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Achieving Equivalence in Slang Translation: The Case of Mario Puzo's "The Godfather"

Aizhan E. Stambekova¹ , Elmira T. Zhanysbekova^{1*} , Karen Bennett² 

¹ Department of Foreign Philology and Translation Studies, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty City 050057, Republic of Kazakhstan

² CETAPS, NOVA University, 1069-061 Lisbon, Portugal

ABSTRACT

This research explores the translation of slang and taboo language from English into Russian and Kazakh, focusing on Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*, a novel included among 100 works recommended for translation into Kazakh. By analyzing a parallel corpus of the original and translated texts, the study investigates the methods of achieving equivalence in the translation of slang in literary texts. The comparative analysis is based on the five-level equivalence theory developed by the prominent translation scholar V.N. Komissarov. The study concludes that when translating slang expressions from the original into Russian and Kazakh, the translator must not only be an expert with a deep knowledge of translation theory and the respective languages, but also be able to accurately convey the pragmatic potential of the source text. This is largely achieved by applying the fifth level of equivalence, which ensures the fulfillment of the communicative goal. A comparative analysis of the translations of slang units, conducted with reference to the works of scholars in the field of translation, contributes to the development of the theory, quality, and critique of literary translation. The practical value of the research lies in the potential application of its findings in translation practice, particularly in the translation of fiction and films from English into Kazakh.

Keywords: Equivalence; Mario Puzo; Literary Translation; Slang; Communicative Purpose; Artistic Devices; Situation Description; Pragmatic Equivalence

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Elmira Zhanysbekova, Department of Foreign Philology and Translation Studies, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty 050057, Republic of Kazakhstan; Email: ezhanysbekova010@gmail.com

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1. Introduction

The case study for this analysis is Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*^[1], an iconic novel that chronicles the life of the Corleone Mafia family in New York. Following the shooting of the family patriarch, Vito Corleone, his son Michael steps in to manage the family's criminal empire. The novel portrays Michael's transformation from an outsider to a vengeful leader, eventually reclaiming his family's dominance in the Mafia world. Written in 1970, *The Godfather* became an international bestseller, and its portrayal of power, loyalty, and violence resonated widely.

The Godfather has garnered significant recognition in Kazakhstan, largely due to its widely acclaimed cinematic adaptation by Francis Ford Coppola. While the novel exists in various translations, its accessibility in Kazakhstan has primarily been through Russian-language editions until recently. Although Russian-translated Western literary works remain a dominant linguistic medium for literature in Kazakhstan, this situation is being changed. More and more classic works are translated into Kazakh. However, sometimes the translation into Kazakh is influenced by or is done through Russian translations.

The thematic elements of *The Godfather*, such as loyalty, familial hierarchy, and power consolidation, resonate with traditional Kazakh sociocultural structures. The historical significance of clan-based governance and the revered status of *bi* (wise elders) or *batyr* (warriors) align with the depiction of Don Corleone as a paternalistic leader. Such parallels suggest an inherent cultural affinity between the novel's ideological framework and traditional Kazakh values concerning leadership and honor.

Beyond its literary and cinematic appeal, *The Godfather* has influenced discourse on power dynamics and strategic governance. The novel is often referenced in discussions about leadership, influence, and organizational control, similar to its reception in post-Soviet nations. Kazakhstan's history includes periods that resemble aspects of the Italian mafia, when the power is concentrated in the hands of one family clan, with the same consequences as high corruption, etc. The strategic maneuvering depicted in the book is sometimes interpreted as a framework for understanding political and economic structures, reinforcing its status as a text with applied sociopolitical significance.

The *Godfather* ranks number 53 on PBS's Great Amer-

ican Read list of "America's 100 Most-Read Books," and it holds a prominent place in UK literary rankings as one of the nation's most beloved novels. The novel was first translated into Russian by Mariya M. Kan in 1989^[2], followed by a more recent translation by M. Molchanov in 2023^[3]. In 2023, *The Godfather* was translated into Kazakh by Oten Akhmet^[4].

The language of the novel contains a lot of slang and taboo words, which have always presented significant challenges in the field of translation studies. Despite its importance, there has been limited research on the techniques and methods used to translate slang and taboo language, particularly from English into Kazakh. This gap in the literature warrants closer investigation, as the translation of such language requires careful consideration to avoid cultural insensitivity and ensure the appropriate contextual adaptation of meanings.

Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* has attracted significant attention in linguistic and translation studies due to its rich use of mafia-specific argot, idiomatic expressions, and culturally embedded language. Scholars have explored various dimensions of the novel's translation, highlighting the challenges posed by its informal, metaphorical, and often taboo-rich discourse. For instance, Yang Zheng^[5] emphasizes the sociolinguistic complexity of mafia language, noting its rhetorical density and symbolic power. He has argued for a view of the translator as an active cultural agent rather than an invisible mediator, particularly in the context of Chinese translations. A review of existing literature reveals a surprising lack of comparative studies analyzing the language employed in *The Godfather* in relation to other literary works. While Puzo's novel has garnered significant attention in film studies and popular culture discourse, scholarly engagement with its linguistic and stylistic dimensions remains limited. In particular, few studies have undertaken a systematic analysis of the novel's use of mafia argot, slang, and code-switching phenomena within a broader literary or sociolinguistic framework. Moreover, there is a notable absence of references to literary-critical analyses that treat *The Godfather* as a novel in its own right, rather than merely as source material for Francis Ford Coppola's cinematic adaptation. Researchers such as Cipolla^[6] have explored the cultural semantics of Italian-American identity in Puzo's work. Yet, these studies remain largely interpretive and thematic, offering limited insight into the text's linguistic

architecture. As such, there remains a substantial gap in the literature for comparative, linguistically grounded research that positions *The Godfather* within the wider canon of American fiction and translation studies.

The translation of slang and taboo expressions in contemporary fiction is especially complex. Translators must navigate cultural differences that influence the acceptability of certain words or expressions. As such, translation decisions can inadvertently offend or discomfort readers, depending on their cultural background and sensitivities. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the strategies employed by translators when rendering slang and taboo terms from English into Russian and Kazakh, with an emphasis on the methods they use to preserve the intended effect and meaning.

This analysis draws on the framework of Descriptive Translation Studies, as proposed by Toury^[7], and incorporates translation strategies. These theoretical approaches help to illuminate how slang and taboo language are rendered across languages and cultures. In line with this, the study advocates a mixed-methods approach or multistrategic methodology^[8], combining both qualitative and quantitative data. This approach is expected to yield more reliable and comprehensive insights into the translation process.

The role of fiction translation in introducing a source-language text to a target culture cannot be overstated. However, since translations are often intended for audiences with different cultural norms and values, they must be adapted to meet the cultural expectations of the target readers. When translating slang and taboo language from English to Kazakh, the risk of mistranslation is high, potentially leading to ambiguity or distortion of the original message. Therefore, it is essential for translators to apply specific translation strategies that account for the cultural particularities of the Kazakh audience and the linguistic constraints of the Kazakh language. Without careful consideration, mistranslation or cultural dissonance may occur, causing a shock or misunderstanding among the readers.

By analyzing the translation of slang and taboo language in *The Godfather* across Russian and Kazakh translations, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the strategies employed by translators to bridge cultural and linguistic divides and at what level the equivalence was achieved. The findings will contribute to the ongoing discourse in translation studies, particularly regarding the trans-

lation of culturally specific, sensitive language in fiction.

2. Materials and Methods

The present research is conducted within the scope of descriptive translation studies^[7], which aims to perform a comparative analysis of the source and target texts to identify translation strategies based on empirical evidence. The examples of slang and taboo language have been taken from the novel *The Godfather*^[1] and its translation into Kazakh: *Өкіл әке*, translated by Oten Akhmet in 2023^[4]. We have also compared it with the Russian translations made by Mariya Kan in 1989^[2] and Mikhail Molchanov in 2023^[3]. We have selected 250 instances randomly from the source and target texts.

Specifically, the paper aims to pursue the following objectives with regard to a Kazakh translation and two Russian translations:

1. To identify how certain slang and taboo expressions in passages of modern fiction have been treated by the two different translators of the Russian language and how they were rendered into Kazakh;
2. To establish how the equivalence in translation was achieved;
3. To analyze the potential consequences of translators' solutions on certain aspects of the novel, such as the transfer of pragmatic potential.

The analysis of the selected instances allows certain observations to be made and major findings to be presented within quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative data consists of a corpus of textual samples collected at random from the source and target texts, which are then subjected to statistical analysis to determine the frequencies of translators' use of certain strategies for rendering slang words. This is followed by a qualitative analysis comparing the main passages in the original and translated texts.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Slang as a Sociolinguistic Phenomenon: A Multidimensional Exploration

Slang represents one of the most debated and complex constructs within the field of linguistics. Often informally

labeled as “the other English language,” it has historically been viewed with skepticism, particularly in educational and formal contexts. Despite persistent efforts by educators to suppress its usage, the continued vitality of slang indicates its resilience and deep-seated role in human communication. As noted by E. Hunsinger^[9], while perspectives on slang may diverge, its enduring presence is virtually indisputable.

J. Green, in his seminal work *Green’s Dictionary of Slang*^[10], frames slang as a “counter-language”—a linguistic phenomenon emerging from the human impetus to deviate from standardized modes of expression. This desire manifests in the creation of alternative, and at times oppositional, lexical systems. According to Green, the thematic core of slang remains remarkably stable, often gravitating toward subjects such as sexuality, wealth, intoxication, fear, and self-assertion—domains deeply embedded in the human experience.

Jessica Weintraub^[11], a poet and scholar from the University of Tennessee–Knoxville, emphasizes the historical polarity of opinions on slang. She highlights that while figures such as Samuel Johnson, Daniel Defoe, and Noah Webster condemned slang as corrosive to linguistic purity, others—including Chaucer and Walt Whitman—embraced its expressive potential. The transcendence of slang across epochs is underscored by H.D. Thoreau’s 1862^[12] assertion that contemporary slang is more vital than ancient languages, reflecting the dynamic interplay between time, language, and social relevance.

The antiquity of slang is well documented. Historical evidence suggests that even ancient Egyptian royalty and Greek dramatists such as Aristophanes employed non-standard vernaculars. D.H. Roberts^[13] affirms that slang expressions were prevalent in classical literature, both Greek and Roman. Cowden^[14] further concludes that slang has periodically surfaced across European linguistic landscapes, reinforcing its global and transhistorical dimensions.

Lexicographic sources offer diverse interpretations of what constitutes slang. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary^[15] defines it broadly as informal lexical items used primarily within specific groups. In contrast, The Free Online Dictionary^[16] elaborates that slang typically arises in casual, playful settings, characterized by ephemeral expressions crafted for humorous or provocative effect. The Oxford English Reference Dictionary^[17] refines this definition by

highlighting the sociolinguistic functions of slang, including its utility in marking group identity, facilitating exclusion, and conveying emotion or irony more effectively than formal lexemes. Similarly, Mattiello^[18] describes slang as a highly informal, unconventional, and often short-lived vocabulary that plays a key role in establishing social affiliation and personal expression.

Further granularity is provided by Legaudait^[19], who proposes a psycho-social framework for understanding teenage slang. Within this model, slang operates as a linguistic vehicle for resisting adult norms, concealing intra-group meanings, and forging peer-group solidarity. Eble^[20], focusing on collegiate discourse, underscores slang’s dynamic and socially integrative nature, positioning it as a key mechanism for group cohesion and identity formation.

One of the main functions that slang performs in the lives of teenagers is the possibility of distancing themselves by a special manner of speech from older generations, as well as from children, sometimes with the aim of keeping secret what they know or do^[21].

Despite the broad consensus that slang is informal, group-specific, and stylistically marked, scholars acknowledge the inherent difficulty of producing a universally comprehensive definition. This ambiguity largely stems from the semantic volatility of slang expressions. H.F. Reves^[22] traced the definitional evolution of slang, noting its initial classification in Webster’s Dictionary^[23] as “low, vulgar, unmeaning language”—a judgment no longer tenable in contemporary scholarship. Reves ultimately characterizes slang as a fluctuating conversational lexicon that briefly enters popular usage within specific social circles before fading into obsolescence or being assimilated into standard discourse.

A related concept, “vulgar slang”, presents further definitional complexity. As Jackson^[24] notes, it may denote taboo, crude, or socially restricted language, often carrying contextual and ethical implications. Vulgar slang is an integral subset of slang, although the boundary between the two is porous and contingent on sociocultural perceptions.

Translation of slang introduces a formidable challenge in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural contexts. Mattiello^[18] emphasizes that translation involves not only lexical equivalence but also the alignment of social connotations. Stolt^[25] argues that the inherently figurative nature of slang impedes direct translation, while Eriksen^[26] underscores the need for

extensive cultural and academic competence on the part of the translator. Drozde and Vogule^[27] add that both linguistic fidelity and ethical sensibility are required to render slang into another language without distortion. The translator thus assumes a complex role that balances authorial intent, target audience expectations, and the integrity of the original message.

From a sociological perspective, Andersson and Trudgill^[28] observe that although slang is widely used, it is often considered unsuitable for formal settings due to its informality and associations with specific social strata. They assert that the novelty and group-specific nature of slang provoke both fascination and disapproval. Legaudait^[19] reinforces the idea that peer-group affiliation, particularly among adolescents, is a crucial driver of slang innovation. Felix R. González^[29] also highlights youth as the most prolific users and modifiers of slang, positing that their limited institutional power motivates the use of language as a form of subversive expression.

In sum, slang is not merely a linguistic curiosity but a vital, dynamic component of human interaction, deeply embedded in socio-cultural and psychological frameworks. Its persistent evolution, capacity for identity expression, and resistance to rigid codification affirm its significance in the broader study of language.

3.2. Equivalence Theories in Translation Studies

The concept of equivalence in translation has long been a cornerstone of translation theory, serving as a framework for evaluating the extent to which a translated text can be considered faithful to its source. Equivalence refers not only to the preservation of lexical meaning but also encompasses stylistic, functional, and communicative aspects of a text^[30–32]. This multidimensional understanding is particularly critical when translating culturally embedded language such as slang, where literal transfer of meaning often proves ineffective or even misleading.

Equivalence is not a fixed or absolute construct; rather, it is context-dependent and relative to the communicative goals of the translation^[31]. According to Williams^[33], the primary task of the translator is to recode the source-language message into the target language, while preserving the semantic and functional core of the original. This task becomes significantly more complex when the source text contains

slang, idiomatic expressions, or culturally specific references that lack direct counterparts in the target language.

Eugene Nida^[34] offered a foundational distinction between two principal types of equivalence: formal and dynamic. Formal equivalence emphasizes fidelity to the linguistic form and content of the source text, often at the expense of naturalness in the target language. This approach is suitable for contexts requiring a high degree of textual accuracy, such as legal or technical documents. However, in the case of slang translation, formal equivalence is frequently inadequate, as slang expressions are deeply rooted in sociocultural norms and often defy literal translation. A word-for-word rendering of slang may fail to convey its intended meaning or pragmatic effect, resulting in communicative failure^[34].

By contrast, dynamic equivalence—also termed functional equivalence—prioritizes the intended effect of the source text on its original audience and seeks to replicate this effect for the target audience^[32,34]. Dynamic equivalence enables the translator to adapt culturally marked elements such as slang, idioms, and humor into expressions that are functionally equivalent in the target culture. This adaptation may involve restructuring, paraphrasing, or replacing the source expression with a target-language slang term that conveys the same social tone, emotional intensity, or humorous nuance.

Aesthetic or stylistic equivalence plays a vital role in translation, particularly when dealing with expressive texts such as literature, dialogue, or slang. Rather than focusing solely on propositional meaning, this approach seeks to preserve the emotive tone, artistic form, and individual style of the source text, aiming for a target-language version that resonates with equivalent expressive force and communicative impact^[35,36]. This type of equivalence becomes especially important in the translation of expressive discourse, such as literature, dialogue, or subcultural language like slang. The goal is not merely to convey propositional meaning but to preserve the expressive force and stylistic individuality of the original text. According to Newmark^[37], communicative translation should aim to reproduce the same effect in the target reader as was experienced by the source audience. This goal aligns closely with both dynamic and aesthetic equivalence, particularly in the translation of slang, where tone, rhythm, connotation, and speaker identity are integral to meaning.

Anthony Pym^[32] expands the equivalence debate by

rejecting static or binary models, proposing instead a functional and ethical approach to translation. He emphasizes the translator's responsibility to both the source and target audiences, advocating for flexible strategies that consider cultural context, communicative intent, and ethical representation. This is particularly relevant when translating slang, which is often laden with social meaning and cultural nuance. Pym further distinguishes between semantic equivalence, which focuses on preserving contextual meanings, and dynamic equivalence, which aims to elicit similar emotional responses through adaptive methods. His approach underscores the need for translators to exercise cultural sensitivity and strategic judgment, especially when navigating informal or marginalized language registers.

Furthermore, as scholars like Bassnett^[38] and Venuti^[39] have argued, cultural context is a pivotal element in translation. The translator must navigate not only linguistic structures but also the sociocultural meanings embedded in the source and target languages. Slang, as a culturally bound and frequently subversive form of language, exemplifies this challenge. Translating slang requires more than linguistic substitution; it demands an intercultural negotiation in which the translator selects target-language expressions that resonate similarly with the intended audience, preserving both function and social impact.

In addition to these theoretical models, V.N. Komisarov^[40] identifies five hierarchical levels of translation equivalence: lexical, structural, semantic, pragmatic, and functional-textual. Each level highlights a different aspect of equivalence that a translator may aim to achieve depending on the text type, purpose, and translation strategy. Lexical equivalence is the most basic level, focusing on the correspondence of individual words or phrases between the source and target languages. At this level, translators seek to find direct or near-synonymous lexical items. However, true one-to-one matches are rare due to cultural and linguistic differences. At the structural equivalence level, attention shifts to the syntactic structure of sentences. The translator aims to maintain a similar grammatical form or sentence structure in the translation. Structural equivalence is particularly important when the goal is to preserve the style and rhythm of the original text. Semantic equivalence involves preserving the meaning of phrases, sentences, or entire passages. This level goes beyond individual words and considers the rela-

tionships between words in context. Even if the structure or vocabulary changes, the core message or idea remains intact. Pragmatic Equivalence Level takes into account the communicative intention of the original text. It focuses on how meaning is interpreted in a specific context and how it affects the reader. Pragmatic equivalence ensures that the translated text produces a similar effect or response in the target audience as the original did in its audience. The highest level is functional and textual equivalence, which emphasizes the overall function and purpose of the text within its cultural and communicative context. The translator ensures that the target text performs the same function as the source text, even if significant changes to form, style, or content are required. This level is especially relevant in literary translation, advertising, or other domains where tone, genre, and impact are crucial.

These levels offer a practical framework for analyzing the translator's choices when dealing with complex linguistic phenomena such as slang. While lexical and structural equivalence may suffice for neutral or formal discourse, slang typically demands higher levels of equivalence—namely, pragmatic and functional-textual—where the focus is on the communicative function and cultural integration of the expression. Slang often carries emotional tone, social identity, and cultural subtext, which can only be preserved through equivalence at these higher levels.

Equivalence theory provides essential tools for understanding and addressing the challenges of slang translation. While formal equivalence may be suitable for factual or technical content, dynamic, aesthetic, and functional equivalence are far more effective for conveying the stylistic and cultural meanings of slang. These approaches allow translators to retain the expressive intent, social connotation, and communicative effect of the original, even when direct linguistic parallels do not exist. As translation theory continues to evolve, the treatment of informal and expressive language forms such as slang remains a vital area of study, underscoring the interplay between language, culture, and meaning in cross-linguistic communication.

4. Results

Figure 1 shows visual comparison highlighting the dominant translation approach employed by each translator.

They reflect the frequency of each level (from lexical to functional) employed by three translators (M. Molchanov and M. Kan – Translations into Russian, O. Akhmet – translation

into Kazakh) across the analyzed slang expressions. Level 1 is lexical, level 2 is structural, level 3 is semantic, level 4 is pragmatic, and level 5 is functional-textual.



Figure 1. Levels of achieving equivalence employed by three translators.

M. Molchanov leans toward pragmatic and semantic strategies, M. Kan frequently uses functional equivalence, and O. Akhmet demonstrates a balanced adaptation between pragmatic and functional choices, particularly within the Kazakh cultural context.

Table 1 provides visual comparison showing how different translators respond not only to language but also to cultural expectations, target audience, and norms of acceptability. M. Molchanov stays close to the emotional grit of the

text, M. Kan adds interpretive color, and O. Akhmet adapts the meaning into a smooth, culturally resonant form.

The analysis of slang-based expressions from *The Godfather* and their translations into Russian and Kazakh highlights the complexity of rendering informal, emotionally charged language across cultures. Slang, idioms, and insults in the novel serve not only as stylistic tools but also as narrative devices that reflect character, cultural context, and relationships.

Table 1. Comparative Overview of Translators.

Translator	Frequent Strategies	Style Characteristics	Strengths	Limitations
M. Molchanov	Modulation, equivalence, substitution	Faithful, emotionally charged, often concise	Preserves tone and slang with vivid idioms	Occasionally softens or omits cultural nuances like accents
M. Kan	Amplification, rephrasing, irony	Expressive, dramatic, sometimes expanded	Adds character voice and mood effectively	May exaggerate tone or shift focus with added details
O. Akhmet	Cultural adaptation, functional equivalence	Culturally localized, smooth, idiomatic in Kazakh	Strong adaptation to Kazakh idioms and metaphors	Tends to soften emotional extremes, loses vulgarity level

The work of the three translators — M. Molchanov, M. Kan, and O. Akhmet — demonstrates varied but equally valuable approaches. M. Molchanov tends to preserve tone and vividness, using idiomatic expressions common in Russian colloquial speech. M. Kan's translations are expressive and dynamic, sometimes expanding upon the original to deepen the emotional or sarcastic effect. O. Akhmet's work is distinguished by cultural fluency and smooth, idiomatic Kazakh, often softening harsher elements while maintaining semantic accuracy.

The study confirms that slang cannot be translated through literal equivalence alone. Each successful rendering

involves thoughtful application of techniques like modulation, cultural adaptation, and expressive substitution. Ultimately, the translator must decide not only how to say something, but what matters most: tone, rhythm, clarity, or cultural resonance. This balance is the true art of literary translation.

5. Discussion

Slang in *The Godfather* is used not only for stylistic coloring but also as a narrative tool. It helps define character relationships, hierarchy, and emotional tension. The follow-

ing section presents an in-depth analysis of selected phrases from the novel and their translations into Russian and Kazakh. Each example illustrates the translator’s approach to handling colloquial, ironic, or emotionally charged expressions and shows how these choices affect the reader’s perception.

Gangster argot emerged and developed into a mature sociolect in reaction to the escalation of lawbreaking behaviors and criminal offenses. Before the emergence of gang conglomerations, there was a nascent paradigm of criminal cant, namely, thieves’ cant. Since most of the petty lawbreakers are loosely connected, their esoteric slang appeared comparatively desultory^[5]. Translating swearing and taboo language more generally poses challenges related to register, pragmatic function, connotations, and culture-specificity. In literary contexts, the translation of swearing raises challenges as it can create ‘culture bumps’^[41] (pp. 40–58). However, simply omitting it can cause “a loss in communicative effect

and social implicature”^[42] (pp. 45–60).

Let us begin with the first example, which demonstrates the use of legal jargon intertwined with a judgmental and ironic tone:

Table 2 shows an example of semantic equivalence. The phrase “suspended sentences” refers to a common legal outcome in which the convict is not actually sent to jail, often seen as a sign of leniency. The word hoodlum dates back to 19th-century American slang, likely of German origin, originally used in San Francisco newspapers. Over time, it came to mean a young criminal, street thug, or troublemaker — someone involved in petty crime or gang activity. Urban Dictionary defines it as “a young juvenile who causes havoc across their local area”^[43]. It’s often used with a slight sneer or disapproval, especially by older generations or figures of authority. It carries a dismissive tone, suggesting the speaker’s frustration with a soft legal system.

Table 2. Illustration of semantic equivalence.

The Original	M. Molchanov	M. Kan	O. Akhmet
“Judges give lenient suspended sentences to the worst Hoodlums” ^[1] (p. 253).	“Даже самым страшным подонкам судьи назначают мягкие условные наказания” ^[3] (p. 246).	“Сердобольный суд выносит прожженным громилам условные приговоры” ^[2] (p. 284).	“Ал соттың жаны аши қалып, қатыгез басбұзарлардың өзіне шартты жаза кеседі” ^[4] (p. 317).
<u>Back translation:</u>	“Even the worst scums are given mild suspended sentences by judges”.	“The soft-hearted court gives suspended sentences to seasoned thugs”.	“The court, feeling pity, gives a conditional sentence even to cruel hooligans”.

M. Molchanov uses a mostly neutral but accurate rendering. The term “**подонки**” [podonki – scum] is more emotionally charged than “**hoodlums**” and adds a strong moral judgment. However, the overall tone is more formal than the original. The legal phrase is translated precisely, but without any stylization or irony. It is clear, but perhaps a little too dry for such a loaded sentence.

If we consider this version through the lens of Komissarov’s theory, it corresponds to **Level 3 — semantic equivalence**. The translator preserves the core meaning but softens the slang tone and makes the phrase more neutral. This approach focuses on clarity over expressiveness and demonstrates the technique of lexical generalization, where a slang term is replaced with a broader and more standard term in the target language.

M. Kan introduces cultural flavor and expressive tone. The word “**сердобольный**” [serdobol’nyi – soft-hearted] adds irony, suggesting that the court is too sympathetic, which

aligns with the speaker’s implied criticism. “**Прожженные громилы**” [prozhzhennye gromily – hardened thugs] is excellent slang — “громила” literally means a big, brutish enforcer — common in criminal slang. This translation feels vivid and street-smart, closer to the tone of the source, and matches **Level 4 — pragmatic equivalence**, as it maintains the emotional function of the original by replacing literal structure with culturally rich vocabulary. The technique used here is expressive amplification — the translator strengthens the emotional tone to preserve the speaker’s sarcasm.

O. Akhmet uses a culturally adapted tone. “**Қатыгез басбұзарлар**” [qatýgez basbúzarlar – cruel hooligans] is accurate but less idiomatic. The added phrase “**жаны аши қалып**” [jany ashi qalýp – feeling pity] is not present in the original but matches the emotional irony of the English. This softens the tone but also adds a local nuance of unexpected compassion in authority. This corresponds to **Level 5 — functional-textual equivalence**, as the translator prioritizes

the function and emotional impact over literal correspondence. The phrase is adapted with culturally appropriate idioms, making the target-language reader feel the same disapproval.

After analyzing the first phrase, where legal terminology is blended with ironic criticism of the justice system, we now turn to a more emotional and personal outburst — a

statement driven by rage and raw impulse.

Table 3 demonstrates pragmatic equivalence. The line “Personally, I want to kill all those bastards” is short but intense, loaded with aggression and contempt. The key word here is “bastards”, a vulgar insult that, while historically tied to illegitimacy, has evolved into a general term of disdain, often used in angry or confrontational speech.

Table 3. Illustration of pragmatic equivalence.

The Original	M. Molchanov	M. Kan	O. Akhmet
“Personally I want to kill all those bastards” ^[1] (p. 109).	“Лично я придушил бы этих ублюдков” ^[3] (p. 189).	“Если тебя интересует мое личное мнение, то я бы всю эту нечисть передушил своими руками!” ^[2] (p. 204).	“Егер жеке пікірімді білгің келсе, мен ол малғұндардың бірін де қалдырмай өз қолыммен тұншықтырып өлтірер едім!” ^[4] (p. 127).
Back translation:	“Personally, I’d strangle those bastards”.	“If you’re interested in my personal opinion, I’d strangle all that filth with my own hands!”	“If you want to know my opinion, I’d strangle every one of those bastards with my own hands!”

M. Molchanov takes a relatively literal approach with the phrase «Лично я придушил бы этих **ублюдков**» [Transliteration into Latin from Russian: “Lichno ya pridushil by etikh ublyudkov”]. The term “ublyudki” is a direct and harsh Russian equivalent of “bastards”, carrying a similarly vulgar and scornful tone. Interestingly, the verb “to kill” is rendered as “pridushil by” (“would strangle”), which shifts the method of violence from general to specific — a transformation known as modulation. According to Komisarov’s model, this corresponds to **Level 4 — pragmatic equivalence**, since the translator maintains the emotional intensity of the original, changing the verb to a more expressive one that suits the target language’s norms.

M. Kan, on the other hand, opts for a more expressive and theatrical rendering: «Если тебя интересует мое личное мнение, то я бы всю эту **нечисть** передушил своими руками!» [Transliteration into Latin from Russian: “Esli tebya interesuet moe lichnoe mnenie, to ya by vsu etu nechist’ peredushil svoimi rukami!”]. This version features several translation transformations. First, there is an addition — an introductory clause that does not exist in the original but helps foreground the personal nature of the statement. Second, “**bastards**” becomes “**nechist**” (“filth” or “unclean creatures”), a metaphorical generalization that dehumanizes the targets even further. Third, the phrase “**with my own hands**” is explicitly added, enhancing the emotional intensity and physicality of the threat. This is a clear example of Level 5 — functional equivalence, as the translator recreates the

speaker’s voice and emotional charge using culturally powerful language. The technique here is emphatic amplification combined with creative restructuring.

Oten Akhmet’s Kazakh version is the most elaborate: «Егер жеке пікірімді білгің келсе, мен ол **малғұндардың** бірін де қалдырмай өз қолыммен тұншықтырып өлтірер едім!» [Transliteration into Latin from Kazakh: “Eger zheke pikirimdi bilgin kelse, men ol malğundardıń birin de qaldyrmai óz qolymmen tuńshyqtyryp óltirer edim!”]. The term “malğun” is a strong insult in Kazakh, meaning something like “damned” or “wretched,” and fits well as a cultural equivalent to “bastards”. Like M. Kan, O. Akhmet adds intensifiers such as “without leaving a single one” and “with my own hands”, amplifying the violence and determination in the phrase. This also aligns with **Level 5 — functional-textual equivalence**, as the translator fully reconstructs the emotional tone and integrates local stylistic features. The phrase is no longer literal, but entirely faithful in function and effect.

All three translations succeed in conveying the speaker’s hatred and desire for revenge, but they achieve this through different methods. M. Molchanov remains close to the original, concise, and direct. M. Kan infuses the line with dramatic flair and metaphor, while O. Akhmet offers a culturally rooted, emotionally charged version.

Following the previous emotionally charged threat, the next phrase shown in **Table 4** is laced with frustration, sarcasm, and an informal tone.

Table 4. Illustration of semantic equivalence with concretization.

The Original	M. Y. Molchanov	M. Kan	O. Akhmet
“He’d have to straighten that damn shepherd out”.	“Нужно будет вправить олуху мозги”.	«Приструнить надо будет пастушка».	“Мына қойшыны сілкіп алу керек ау”.
<u>Back translation:</u>	“He’ll need to knock some sense into that fool”.	“He’ll need to rein in the shepherd”.	“Looks like we’ll have to shake this shepherd up”.

The slang verb “to straighten someone out” implies giving someone a harsh correction — to set them straight, discipline them, or make them behave properly, often through intimidation or force. The word “damn” adds an emotionally loaded insult, while “shepherd” here is not literal but likely a belittling nickname for a rustic character — someone seen as weak, foolish, or backward.

M. Molchanov renders this line as «Нужно будет вправить олуху мозги» [Transliteration into Latin from Russian: “Nuzhno budet vpravit’ olukhu mozgi”]. The verb “straighten out” is transformed into a Russian idiom “**вправить мозги**” (literally: “put his brains back in place”), which conveys the same aggressive correction but with a slightly different metaphor. The term “**олух**” (“fool”) replaces “shepherd”, making the insult more direct and explicit rather than metaphorical. This corresponds to Level 4 — pragmatic equivalence, as the translator focuses on the intended effect — to belittle — through culturally familiar phrases. The strategy is expressive substitution, which emphasizes emotional force over metaphorical accuracy.

M. Kan takes a different approach. The verb «**приструнить**» (pristrunit) carries connotations of control, but is milder than “to straighten out”. Still, the nuance of subduing someone is present. Interestingly, she retains the word “pastushok” (diminutive for “shepherd”), preserving the metaphor. The use of diminutive adds a mocking, patronizing tone, underlining the character’s condescension. This is an instance of Level 3 — semantic equivalence, because the meaning remains intact.

Akhmet’s Kazakh translation, Мына қойшыны сілкіп алу керек ау [transliteration into Latin from Kazakh: “Мына qoishýny silkip alý kerek-au”], introduces a colorful idiom. The verb «**сілкіп алу**” “silkip alý” literally means “to shake someone up,” which matches the aggression of “straighten out” quite well. It implies confrontation or a wake-up call — an effective equivalent idiom. In Bektenov’s Dictionary, there are different translations of the word пастух [shepherd] into Kazakh: бақташы (baqtashy), малшы (malshy),

сиыршы (siirshy), қойшы (koishy)^[44]. The Kazakh translator used the word «**қойшы**” (qoishy), which means a person who is looking after sheep, which is an example of concretization. It illustrates the situation when a word with a broad meaning is translated with a word with a more narrow meaning. The metaphor is culturally understandable in Kazakh, especially given the pastoral associations in both American and Kazakh rural contexts. The ending “-au” adds a colloquial, spoken flavor, suggesting irritation or sarcasm. According to Komissarov’s model, this is Level 4 — pragmatic equivalence, since the emotional effect is kept through idiomatic, localized language. The strategy is idiomatic localization, blending accuracy and tone with the use of concretization given in **Table 4**.

While some slang phrases in *The Godfather* are aggressive or emotionally charged, others serve to subtly reflect cultural context and social roles. Let’s analyze the next slang expression given in **Table 5**, which demonstrates an example of transliteration.

Table 5 shows an example of transliteration and semantic equivalence. The word “**moll**” originated in early 20th-century American slang, particularly in the 1930s–1950s, and refers to the girlfriend or companion of a gangster. It carries connotations of both allure and moral ambiguity, often associated with classic crime cinema.

M. Molchanov translates this phrase as «**боевая подруга**» (boevaya podrugа), applying descriptive substitution to convey the meaning of “moll.” Rather than translating the term directly or retaining its foreign form, she chooses a culturally familiar Russian phrase that evokes the image of a loyal, streetwise woman involved in criminal activity. While this solution avoids the unfamiliarity of an untranslated word, it slightly neutralizes the stylistic charm and cultural specificity of the original. Nevertheless, the phrase sounds natural and appropriately ironic in Russian, and the use of the rhetorical question preserves the original hesitancy. **This is Level 3 — semantic equivalence**, as the general idea is present, but the slang flavor is lost.

Table 5. Illustration of semantic equivalence with transliteration.

The Original	M. Y. Molchanov	M. Kan	O. Akhmet
“...that she is a... ‘moll,’ I believe it’s called” ^[1] (p. 138).	“Его «боевая подруга», так ведь говорят?” ^[3] (p. 231).	“Кажется, таких называют... эээ... «молл», да?” ^[2] (p. 238).	“Оның жүзінде ғалым адамға тән күдік көлеңкесі пайда болды,- ұмытпасам, “жезөкше” деп атайды-ау деймін” ^[4] (p. 197).
<u>Back translation:</u>	“His ‘battle girlfriend,’ that’s what they say, right?”	“I think they’re called... uh... ‘moll,’ right?”	“A shadow of doubt appeared on his scholarly face — if I’m not mistaken, I think they call it ‘prostitute’.

M. Kan takes a different path, opting for partial transliteration, leaving the word «молл» - **moll** unchanged. This version keeps the original slang intact, trusting the reader to infer its meaning from context or tone. The surrounding structure mimics natural speech and hesitation, with filler sounds (“эээ”) and a questioning tone. **This is Level 4 — pragmatic equivalence**, as the communicative tone and stylistic awkwardness are fully preserved. Strategy: foreignization and structural mimicry.

O. Akhmet’s Kazakh translation takes a more explanatory route. Here, we see generalization — “moll” is translated as “жезөкше” (zhezókse), which conveys the woman’s perceived moral status but misses the cultural and stylistic

nuance of the original slang. The added commentary on the speaker’s expression enriches the narrative tone but shifts the focus away from the subtle discomfort and toward more explicit moral labeling. The result is clearer but less faithful in terms of tone and layered meaning. This is also **Level 3 — semantic equivalence**, with loss of stylistic nuance.

Table 6 contains the phrase “Hate someone’s guts”, this idiom is an emphatic and colorful way to express intense dislike. It’s not literal, of course — the phrase likely emerged in the early 20th century and conveys visceral, deeply personal hatred. Often used in informal, even humorous contexts, it adds dramatic flair and emotional exaggeration to otherwise casual speech.

Table 6. Illustration of pragmatic equivalence with disphemisation.

The Original	M. Molchanov	M. Kan	O. Akhmet
“The head of the studio always hated my guts and now he’s paying me off” ^[1] (p. 48).	“Владелец студии решил дать мне расчет. Он всегда меня не выносил” ^[3] (p. 35).	“Хозяин студии издавна меня не терпит, и сейчас для него удобное время со мной сквитаться” ^[2] (p. 38).	“Студия кожасы мені бұрыннан жақтырмаушы еді, қолайлы сәті туды, енді есеп айырысатын шығар” ^[4] (p. 44).
<u>Back translation:</u>	“The owner of the studio decided to fire me. He never could stand me”.	“The studio boss has long hated me, and now is a good time for him to settle the score”.	“The studio owner never liked me from the start, now the moment’s right, he’s settling accounts”.

M. Molchanov translates this line as «Владелец студии решил дать мне расчет. Он всегда меня не выносил» [Transliteration into Latin from Russian: “Vladelets studii reshil dat’ mne raschet. On vseгда menya ne vynosil”]. The phrase «дать расчет» (dat’ raschet) is a culturally familiar Russian idiom meaning “to dismiss someone” or “terminate employment,” though it sounds slightly formal. Instead of preserving the expressive slang “hated my guts,” she uses the more neutral «не выносил» (ne vynosil), which reduces emotional intensity. This makes the translation more polished but less vivid — the hostility becomes restrained. This corresponds to **Level 3 — semantic equivalence with disphemisation**, as the basic meaning is intact, but emotional sharpness is reduced. The translator uses tonal neutralization and lexical standardization.

M. Kan, however, intensifies the language slightly. The expression «не терпит» (ne terpit) is a close equivalent of “hates my guts”, and the phrase «сквитаться» (skvitat’sya) introduces a metaphor of revenge or payback. This is an example of amplification — a slight intensification of the conflict through a culturally resonant idiom. It captures the personal tension and bitterness embedded in the original. This fits **Level 4 — pragmatic equivalence**, where communicative intent and emotional subtext are preserved.

O. Akhmet’s Kazakh translation similarly leans on metaphor. The phrase «есеп айырысатын» (sep айыrysady) mirrors the Russian «сквитаться», preserving the implication of tension and retribution. The expression «жақтырмаушы еді» (jaqtyrmaushy edi) is milder than “hated my guts”, suggesting personal dislike without the in-

tense emotional weight. This reflects a common translation challenge — balancing tone and cultural expression without sounding unnatural. O. Akhmet’s version is fluid, but like M. Molchanov’s, it slightly downplays the hostility of the original. According to Komissarov’s model, this is **Level 3** — **semantic equivalence**, as the structure and meaning are preserved, but the emotional impact is softened.

Pragmatic equivalence with modulation is demonstrated in **Table 7**. The phrase, “Hey, Casanova, those broads really brushed you off,” mixes irony with layered slang. The speaker mocks someone for his failed attempt at charm, using “**Casanova**” ironically, “**broad**s” as a dated, somewhat crude word for women, and “**brushed off**” to mean a casual, even humiliating rejection.

Table 7. Illustration of pragmatic equivalence with modulation.

The Original	M. Y. Molchanov	M. Kan	O. Akhmet
“Hey, Casanova, those broads really brushed you off” ([1], p. 75).	“Эй, Казанова! Ну и здорово тебя та крошка отшила!” ([3], p. 64).	“Эй, Казанова красиво тебя отшила та деваха” ([2], p. 72).	“Эй, Казанова, бикешің мықты екен, бетінді әдемі қайтарды” ([4], p. 84).
<u>Back translation:</u>	“Hey, Casanova! That chick really shut you down!”	“Hey, Casanova, that girl really rejected you nicely”.	“Hey, Casanova, your girl was tough — she turned you down beautifully”.

M. Molchanov’s version — «Эй, Казанова! Ну и здорово тебя та крошка отшила!» [Transliteration into Latin from Russian: “Ey, Kazanova! Nu i zdorovo tebya ta kroschka otshila!”] — captures the tone well. She uses the colloquial “**крошка**” (chick) and the vivid verb “отшила” (shut you down). This is a clear case of **Level 4** — **pragmatic equivalence**. The translator recreates the interpersonal tone and communicative effect through expressive and culturally resonant language. The technique applied is idiomatic substitution, with attention to conversational rhythm and social cues.

M. Kan opts for a rougher tone with «**девах**» (devakha) and adds «**красиво**» (krasivo), which gives the rejection a sarcastic flair. According to Komissarov, this is **Level 4** — **pragmatic equivalence**. The translation preserves the speaker’s tone, sarcasm, and rhythm. It also reflects the same social layer of language through slang equivalence and slight emotional modulation.

O. Akhmet’s Kazakh version — “Эй, Казанова,

бикешің мықты екен, бетінді әдемі қайтарды” — uses the idiom “бетті қайтары” (beti qaittaru) to mean rejection, a culturally familiar metaphor. This version represents **Level 5** — **functional-textual equivalence**. The emotional function is retained through localized idioms, but the tone is adapted to cultural norms. The translator uses cultural domestication, prioritizing naturalness for the target audience over roughness.

Table 8 shows functional and textual equivalence. This phrase is a sharp insult, densely packed with layered slang and contempt. The speaker ridicules Tucker, using a series of epithets: «**incompetent**” (incapable), «**sartorial**” (related to clothing — here sarcastic), «**son of a bitch**” (a common insult), and «**Hollywood phony**” (a fake, pretentious person from the film world). The whole structure is chaotic and emotionally charged, typical of spontaneous, angry speech. Translating such a phrase requires special care to preserve tone, rhythm, and offensiveness without becoming too artificial or diluted.

Table 8. Illustration of functional-textual equivalence.

The Original	M. Molchanov	M. Kan	O. Akhmet
“Tucker, that incompetent sartorial son of a bitch of a Hollywood phony, should have been able to spot it” ([1] (p. 320).	“Такер, сукин сын, безмозглый коновал и голливудский пройдоха, должен был давно его заметить.” [3] (p. 314).	“Такер, этот некомпетентный щёголь и голливудская фальшивка, ты давно должен был это понять” [2] (p. 320).	“Алайда мактаулы оңбаған Теккер кайда қараған? Алаяқ голливудтық тотықұс” [4] (p. 325).
<u>Back translation:</u>	“Tucker, that son of a bitch, brainless butcher and Hollywood scoundrel, should’ve noticed it long ago”.	“Tucker, that incompetent dandy and Hollywood fake, you should’ve figured it out long ago”.	“That bragging scoundrel Tucker, where was he looking? A Hollywood parrot”.

M. Molchanov renders it as: «Такер, сукин сын, безмозглый коновал и голливудский пройдоха, должен был давно его заметить» [Transliteration into Latin from Russian: “Taker, sukin syn, bezmozgly konoval i gollivudskii proidokha, dolzhen byl davno ego zametit”]. She uses expansion by splitting «sartorial son of a bitch» into «**brainless butcher**», which carries a rough, physical insult. The term «пройдоха» (proidokha) fits «**phony**» well — it implies deceitfulness. M. Molchanov’s translation preserves the aggressive tone and uses strong colloquial expressions — a good example of compensation through expressive Russian idioms. If we apply Komissarov’s model, this translation falls under **Level 4 — pragmatic equivalence**, as it prioritizes the emotional build-up and expressive structure while slightly shifting specific lexical nuances

M. Kan takes a more structured and literal path. She keeps “sartorial” as «щёголь» (shchegol) - dandy, which maintains the sarcasm, and “phony” becomes «фальшивка» (falshivka) — a direct and commonly understood insult. This corresponds to **Level 4 — pragmatic equivalence**, too — the insult structure and stylistic rhythm are preserved. M. Kan applies metaphorical equivalence with partial calque, leaning toward accuracy over intensity.

O. Akhmet’s Kazakh version is even more compressed and metaphorical: «Алайда мақтаулы оңбаған Теккер қайда қараған? Алаяқ голливудтық тотықұс!» [Transliteration into Latin from Kazakh: “Maqtaýly ońbaǵan Tekker qaida qaraǵan? Alayaq gollivudtyq totyqús!”]. This is a strong cultural adaptation. He transforms “**phony**” into “**тотықұс**” (parrot) — implying someone flashy and empty, a person who only imitates. While some original words are dropped, the insult remains effective through local imagery. The loss of “sartorial” is compensated by visual metaphor, and “алаяқ” (swindler/fraud) keeps the critical tone. According to Komissarov, this reflects **Level 5 — functional-textual equivalence**, as the translator reframes the insult culturally and reproduces the tone and social function, not the lexical build. The technique is cultural reinterpretation with metaphorical localization.

Table 9 contains the slang phrase “**poor benighted**” which suggests that the girl is pitifully unaware or naive, and “**you dope**” is gentle name-calling — it implies foolishness, but in a light, almost affectionate way. Most notably, the word “**Eye-talian**” imitates the American mispronunciation of “Italian,” often used mockingly to emphasize ethnic or immigrant identity. Translating this cultural accent is a unique challenge.

Table 9. Illustration of functional-textual equivalence with cultural adaptation.

The Original	M. Y. Molchanov	M. Kan	O. Akhmet
“You poor benighted Eye-talian girl, so that’s why you kept refusing me all these months? You dope” ^[1] (p. 312).	“Моя бедная глупенькая итальяночка, — к ее невероятному удивлению произнес Джулз с тихим смехом. — Ты поэтому отказывала мне все эти месяцы? Вот дурочка, ну точно как из темного средневековья!” ^[3] (p. 306).	“Ты, бедная заблудшая итальянка, — именно поэтому ты отвергала меня все эти месяцы? Дурочка, ты, наверное, даже не закончила среднюю школу!” ^[2] (p. 310).	“О, менің италиялық байғұсым, неше айдан бері неге бермей жүргеніңді енді түсіндім. Ай, ақылсызым-ай!” ^[4] (p. 315).
<u>Back translation:</u>	“My poor silly little Italian girl,” Jules said with a soft smile. “So that’s why you kept rejecting me all these months? Silly girl — like from the dark Middle Ages!”	“You, poor lost Italian girl — so that’s why you were rejecting me all these months? Silly thing, you probably didn’t even finish high school!”	“Oh, my poor Italian darling, now I understand why you’ve been refusing me all these months. Oh, my little fool!”

M. Molchanov translates the line as: «**Моя бедная глупенькая итальяночка**, — к ее невероятному удивлению произнес Джулз с тихим смехом. — Ты поэтому отказывала мне все эти месяцы? **Вот дурочка, ну точно как из темного средневековья!**» [Transliteration into Latin from Russian: “Moya bednaya glupen’kaya italyanochka, — k ee neveroyatnomu udivleniyu proznes Dzhulz s tikhoi ulybkoi. — Ty poetomu otkazyvala mne vse eti mesyatsy? Vot durochka, no tochno kak iz temnogo srednevekov’ya!”]. This is a significant amplification —

the line is expanded with added descriptors like «**дурочка**» (silly girl), and even the metaphor “dark Middle Ages” is inserted to highlight the “benighted” idea. However, the ethnic accent from “Eye-talian” is entirely lost. This is **Level 5 — functional-textual equivalence**, with expanded expressiveness and cultural adaptation.

M. Kan’s version keeps a sharp, almost condescending humor. The use of «**заблудшая**» (zabludshaya) - lost, mirrors “benighted”, and the final sentence — about not finishing school — is an added joke, replacing “you dope.” M.

Kan uses rephrasing and interpretive expansion, giving the line a slightly harsher, more socially tinged flavor. Again, the “Eye-talian” pronunciation is normalized, losing the mock-accent dimension. This is **Level 5** — functional equivalence, as the phrase is reconstructed to intensify the speaker’s superiority and sarcasm.

O. Akhmet offers a smoother, localized take: «О, менің италиялық байғұсым, неше айдан бері неге бермей жүргенінді енді түсіндім. Ай, ақылсызым-ай!» [Transliteration into Latin from Kazakh: “O, meniñ italialyq baıǵúsym, neshe aıdan beri nege bermey júrgenińdi endi túsimdım. Ai, aqylsyzym-ai!”]. This version softens the sarcasm into affection. The Kazakh «байғұс» - “baıǵús” (poor thing) is emotionally warm, and «ақылсызым-ай!» - “aqylsyzym-ai” (my foolish one) replaces “you dope” with

gentle teasing. The tone shifts from mockery to endearment — a clear domestication strategy. The cultural nuance of the accented “Eye-talian” is lost, but the emotional core is preserved, just in a culturally adapted form. This is **Level 3** — **semantic equivalence**, as the emotional core shifts toward gentleness.

Table 10 illustrates pragmatic equivalence with addition. This final phrase is one of the bluntest in the list — short, crude, and openly judgmental. «**Slut**» is a harsh, misogynistic term used to shame women for perceived promiscuity. In modern use, it’s considered deeply offensive. In The Godfather, its function is to diminish the woman entirely, both morally and personally — a way to strip her of worth in one word.

Table 10. Illustration of pragmatic equivalence with addition.

The Original	M. Y. Molchanov	M. Kan	O. Akhmet
“She was a lazy slut” ^[1] (p. 244).	«Нет, ну какая же ленивая сука!» ^[3] (p. 237).	“Досталась же лентяйка, прости господи” ^[2] (p. 240).	“Жалқау қатынмен жарылқапсың, Жаратқан” ^[4] (p. 242).
Back translation:	“Well, what a lazy bitch she is!”	“What a lazybone I ended up with, God forgive me”.	“You were blessed with a lazy woman, Lord”.

M. Molchanov translates it as: «Нет, ну какая же ленивая сука!» [Transliteration into Latin from Russian: “Net, nu kakaya zhe lenivaya suka!”]. This version preserves the offensiveness and the rhythm of the original. The word «сука» (suka) is a strong, gendered insult in Russian — not a literal translation of «slut», but close in tone and vulgarity. This is a clear case of equivalence through expressive substitution. M. Molchanov also adds “Ну какая же...” — a phrase used in spontaneous emotional speech, which adds liveliness and authenticity, though it softens the abruptness of the English sentence slightly. This corresponds to **Level 4** — pragmatic equivalence.

M. Kan’s version is: «Досталась же лентяйка, прости господи» [Transliteration into Latin from Russian: “Dostas’ zhe lentyaika, prosti Gospodi”]. Here, the word «лентяйка» (lazy girl) is mild and neutral compared to “slut.” The insult becomes more about the laziness than sexual morality. Adding “прости Господи” introduces irony, suggesting the speaker knows he is judging but can’t help himself. This is a classic example of attenuation — the emotional violence of the original is reduced. While the sentence is culturally adapted and more palatable, the sharpness of the

insult is lost. This is **Level 3** — semantic equivalence. The meaning is there, but intensity and tone are softened.

O. Akhmet’s Kazakh translation is: «Жалқау қатынмен жарылқапсың, Жаратқан.» [Transliteration into Latin from Kazakh: “Jalqau qatynmen jarılqapsyń, Jarátqan”]. The word «қатын» (qatyn) is a strong, often disrespectful word for “woman” in Kazakh [45]. Combined with «жалқау» (jalqau) – lazy [45], it mirrors the aggressiveness of the original well. The structure «Жаратқан» (Jarátqan) – Lord, echoes the sarcastic tone of M. Kan’s “prosti Gospodi.” This version maintains emotional intensity while preserving natural flow in Kazakh — a good balance of functional equivalence and cultural fluency. This fits **Level 4** — **pragmatic equivalence**, using culturally embedded sarcasm and emotional expressiveness. The insult is preserved but localized.

6. Conclusions

Western literary works enjoy significant popularity in Kazakhstan, particularly among younger, urban populations. While Russian translations are still predominant, interest in

literature in both Kazakh and English is steadily increasing. The interplay between Western literary traditions and Kazakh cultural identity plays a key role in the development of the country's literary scene. A large portion of Western literature is available in Russian due to its widespread use, while efforts to expand the body of Kazakh-language translations are underway. Despite the current limitations in Kazakh-language availability, this trend is gradually shifting. As English language proficiency grows among the youth, more readers are engaging with Western texts in the original and translating them directly into Kazakh.

The *Godfather* holds a distinctive place within Kazakhstan's literary and cultural context. Its presence is largely attributed to the widespread popularity of its film adaptation, the ease of access through Russian translations, and its thematic resonance with traditional Kazakh values. Nonetheless, its reception is influenced by moral considerations and the relatively scarce availability of Kazakh editions. The novel's enduring relevance reflects its ability to engage with themes of authority, fidelity, and leadership—topics that continue to resonate within modern Kazakhstani socio-political dialogue.

The translation analysis of *The Godfather* reveals that M. Kan's version is highly refined and literary in style. Even colloquial and taboo language is carefully rendered, allowing the translation to maintain the tone and depth of a classic literary work. In contrast, Molchanov's translation appears less polished. His approach leans more heavily on literal translation and dysphemistic techniques, resulting in slang that often comes across as harsher than in the original.

Notably, M. Kan undertook her translation in 1987, at the age of 60, by which time she had already established herself as a seasoned literary translator. Her approach favored toning down particularly crude expressions by using more neutral phrasing or metaphors. On the other hand, Yuri Molchanov, a younger translator, completed his version in 2023, making it a recent addition. A Kazakh translation, introduced in 2024, aligns with broader tendencies in Kazakh literary translation, where vulgar or explicit language is typically softened or culturally adapted.

The distribution of translation levels across the three translators demonstrates distinct stylistic approaches. M. Molchanov predominantly used Level 3 translations (62%), reflecting a moderate approach with some harsh or direct

renderings, while only 10% of his translations reached Level 5 intensity. In contrast, M. Kan shows a higher proportion of Level 5 translations (40%), suggesting a more expressive or emotionally charged style, with a relatively balanced use of Levels 3 and 4. O. Akhmet also favored higher intensity, with 35% of translations at Level 5 and significant use of Levels 3 and 4, but softened more expressions at Level 2 (15%). Overall, M. Kan and O. Akhmet applied more expressive strategies, whereas M. Molchanov leaned toward a neutral, straightforward translation style.

Based on the conducted analysis, the following scholarly conclusions can be drawn regarding the achievement of equivalence in the translation of slang:

- Functional equivalence serves as the primary principle in slang translation—the translator must grasp and convey the core intent of the original message.
- Context and pragmatics are critical factors. Equivalence is primarily based on the “communicative purpose” and the “general nature of the situation.”
- While structural differences between the Russian and Kazakh translations are minimal, the Kazakh version places greater emphasis on communicative intent. This may be attributed to the informal and colloquial structure characteristic of the Kazakh language.

In general, translators working into both Russian and Kazakh have prioritized pragmatic equivalence in conveying the meaning of slang. In the Kazakh translations, intercultural differences and linguistic features are more carefully considered, increasing the need for pragmatic adaptation. This, in turn, contributes to conveying the original's impact more effectively to the Kazakh reader.

In translating slang, a translator must first understand the communicative purpose of the expression and aim to reproduce its impact in the target language. Rather than relying on literal translation, it is advisable to use equivalents that carry similar emotional or cultural connotations in the target language. Furthermore, the cultural context should be taken into account, and the translation should be adapted to suit the expectations of the target audience.

The topic of slang and its application in literary translation remains underexplored in both linguistics and translation studies. From a functional perspective, slang plays a significant role in the lexical system of any language, as it helps

the speaker fulfill various communicative functions. Therefore, this research contributes to the further exploration of translation strategies used in rendering slang expressions.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, A.E.S. and E.T.Z.; methodology, K.B.; software, A.E.S.; validation, A.E.S., E.T.Z. and K.B.; formal analysis, E.T.Z.; investigation, A.E.S.; resources, A.E.S.; data curation, K.B.; writing—original draft preparation, A.E.S.; writing—review and editing, E.T.Z.; visualization, A.E.S.; supervision, K.B.; project administration, A.E.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Conflict of Interest

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