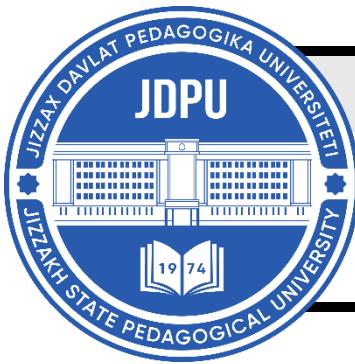


# MENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT SCIENTIFIC – METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL



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### CHALLENGES IN PRESERVING A WRITER'S STYLE IN TRANSLATION

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#### ABOUT ARTICLE

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**Abstract:** This article examines the challenges of preserving a writer's stylistic identity in literary translation through an IMRAD-based analytical framework. The introduction conceptualizes style as a multi-layered phenomenon encompassing lexical choice, grammatical structure, stylistic organization, and pragmatic meaning, emphasizing that stylistic distortion can undermine a text's literary identity even when semantic accuracy is maintained. The methods section outlines a qualitative, interpretative approach grounded in translation studies, stylistics, and literary linguistics, employing multi-level linguistic analysis, comparative reasoning between source- and target-language norms, and an emphasis on the translator's decision-making process. The results demonstrate that stylistic loss emerges systematically across lexical, grammatical, stylistic, and pragmatic levels. The discussion highlights the interdependence of these levels, arguing that loss at one level often triggers distortion at others, and underscores the ethical responsibility of translators to balance fluency with stylistic integrity. The conclusion affirms that stylistic preservation is not a matter of formal equivalence but of recreating an aesthetic and emotional experience within another language, positioning literary

**Introduction.** Literary translation is far more than the replacement of words from one language with those of another. It is a multilayered interpretative act in which the translator seeks to recreate a writer's style—their distinctive voice, rhythm, emotional stance, and communicative intention. Style operates simultaneously on several linguistic levels: lexical choice, grammatical structure, stylistic organization, and pragmatic meaning. When a literary text crosses linguistic and cultural boundaries, each of these levels is affected, making stylistic preservation one of the most demanding challenges in translation studies.

A writer's style determines not only what is communicated, but how, why, and with what effect it is communicated. Sentence rhythm, syntactic complexity, repetition, irony, understatement, and implied meaning all shape the reader's experience. If these elements are distorted in translation, the text may remain intelligible but lose its literary identity. This article offers an advanced and humanized analysis of the lexical, grammatical, stylistic, and pragmatic challenges involved in preserving a writer's style in translation, supported by a clear methodological framework and analytical results.

**Methods.** The present study adopts a qualitative and interpretative methodology grounded in translation studies, stylistics, and literary linguistics. Rather than employing quantitative data, the research focuses on close analysis of linguistic and stylistic phenomena that typically arise in literary translation.

The methodological approach consists of the following components:

1. Theoretical Framework

The study draws on key ideas from translation theory, particularly those emphasizing the interpretative and ethical nature of translation. Concepts such as stylistic fidelity, equivalence beyond the lexical level, and translator visibility inform the analysis. Theoretical perspectives associated with Friedrich Schleiermacher, Walter Benjamin, and Lawrence Venuti are used to frame translation as a creative negotiation rather than a mechanical transfer.

2. Multi-Level Linguistic Analysis

The study examines translation challenges across four interrelated levels:

lexical (word choice and connotation),

grammatical (syntax, tense, and structure),

stylistic (rhythm, tone, narrative voice),

pragmatic (implicit meaning, intention, and context).

This layered approach allows for a holistic understanding of how style operates and how it may be altered in translation.

### 3. Comparative Reasoning

Source-text features are conceptually compared with typical target-language norms to identify points of tension where stylistic loss or transformation is likely to occur. Although specific texts are not quoted, the analysis reflects widely observed patterns in literary translation practice.

### 4. Interpretative Emphasis

Rather than prescribing fixed solutions, the method emphasizes interpretation, recognizing that stylistic preservation depends on genre, authorial intention, and cultural context. The translator's decision-making process is treated as a central object of analysis.

#### Results

The analysis reveals that challenges in preserving a writer's style emerge consistently across all four linguistic levels and are deeply interconnected.

##### Lexical-level findings

At the lexical level, the analysis demonstrates that stylistic loss most frequently arises when translators give priority to denotative meaning while neglecting the connotative, emotional, and associative layers of words. In literary texts, lexical choices are rarely neutral. Writers select words not only for what they refer to, but for what they suggest, echo, and evoke. A single word may carry historical resonance, emotional coloring, social register, or symbolic significance that extends far beyond its dictionary definition.

One of the most common tendencies observed in translation is the replacement of stylistically marked or ambiguous lexical items with semantically safe, neutral equivalents in the target language. While such substitutions may preserve basic meaning, they often erase subtle shades of tone and atmosphere. Words chosen for their poetic ambiguity, phonetic texture, or cultural specificity are particularly vulnerable to this process. As a result, the translated text may become clearer but also more predictable, losing the tension and openness that characterize the original style.

Another significant lexical issue concerns polysemy. Many literary texts deliberately exploit words with multiple meanings, allowing different interpretations to coexist. Translators, however, are often compelled to select a single meaning that best fits the immediate context. This act of disambiguation, while practical, narrows the semantic field of the text and reduces interpretative freedom for the reader. What was intentionally indeterminate in the source text becomes fixed and closed in the translation.

Furthermore, the results indicate that over-interpretation at the lexical level is a major source of stylistic flattening. In an effort to ensure comprehension, translators may introduce explanatory words or phrases that are absent from the original. Although these additions clarify meaning, they frequently disrupt stylistic economy and alter narrative voice. Writers who rely on understatement or implication may thus appear more explicit, emotionally direct, or even didactic in translation.

Lexical repetition also emerges as a sensitive area. In many literary styles, repetition is a deliberate rhetorical strategy used to create rhythm, emphasize emotional states, or reflect obsessive thought patterns. Translators, influenced by target-language norms that view repetition as stylistically undesirable, often replace repeated words with synonyms. While this may improve surface variation, it weakens rhythmic coherence and undermines the author's stylistic intention.

Finally, the findings reveal that lexical choices related to register and social nuance pose additional challenges. Words signaling formality, intimacy, irony, or emotional distance may not align neatly across languages. A slight shift in register can subtly transform characterization, power relations, or narrative stance. When such nuances are lost, the translated text may convey the same events but project a different emotional and stylistic profile.

#### Grammatical-level findings

The analysis confirms that grammatical restructuring is one of the most powerful forces shaping stylistic transformation in translation. Unlike lexical changes, which are often immediately noticeable, grammatical shifts tend to operate more subtly, yet their impact on narrative voice, rhythm, and psychological depth is profound. Grammar structures the way thought unfolds in language; therefore, any alteration at this level directly affects how a reader experiences the text.

One of the most frequent grammatical interventions observed in translation is sentence segmentation. Writers often construct long, syntactically complex sentences to mirror streams of consciousness, emotional accumulation, or reflective thought. When such sentences are divided into shorter units to meet target-language conventions of clarity and readability, the internal rhythm of the text is disrupted. This segmentation may make the translation easier to process, but it often interrupts the author's cognitive flow, replacing continuity with fragmentation. As a result, the translated text may feel faster, more abrupt, or emotionally less immersive than the original.

Another significant source of stylistic change involves tense and aspect shifts. Languages differ in how they express temporal relations, duration, and completeness of actions. Writers frequently exploit tense variation to create immediacy, distance, or narrative layering. When translators adjust tense usage to fit the grammatical system of the target language, subtle shifts in temporal perspective may occur. These shifts can alter narrative tension, weaken emotional immediacy, or change the perceived relationship between narrator and events.

Changes in grammatical voice, particularly the movement between active and passive constructions, also play a crucial stylistic role. Authors may deliberately choose passive structures to create detachment, ambiguity of agency, or emotional restraint. Translators, influenced by target-language preferences for active constructions, often reassign agency explicitly. While this increases clarity, it can significantly alter tone, narrative focus, and psychological distance, thereby reshaping the author's stylistic intent.

The findings further indicate that grammatical normalization—adapting source-text structures to target-language norms—often leads to a loss of stylistic distinctiveness. Unconventional syntax, incomplete sentences, or deliberate grammatical irregularities are frequently “corrected” in translation. These features, however, are rarely accidental; they function as expressive tools that contribute to voice and atmosphere. Their removal results in translations that are grammatically smooth but stylistically neutral.

At the same time, the study shows that excessive grammatical imitation is equally problematic. Strict adherence to source-language syntax may produce translations that feel artificial or strained, distancing the reader from the text. Such literal grammatical transfer may preserve surface structure, yet fail to recreate the intended aesthetic effect. This demonstrates that grammatical fidelity, when pursued in isolation, does not guarantee stylistic fidelity.

#### Stylistic-level findings

At the stylistic level, the analysis reveals that some of the most significant losses in authorial voice occur when repetition, fragmentation, and deliberate deviation from linguistic norms are altered or removed in translation. These features are often central to a writer's expressive strategy, yet they are also the most vulnerable because they conflict with conventional expectations of fluency and “good style” in the target language.

Repetition is a particularly sensitive stylistic device. In many literary texts, repeated words, phrases, or syntactic patterns serve specific artistic purposes: they create rhythm, reinforce emotional states, reflect obsessive thinking, or build thematic cohesion. However, in many target-language traditions, repetition is perceived as stylistically weak or redundant. As a result, translators frequently replace repeated elements with synonyms or restructure

sentences to avoid recurrence. While this may produce surface-level variation, it often disrupts rhythmic continuity and diminishes emotional intensity. The author's deliberate insistence on certain words or structures—an essential marker of voice—is thus softened or erased.

Fragmentation presents another major challenge. Writers may intentionally employ sentence fragments, incomplete clauses, or abrupt syntactic breaks to convey hesitation, tension, psychological instability, or rapid shifts in perception. Such fragmentation often mirrors the inner states of characters or the fractured nature of experience itself. In translation, these fragmented structures are commonly "repaired" to align with grammatical completeness and stylistic smoothness. This normalization reduces emotional immediacy and transforms expressive disjunction into conventional coherence, thereby altering the stylistic and psychological texture of the text.

Deviation from linguistic norms—including unusual syntax, unconventional punctuation, or atypical word order—is likewise highly vulnerable. Many writers consciously resist standard language to create estrangement, irony, or aesthetic shock. These deviations signal that the text demands active engagement from the reader. Translators, however, may interpret such features as errors, inconsistencies, or stylistic weaknesses rather than intentional artistic choices. Consequently, they are often corrected or standardized, leading to translations that are grammatically polished but stylistically domesticated.

The analysis further indicates that minimalist styles are especially susceptible to stylistic erosion. Writers who rely on brevity, silence, and implication depend heavily on what is not said. When translators add connective phrases, clarifying elements, or stylistic embellishments to enhance fluency, they fill the very gaps that give minimalist writing its power. The result is a text that communicates more explicitly but loses its tension and interpretative openness.

Similarly, authors who build their style around ambiguity face particular risks in translation. Ambiguity often functions as a deliberate aesthetic strategy, inviting multiple interpretations and sustained reader involvement. Translators, driven by the need for clarity, may resolve ambiguities that were intentionally left open. This process narrows the interpretative range of the text and shifts the stylistic balance toward definiteness and closure.

#### Pragmatic-level findings

The pragmatic analysis demonstrates that shifts in implied meaning and communicative intention represent some of the most subtle yet consequential risks to stylistic preservation in translation. Pragmatics operates beyond what is explicitly stated, governing how meaning is inferred through context, shared knowledge, social conventions, and cultural expectations.

Because literary style often relies heavily on implication rather than direct statement, pragmatic misalignment can significantly alter how a text is perceived and interpreted.

One of the most critical pragmatic challenges involves politeness strategies. Languages encode respect, intimacy, hierarchy, and emotional distance in different ways. Forms of address, levels of formality, and indirect expressions of request or refusal vary widely across cultures. When such strategies are translated literally, the pragmatic force of an utterance may shift. A line intended to sound restrained or tactful in the source language may appear cold, evasive, or even rude in the target language. Conversely, an expression meant to be emotionally distant may sound overly intimate or confessional. These shifts can subtly but powerfully reshape character relationships and social dynamics within the narrative.

Indirectness presents another major pragmatic difficulty. Many writers deliberately avoid direct statements, allowing meaning to emerge through implication, hesitation, or silence. This strategy often reflects cultural norms of communication as well as psychological depth. In translation, indirect expressions are frequently rendered more explicitly to ensure clarity. While this may aid comprehension, it reduces ambiguity and weakens stylistic nuance. What was once suggestive becomes declarative, and the reader's role in interpreting meaning is diminished.

Cultural assumptions also play a decisive role in pragmatic meaning. Literary texts often rely on shared cultural knowledge to convey irony, understatement, or emotional tension. When such assumptions are not shared by the target audience, pragmatic meaning may fail to transfer. Translators may attempt to compensate by adding explanation or modifying expressions, but these interventions can alter tone and narrative stance. As a result, irony may be lost, understatement exaggerated, or emotional tension resolved too quickly.

The analysis further shows that pragmatically loaded expressions—such as refusals, confessions, threats, or expressions of affection—are particularly vulnerable. These utterances carry social and emotional force that cannot be captured through literal equivalence alone. A literal translation may preserve semantic content but distort pragmatic impact, changing how characters are perceived. For example, a softly implied reproach may become an explicit accusation, or a tentative confession may sound overly confident. Such shifts affect not only individual interactions but the overall emotional architecture of the text.

Importantly, pragmatic shifts also influence narrative voice. The narrator's stance toward events and characters—whether detached, ironic, sympathetic, or judgmental—is often conveyed implicitly. When pragmatic cues are altered, the narrative voice may appear more

authoritative, more emotional, or more neutral than intended. This, in turn, reshapes the reader's engagement with the text and their interpretation of its themes.

**Discussion.** The results demonstrate that preserving a writer's style is not a matter of addressing isolated linguistic problems, but of managing interactions between lexical, grammatical, stylistic, and pragmatic levels. Loss at one level frequently triggers distortion at another. For example, grammatical simplification may reduce rhythmic complexity, while pragmatic misalignment may alter tone and narrative stance.

These findings reinforce the view that literary translation is inherently interpretative. The translator must act as a mediator who balances linguistic naturalness with stylistic integrity. Absolute equivalence is unattainable; instead, translators aim for functional and aesthetic correspondence, recreating a comparable reading experience rather than identical form.

At a cultural level, the results highlight the risk of stylistic homogenization in translated literature. When stylistic irregularities are systematically smoothed out, literary diversity is reduced. Preserving stylistic difference thus becomes an ethical and cultural responsibility as well as a technical challenge.

**Conclusion.** This article has shown that preserving a writer's style in translation involves navigating complex challenges at lexical, grammatical, stylistic, and pragmatic levels. Through a qualitative and multi-layered methodological approach, the study demonstrates that stylistic loss is rarely accidental; it is often the result of conscious or unconscious translational choices.

Ultimately, stylistic preservation is not about perfect replication, but about recreating an aesthetic and emotional experience within the expressive limits of another language. Literary translation remains a profoundly human endeavor—one that exposes the limits of language while affirming the creative power of interpretation. When handled with sensitivity and awareness, translation allows a writer's voice to cross linguistic boundaries and continue to resonate in new cultural contexts.

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