



EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATION: SOME PROBLEM-SOLVING STRATEGIES

Introduction

- In any account of interlingual communication, translation is used as a generic term.
- Professionally, however, the term translation is confined to the written, and the term interpretation to the spoken

If confined to a written language, translation is a cover term with three distinguishable meanings:

1) translating, the process (to translate; the activity rather than the tangible object)

2) a translation: the product of the process of translating (e.g. the translated text)

3) translation: the abstract concept which encompasses both the process of translating and the product of that process Bell

- The definitions of translation suggested above imply that producing the same meaning or message in the target language text as intended by the original author is the main objective of a translator. This notion of 'sameness' is often understood as an equivalence relation between the source and target texts. This equivalence relation is generally considered the most salient feature of a quality translation.

Problems of Equivalence

- The principle that a translation should have an equivalence relation with the source language text is problematic. There are three main reasons why an exact equivalence or effect is difficult to achieve.



Firstly, it is impossible for a text to have constant interpretations even for the same person on two occasions (Hervey, Higgins and Haywood (1995: 14)).

Secondly, translation is a matter of subjective interpretation of translators of the source language text. Thus, producing an objective effect on the target text readers, which is the same as that on the source text readers is an unrealistic expectation.

Thirdly, it may not be possible for translators to determine how audiences responded to the source text when it was first produced (ibid, p. 14).

- Dynamic equivalence is based on the principle of equivalent effect, where the relationship between the receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message (p. 159).

Munday (2001) describes these five different types of equivalence as follows:

1. Denotative equivalence is related to equivalence of the extralinguistic content of a text.
2. Connotative equivalence is related to the lexical choices, especially between near-synonyms.
3. Text-normative equivalence is related to text types, with texts behaving in different ways.
4. Pragmatic equivalence, or 'communicative equivalence', is oriented towards the receiver of the text or message.
5. Formal equivalence is related to the form and aesthetics of the text, includes word plays and the individual stylistic features of the source text (p. 74).

STRATEGIES TO SOLVE PROBLEMS OF EQUIVALENCE

- As has been mentioned above, problems of equivalence occur at various levels, ranging from word to textual level. The equivalence problems emerge due to semantic, socio-cultural, and grammatical differences between the source language and the target language. These three areas of equivalence problems are intertwined with one another. The meaning(s) that a word refers to are culturally bound, and in most cases the meaning(s) of a word can only be understood through its context of use.

Addition of information


Information which is not present in the source language text may be added to the target language text. According to Newmark (1988: 91), information added to the translation is normally cultural (accounting for the differences between SL and TL culture), technical (relating to the topic), or linguistic (explaining wayward use of words). The additional information may be put in the text (i.e. by putting it in brackets) or out of the text (i.e. by using a footnote or annotation). Such additional information is regarded as an extra explanation of culture-specific concepts (Baker, 1992) and is obligatory specification for comprehension purposes.

Deletion of information

- Baker (1992: 40) refers to deletion as "omission of a lexical item due to grammatical or semantic patterns of the receptor language" (Baker, 1992: 40). She states further that this strategy may sound rather drastic, but in fact it does no harm to omit translating a word or expression in some contexts. If the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations, translators can and often do simply omit translating the word or expression in question (Baker, 1992: 40).

Structural adjustment

Structural adjustment is another important strategy for achieving equivalence. Structural adjustment which is also called shift or transposition or alteration refers to a change in the grammar from SL to TL . Similarly, Bell states that to shift from one language to another is, by definition, to alter the forms. The alteration of form may mean changes of categories, word classes, and word orders.

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- **Structural adjustment, according to Nida has various purposes including:**
 - 2) to produce semantically equivalent structures.
 - 3) to provide equivalent stylistic appropriateness.
 - 1) to permit adjustment of the form of the message to the requirements of structure of the receptor language.
 - 4) to carry an equivalent communication load.



Thanks for attention!