

HANDOUT 4. EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATION

Key points:

- Equivalence is a central yet controversial issue in translation studies
- Equivalence is the relationship between a ST and a TT that allows the TT to be considered as a translation of the ST.
- Four kinds of quantitative equivalence are suggested by Kade (1968).
- Koller (1979) proposed five types of meaning-based equivalence.

The nature of equivalence

The definition, relevance and applicability of equivalence has caused heated controversy. It has been analyzed, evaluated, and discussed from different points of views and has been approached from different perspectives.

Definition of equivalence in translation

It is the relationship between a ST and a TT that allows the TT to be considered as a translation of the ST.

Equivalence is a relationship between two texts in two languages, rather than between the languages themselves

Catford (1965, 1994):

- ST & TT relatable
- ST & TT have the same referents

Pym (1992)

- Translation as a transaction
- Equivalence as equality of exchange value

=> Equivalence becomes a negotiable entity, with translators doing the negotiation.

QUANTITATIVE EQUIVALENCE

Kade's categories of Quantitative equivalence

a. One – to – one equivalence

- *A single expression in TL is equivalent to a single expression in SL (ONE SL item corresponds to ONE TL item.)*
- Stable technical terms
- Examples:
 - ✓ Giở trái đất
 - ✓ Khoan điện
 - ✓ Appendix

b. One – to – many equivalence:

- More than one TL expressions are equivalent to a single SL expression. (ONE item in one language corresponds to SEVERAL in the other language.)
- Examples:
 - ✓ Nuôi
 - ✓ Bamboo

c. One – to – part – of – one equivalence:

- Only *partial equivalents* are available
- "*Approximate equivalents*"
- Examples:
 - ✓ Cá tính?

d. Nil equivalence

- No equivalent is available in the TL
- Translators create new *solutions*
- Examples:
 - ✓ Bánh chưng
 - ✓ Áo dài
 - ✓ Sushi
 - ✓ Phở

MEANING – BASED EQUIVALENCE

Koller's 5 types of equivalence:

- Denotative equivalence
- Connotative equivalence
- Text-normative equivalence
- Pragmatic / Dynamic equivalence
- Formal equivalence

a. Denotative equivalence

- Denotative equivalence is one in which the SL and TL words *refer to the same thing* in the real world. This is the referential identity between SL and TL units.
- This is equivalence of the extra linguistic content of a text, otherwise called 'content invariance.'
- Examples:
 - ✓ a rabbit
 - ✓ the great fire of London

b. Connotative equivalence

- SL and TL words should produce the same *communicative values* in the mind of native speakers of the two languages
- The connotation transmitted by means of the word choices (especially where there is a specific choice between synonymous expressions), with respect to level of *style* (register), the *social and geographical dimension*, frequency, etc.
- Also called "Stylistic equivalence"

b -1 . Connotations of speech level

❖ Types:

- Elevated (formal, dignified)
- Poetic
- Normal

- Colloquial
- Slang
- Vulgar (rude, offensive)
- Examples:
 - ✓ Cô gái xinh đẹp
 - ✓ Người mới (chưa biết gì)
 - ✓ Người bị lừa

b– 2. Connotations of socially determined usage

❖ Types:

- Student language. Some examples:
 - ✓ INCREDIBLE/ AMAZING!
 - ✓ ABSOLUTELY/ DEFINITELY!
- Military usage. Some examples:
 - ✓ Attention!
 - ✓ At ease!
- Working-class language
- Educated class
- Aristocratic language. Some examples:
 - ✓ Your Majesty
 - ✓ Sir/Ser

b-3. Connotations of geographical relation or origin

❖ Types:

- American English
- Australian English
- British English

- Non – regional
- Dialects
- Examples:
 - ✓ Đi vệ sinh
 - ✓ Xe taxi
 - ✓ Nhanh như sóc

b - 4. Connotations of medium

- ❖ Types:
 - Spoken language
 - Written language
 - Example: Tôi đã nhận được thư của bà.

b- 5. Connotations of stylistic effect

- ❖ Types
 - Archaic (old, no longer used)
 - Pompous (show that you are more important than other people)
 - Artificial
 - Fashionable
 - Euphemistic
 - Plain (easy to see or understand)
 - Descriptive
 - Examples:
 - ✓ Người mù
 - ✓ Người bị HIV
 - ✓ Béo

b-6. Connotations of frequency

❖ Types:

- Common
- Uncommon
- Example: Nông dân

b – 7. Connotations of register

❖ Types:

- Normal usage
- Technical
- Medical
- Examples:

- Surgeon: A. Swan
- Assistant: Mr. Dickson
- GA: Dr. Wood
- Incisions: median sternotomy and right thigh and leg

✓ *See the box*

✓ First of all, steel plates and bars are taken from the stockyard to the *preparation shop*. Here they are cleaned by *shot blasting*. Then, they are coated with primer paint to prevent corrosion. Later they are cut and *shaped* automatically by machines.

b-8. Connotations of evaluation

❖ Types:

- Positively evaluative
- Ironic
- Pejorative (disapproval, criticism)
- Example:

✓ The cloth is as soft as concrete.

✓ Chết

c. Text-normative equivalence

- The SL and TL words are used in the same or similar context in their respective languages.

- Text – normative equivalence relates to *text-type specific features* or text and language norms for given text types.
- Examples:
 - ✓ Dear Anne,
 - ✓ Faithfully yours,
 - ✓ Art.2. the organization and its members, in pursuit of the purposes stated in Article 1, shall act in accordance with the following principles:
 - 1) the organization is based on the principle for the sovereign equality of all its members...

d. Pragmatic equivalence

- The SL and TL words have *the same effect* on the reader.
- Also called "*communicative equivalence*"
- Examples: It's cold in here.

e. Formal equivalence

- Focuses on the *form* of the text: Rhythm, verse form, special stylistic forms of expression in syntax and lexis, word play, metaphor...
- Particularly used in translation of poems, songs, etc.
- Also called '*expressive equivalence*'
- Example:
 - ✓ Wear a smile, one size fits all.
 - ✓ *Read the following translated version of a poem and guess its Vietnamese name:*

I loved you and this love by chance
 Inside my soul has never fully vanished
 No longer shall it ever make you tense;
 I wouldn't want to sadden you with anguish.
 I loved you speechlessly and wildly,
 By modesty and jealousy was stressed;
 I loved you so sincerely and so mildly,
 As, God permit, may love you someone else.

✓ *Read the following translated version of a song lyrics and guess its English name:*

NỮ: Đau đớn một thời

Để yêu nồng thêm

Lướt qua bể dâu

Lướt qua đêm dài

Trái tim càng ốm yếu

Ta vẽ mơ lại

Vùng mơ thật xanh

Rồi chiếc - hôn...

Lại sẽ êm như ngày mới yêu nhau người ơi...

NAM: Rồi sẽ cùng nhau

Bay vượt trời cao

Rồi sẽ dìu nhau

Hòa với ngàn sao