

# РОМАНСЬКІ ТА ГЕРМАНСЬКІ МОВИ

UDC 811.111

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2710-4656/2025.2.1/10>*Aliyeva L. S.*

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## LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF THE TRANSLATION OF THE POEM “BEOWULF” AND ITS EMBODIMENT IN THE LITERARY LANGUAGE

*This article examines the translational characteristics of the poem “Beowulf” and its reflection in literary language. It explores how the linguistic nuances of the poem are translated, taking into account the unique features of ancient English, its cultural context, and the role of cognitive abilities in shaping language. In the article, the author highlighted the translation characteristics of the poem “Beowulf” and how it is reflected in the literary language. It is generally hypothesized that cognitive abilities developed for various adaptive functions are restructured to form a complex symbolic and communicative system. Author investigated that certain cognitive abilities are only related to language and develop gradually as human communication becomes more complex. It is highlighted that once language reaches a certain degree of neurobiological universality and cognitive complexity; brain synapses are rewired to facilitate language development. Although languages differ in many ways, they all have the same genetic structure and are made in the same way, and they are all processed by the brain in the same way, so they all share basic structural features and structural features that enable them to function. Let me take for an instance, although different sets of sounds are used in the formation of each language, the resulting sounds are organized and combined according to only a few principles. Outside the immediate context of speech, writing systems construct and transmit our knowledge. Thus, if it were not for the general, universal features that exist in language, we would think that the sounds of languages and their combinations have changed randomly. One of the main tasks of a linguist is to understand and explain the features that are universal for all languages, as well as those that vary from language to language. Languages are also quite creative as they can develop new word combinations to express new concepts.*

**Key words:** cognitive complexity, alliteration, warrior culture, supernatural creature, monstrous creature.

**Introduction.** Language is a crucial means of communication, linking individuals within a society or across different societies. From the dawn of civilization, humans have used language to convey thoughts and emotions. Although the ability to self-reflect and abstract thinking is not strictly dependent on language, it is facilitated by it. Language is essential for conveying complex information, expressing emotions and ideas, and discussing the meanings of events and the potential consequences of various choices. Over thousands of years, humans have developed highly flexible vocal tracts capable of producing a vast range of sounds and distinguishing between them. The most important development, however, has been the ability of humanity to create and use systems that can convey the meanings of these sounds.

Although languages differ in many ways, they all have the same genetic structure and are made in the same way, and they are all processed by the brain in the same way, so they all share basic structural features and structural features that enable them to function. Let me take for an instance, although different sets of sounds are used in the formation of each language, the resulting sounds are organized and combined according to only a few principles. Outside the immediate context of speech, writing systems construct and transmit our knowledge [6, p. 237].

Thus, if it were not for the general, universal features that exist in language, we would think that the sounds of languages and their combinations have changed randomly. One of the main tasks of a linguist is to understand and explain the features that are universal for all languages, as well as those that vary

from language to language. Languages are also quite creative as they can develop new word combinations to express new concepts.

“Beowulf” is indeed a multifaceted work, and there are various analyses regarding its connection to Christian allegory and heroism. The hero’s sacrifice and his tragic death highlight the underlying sadness in the story, which does not necessarily mean that “Beowulf” is a purely optimistic poem. While Beowulf’s death, his nobility, and loyalty to his homeland are important, it also brings to the forefront themes like the limitations of life and the inevitability of death [1, p. 17].

As critics have pointed out, the style of the poem is both optimistic and dark. Beowulf’s heroism, courage, and warrior nature contrast with the sorrow and changes in society after his death, adding a layer of melancholy to the work. This balance is important in reflecting both the social and religious context of its time as well as the universal human experience.

**The main goal** of the article is to show the linguistic features in the translation of the work “Beowulf”.

**The main part.** Generally, the key feature that stands out is the hero’s defeat of a terrifying monster – something that reflects the hyper-strength typical of literature from that era. These themes were likely written with the intention of entertaining people who lived within the safety of city walls and never saw battle throughout their lives. On the other hand, ancient people, who were constantly at risk of encountering various predators and giant creatures in nature, had a strong desire to defeat these beasts. Therefore, the heroes they depicted were created as figures with extraordinary strength. This phenomenon can be observed not only in ancient English literature but also across the literary traditions of many ancient peoples, including the Turks.

I. Tahirov mentioned that the inability of modern-day English speakers, the direct descendants and carriers of the Old English language, to read the “Beowulf” epic is due to the historical processes and events that caused the decline of the English oral folk literature created in distant and dark centuries. He explains that the primary reason modern English and American readers cannot understand “Beowulf” without the help of a translator is the extraordinary evolution of the English language over centuries. This development, he argues, led to significant changes in the language, making the original text incomprehensible to contemporary speakers [5, p. 110].

Translators must be aware of the cultural significance and status of certain terms to accurately

convey the nuances of the original text. They should also understand the cultural symbolism of natural elements like the sea, mountains, animals, and landscapes. Kennings related to battles, weapons, and courage must be translated in a way that preserves the heroic spirit. Moreover, translators need to be aware of the historical contexts that influence the creation of specific kennings in order to accurately convey their intended meaning. Ultimately, when translating kennings, understanding the cultural context is not just about linguistic precision, but also about capturing the spirit, morality, and worldview of the people who used these expressions.

The ancient people, constantly facing the danger of encountering all kinds of predators and giant creatures in nature, had a desire to overcome these predators. This desire led them to create the heroes they described as figures with extraordinary strength. Therefore, this fact can be observed not only in ancient English literature but also in the literature of all ancient peoples, including the Turks. In this regard, these themes have been relevant throughout all periods; fighting for honor, against darkness, and even sometimes against God, have remained the central themes of literature up to the present time. Another interesting fact about this literature is that all the poems from the ancient English period are anonymous, and their authors are unknown.

When analyzed from a stylistic-linguistic perspective, it becomes clear that ancient English poetry relied more on alliteration than today’s poetry. The main device creating the rhythm of the poem is not rhymed lines but rather the repetition and emphasis of various sounds, words, and syllables. Creating metaphors by combining words also played an important role in ancient English literature, contributing to a rich poetic mood. In this sense, ancient English literature represents an interesting example for studying the undeniable role of oral folk literature in the current literary richness, and a deeper exploration of this literature would be purposeful. «Beowulf» is considered an epic poem because it depicts the hero’s extraordinary battles against supernatural demons and beasts, as well as his journey across vast distances, facing numerous challenges. The work begins with the arrival of Beowulf and continues with the attacks of Grendel. The epic also recounts the history of the characters’ lineages, their interactions, debts paid, and acts of heroism. A key theme in the work is the loyalty of warriors to their lords. The poem begins with a funeral ceremony and ends with one: at the beginning, the funeral of Scyld Scefing is described, and at the end, Beowulf himself is laid to rest.

The discovery of «Beowulf» by the academic world led to a variety of interpretations and discussions. Scholars debated whether the poem was first written down in the 8th century or whether its proto-version existed in oral form before being transcribed. These differing views reflect the complex history of the epic's transmission. When analyzing the aforementioned works, it becomes clear that neither the sources cited nor the translations are sufficient to definitively prove the complex linguistic features of the «Beowulf» epic, its author, the exact location of its creation, or its historical date. Many of the hypotheses put forward have not been fully substantiated. However, these works are crucial for historians in understanding the «Beowulf» manuscript. Source texts can help clarify proposals regarding the creation date of the epic, its possible geographical boundaries, and the scope of its influence. These proposals can be tested, leading to more accurate conclusions [2, p. 143].

Through article, the epic has been linked to Scandinavian, Celtic, and international folklore sources based on its poetic language characteristics. This highlights the cross-cultural influences that may have shaped «Beowulf» and its development.

Some researchers disagree on whether «Beowulf» is a Christian work built within the context of Germanic paganism. In their view, the transition from Germanic pagan beliefs to Christian ones was a gradual process that spanned several centuries. Therefore, the religious message of the poem remains uncertain, as the period in which it was written may still have seen conflicting influences and ideas. While the Christian elements in the text are clear, there are still traces of pagan beliefs, making it difficult to definitively categorize the work as either fully Christian or pagan. This ambiguity is a key area of debate in understanding the religious and cultural context of «Beowulf».

The fact that Christ is never mentioned, and that the characters, including Beowulf, are not explicitly Christian, suggests that the poem was likely composed during a time when paganism still held sway, and the characters adhered to the old Germanic beliefs. Beowulf's prayers, directed to a higher power such as the «Uca Ata» (Almighty Father) or «Hamin Sahibina» (Lord of All), are indicative of a belief in a powerful, supreme force, but they do not directly invoke Christian terminology or figures [5, p. 111].

This raises an important question: Was the poet intending to portray Beowulf as a Christian hero, relying on Christian virtues symbolically, or did the Christian references reflect the later influence of Christian scribes who recorded or modified the poem? It's possible that when the poem was transcribed or

passed down through generations, Christian elements were superimposed onto an originally pagan story, as Christian scribes would have inserted their own understanding of virtue, morality, and divine influence into the existing narrative. Moreover, the dual nature of the poem-containing both pagan and Christian elements—adds to its complexity and invites readers to consider how religious influences shaped its creation and interpretation.

Thus «Beowulf» poem has been translated into Azerbaijani and published, and a number of studies have been conducted on it. The translation of the work aimed to convey its rich linguistic features, structures, and cultural context to Azerbaijani readers. Translators have also tried to accurately reflect both the pagan and Christian elements of the work.

Perhaps other epics existed alongside Beowulf, but in any case, the only epic that has survived to this day is the Beowulf manuscript, and this fact constantly underscores its significance.

**The Cognitive Foundations of Language.** Certain cognitive abilities are tied to language, gradually evolving as human communication becomes more complex. It is hypothesized that cognitive abilities, originally developed for various adaptive functions, were reorganized to create a symbolic and communicative system. Once a language reaches a certain level of neurobiological universality and cognitive complexity, the brain's synapses are reorganized to facilitate language development. Despite their many differences, all languages share the same genetic structure and are processed by the brain in the same way, allowing them to function effectively. For example, although each language employs different sets of sounds, these sounds are combined and organized based on a few common principles. Without these universal features, languages would appear to have randomly altered sounds and combinations. One of the key tasks of a linguist is to understand and explain both the universal and language-specific features of languages [3, p. 25].

**The Role of Symbols in Communication.** Human communication relies on the ability to convey ideas through various forms such as signs, sounds, gestures, and written symbols. Symbols, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, writing systems, creativity, cultural identity, and multifunctionality are some of the most important aspects of language. Ideas, objects, abstract concepts, and actions can all be represented by symbols. Syntax governs sentence structure, while semantics explores how people understand and use linguistic expressions. Phonology and phonetics deal with the physical properties of speech sounds,

and pragmatics examines how context influences understanding. Writing systems, which exist outside of speech, preserve and transmit knowledge. Language is highly creative as it can generate new word combinations to express novel ideas.

The Characteristics of Old English Poetry. The authorship of ancient English poems is largely unknown. These works were likely performed by bards known as “Gleeman” or “Scop,” who would recite their own or others’ poems, often accompanied by musical instruments. The word “glee” in contemporary English, meaning “joy” or “entertainment,” reflects the connection between music and poetry in ancient English tradition. Similarly, the term “scop” referred to a poet or bard. The most distinctive poetic feature of Old English poetry is alliteration, a stylistic device in which nearly all words in a poem are alliterative. Alliteration played a key role in shaping the poetic possibilities of this period. Examples of alliteration in Old English texts include patterns like the repetition of consonant sounds, such as in “swift swallow flying to the south” [7, p. 313].

Translation of “*Beowulf*” and Its Linguistic Nuances. The epic poem “*Beowulf*” is notable for its stylistic richness and complex language. As an epic narrative, it recounts the heroic deeds of its protagonist, “Beowulf”, as he battles supernatural creatures and faces numerous challenges. The poem is known for its focus on the virtues of honor, bravery, and loyalty, with an emphasis on the relationships between warriors and their lords. “*Beowulf*” is often considered a Christian allegory, with “Beowulf” symbolizing good fighting against the forces of darkness and evil. However, the poem is also marked by a somber and tragic tone, particularly in its depiction of “Beowulf’s death.

Old English poetry, including “*Beowulf*”, typically focused on epic tales, battles, and heroism. These topics reflect the warrior culture of the Anglo-Saxon period and the fascination with heroic figures who exhibited extraordinary strength and courage. The poem’s themes of heroism, the struggle against monstrous creatures, and the eventual death of the hero are recurrent motifs in the literary traditions of many ancient cultures, including those of the Turks.

Translating “*Beowulf*” Across Cultures. When translating “*Beowulf*”, it is essential for translators to understand the cultural and symbolic significance of certain terms. For example, natural elements like the sea, mountains, animals, and landscapes carry deep cultural meaning that must be accurately conveyed. Additionally, kennings – compound expressions used

in Old English poetry to describe concepts such as battle, weapons, and courage—need to be carefully translated to preserve the heroic spirit of the poem. Translators must also be aware of the historical context that shaped these kennings to ensure their accurate representation in translation. Understanding the cultural context is not only important for linguistic precision but also for capturing the spirit, morality, and worldview of the people who used these expressions [4, p. 42].

The Legacy of “*Beowulf*” and Its Translation. “*Beowulf*” is an epic poem that has survived as the only extant manuscript from its period, written in Old English. Researchers believe that the poem was composed over time, drawing upon folk tales and traditions. It is speculated that the poem was performed by bards or court poets, who may have accompanied their recitations with musical instruments like the harp. The poem’s enduring influence on literature can be seen in its profound impact on subsequent English poetry and its continued study in modern literary and linguistic research.

Despite being written in Old English, “*Beowulf*” shares many linguistic features with modern Scandinavian languages, particularly Old Norse. The ancient English writing system, known as the “runic” alphabet, was used for inscriptions on wood and stone, but the stories were likely passed down orally before being written down in the early medieval period. As a result, “*Beowulf*” is a product of both oral and written traditions, combining the historical and cultural elements of its time.

**Conclusions.** The poem “*Beowulf*” is a remarkable work of ancient English literature that continues to captivate readers and scholars alike. Its themes of heroism, fate, and the struggle between light and darkness are as relevant today as they were in the Anglo-Saxon period. Translating this work presents a unique set of challenges, particularly in capturing the poem’s rich linguistic and cultural nuances. By understanding both the language and the historical context in which “Beowulf” was composed, translators can preserve the essence of this epic while making it accessible to modern audiences.

“Beowulf” is an Old English epic poem that has been highly influential in the development of the English language and literary tradition. It embodies a rich blend of themes, structure, and language features that have allowed it to be studied for centuries. If we’re looking through its features, especially with respect to its incarnation in language, here are some key aspects to consider.

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**Алієва Л. С. ЛІНГВІСТИЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПЕРЕКЛАДУ ПОЕМИ «БЕОВУЛЬФ»****І ЇІ ВТІЛЕННЯ В ЛІТЕРАТУРНІЙ МОВІ**

У цій статті розглядаються перекладацькі характеристики поеми «Беовульф» та її відображення у літературній мові. У ній досліджується, як перекладаються мовні нюанси поеми, зважаючи на унікальні особливості давньоанглійської мови, її культурний контекст та роль когнітивних здібностей у формуванні мови. У статті автор виділив перекладацькі характеристики поеми «Беовульф» і те, як вони відображаються в літературній мові. Зазвичай передбачається, що когнітивні здібності, розвинені різних адаптивних функцій, реструктуруються, утворюючи складну символічну і комунікативну систему. Автор досліджував, що певні когнітивні здібності пов'язані лише з мовою та розвиваються поступово у міру ускладнення людського спілкування. Наголошується, що як тільки мова досягає певної міри нейробіологічної універсальності та когнітивної складності, мозкові синапси перебудовуються, щоб сприяти розвитку мови. Хоча мови багато в чому розрізняються, всі вони мають однакову генетичну структуру і створені однаково, і всі вони обробляються мозком однаково, тому всі вони поділяють основні структурні особливості та структурні особливості, які дозволяють їм функціонувати. Дозвольте мені взяти для прикладу, хоча різні набори звуків використовуються для формування кожної мови, отримані звуки організовані і об'єднані відповідно до кількох принципів. Поза безпосереднім контекстом мовлення системи листи конструюють і передають наші знання. Таким чином, якби не загальні, універсальні особливості, які існують у мові, ми думали б, що звуки мов та їх комбінації змінювалися випадковим чином. Одне з головних завдань лінгвіста – зрозуміти та пояснити особливості, що є універсальними для всіх мов, а також ті, що відрізняються від мови до мови. Мови також є досить креативними, оскільки вони можуть розробляти нові словосполучення для вираження нових концепцій.

**Ключові слова:** когнітивна складність, алітерація, культура воїнів, надприродна істота, жахлива істота.