were applied. In contrast, when translating the original poems into Russian, lexical transformations such as specification, intonational replacement, and changes in sentence structure were most commonly used. The study by T. Elhadary (2023) also focused on a comparative analysis of languages, specifically English and Arabic. Key aspects included linguistic and cultural differences, translation challenges and strategies, as well as practical examples. The research examined grammatical, structural, and lexical distinctions, discussed various translation approaches, and analysed how the target audience perceives translated texts. Similarly, the study by M.J. Zagood et al. (2023) investigated issues related to translating Arabic socio-cultural expressions into English, particularly in the context of non-equivalent vocabulary. Meanwhile, the study by M.A. Tenaijy and M. Al-Batineh (2024) explored the use of domestication and foreignisation strategies to preserve cultural elements in translated texts.

Among the structural changes identified in this study when translating from Kazakh into Russian and English, several key lexical transformations can be observed, including semantic development, holistic transformation, contextual substitution, omission, intonational replacement, and changes in sentence structure. The study by N. Vişan (2023) focused on the use of expanders in translations from English into Romanian. Specifically, it examined structures that extend utterances by repositioning phrases or sentences. Similarly, the study by W.K. Asri et al. (2024) demonstrated that both English and German employ a wide range of semantic shifts, particularly metaphorical expanders. The phenomenon of semantic shifts in Portuguese was explored by P. Amaral et al. (2023), who analysed semantic categories present in both source and target corpora. The issue of semantic translation, particularly in relation to preserving contextual meanings, was addressed in the work of E.J. Mohammed (2022b).

The findings of this study on translations of A. Kunanbaev's (1945) poetic texts from Kazakh into Russian and English highlight the importance of maintaining lexical, structural, and emotional equivalence in translations. Additionally, the study by S. Paronyan (2024) examined the issue of pragmatic equivalence in literary translation, with a particular focus on ensuring consistency between source and target literary texts. This research also explored the handling of culturally sensitive elements in translation.

Based on the findings of this study, the main challenges in translating from Kazakh into Russian and English include preserving content and style, addressing cultural differences, maintaining semantic features, and adhering to structural requirements. The use of structural and semantic transformations, as highlighted in the work of L. Jin et al. (2023), is primarily linked to the introduction of context-dependent translation models, which are oriented towards both the context and the model's architecture. Notably, when translating from Kazakh into Russian, a greater number of templates (context-dependent models) were utilised compared to translations from Kazakh into English.

Among the key issues actively explored in contemporary research, several prominent topics can be identified: the role of post-editing and the principle of predictability in translation, strategies for filling lexical gaps, the use of literary translation as an educational tool, the challenges associated with text translation, the comparative analysis of translation strategies across different languages, and the study of expanders in translation. Additionally, the influence of cultural and linguistic differences on the structure and semantics of literary texts has been a significant area of investigation.

## 5. Conclusions

In literary translations into Russian, Kazakh cultural realities are often replaced, whereas in English translations, only general terms tend to be substituted. From the perspective of metaphor translation, Russian translations can typically replace metaphors without significant loss, while in English translations, most linguacultural symbols are conveyed through explanations or transliteration. When translating literary texts from Kazakh into Russian and English, it is essential to preserve not only the content but also the style and emotional tone of the text. Notably, the Russian language has a broader range of words and expressions that can convey concepts found in Kazakh. However, due to the greater cultural differences between Kazakh and English, not all cultural realities can be adequately substituted.

Furthermore, structural and semantic differences in literary translation from Kazakh into Russian and English arise from both linguistic and cultural factors. These differences are reflected in lexical transformations such as specification, generalisation, semantic development, holistic transformation, contextual substitution, omission, intonational replacement, and changes in sentence structure. Analysis of source and target language contexts has shown that, in English translations, the most common lexical transformations include generalisation, changes in sentence structure, and holistic transformation. In contrast, Russian translations primarily employ specification, contextual substitution, intonational replacement, and changes in sentence structure.

Concretisation was employed in translated texts to convey a general term through a more specific one, while generalisation was used to replace a specific term with a broader, more general concept. Semantic development facilitated the translation of words or phrases in a way that reflected the logical evolution of meaning in the translated unit. Holistic transformation was applied to alter the plane of expression by using linguistic units that diverge in content from the original text while preserving rhythm and various types of rhyme in the target text. Contextual substitution was used to enhance readability in the target text. The omission (or introduction) of lexical units involved the removal or addition of lexical elements. Intonational replacement was employed to shift the rhetorical aspect of a literary work, for instance, transforming interrogative intonation into affirmative intonation.

When translating into Russian, preserving the poetic form is more achievable due to the structural and phonetic similarities between Russian and Kazakh. Translators can utilise comparable rhymes and metrical patterns, which helps maintain the rhythmic structure of the original text. In contrast, conveying the poetic features of Kazakh poetry in English is more challenging, as English has a different phonetic system, rhythmic structure, and metrical traditions. As a result, translators often face the dilemma of preserving either the form (sound and rhythmic features) or the content. The limitations of this study primarily stem from the fact that only a specific number of texts were analysed, meaning that not all poetic texts were examined. Looking ahead, key research priorities include the development of innovative technologies for processing literary texts, particularly for handling non-equivalent lexical units. Future studies may also focus on comparing source texts with their translations to identify ways of adapting linguacultural concepts and examining structural and semantic differences. A promising direction for further research is the study of the pragmatics of artistic strategies in translating texts from low-resource languages.

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