

The Concept of Equivalence in Translation Theory

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Abstract: Translation is a complex and multifaceted process that involves the transfer of meaning from one language to another. In the field of translation theory, the concept of equivalence plays a central role in ensuring that the meaning, context and nuances of the source text are faithfully conveyed in the target language. Equivalence is a fundamental principle that supports accurate and efficient translations, especially in specialized fields such as legal, medical, technical and scientific translations. The purpose of this article is to explore the concept of equivalence in translation theory, explore its theoretical foundations, practical applications and implications for effective communication between different languages and cultures.¹

Key words: terminology extraction, terminological variation, cultural equivalence, language equivalence, contextual equivalence.

Theoretical Foundations of Translation Equivalence

Equivalence has been central to translation theory, and scholars and theorists have explored its various dimensions and implications for interlingual communication. The theoretical foundations of translation equivalence come from the works of famous scholars such as Eugene Nida, Roman Jakobson and Georges Mounin, who have greatly contributed to our understanding of equivalence as a key concept in translation theory.

Famous linguist and translation theorist Eugene Nida introduced the concept of dynamic equivalence, emphasizing conveying the meaning and purpose of the source text in a way that is natural and easy to understand in the target language. Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence focused on the functional side of translation and emphasized the need to prioritize the communicative function of the source text over formal or structural aspects.

¹ Wright, S. E., & Budin, G. (Eds.). (2011). Handbook of terminology management: Volume 2: Application-oriented terminology management. John Benjamins Publishing.

Well-known linguist and semiotician Roman Jakobson proposed the function of intersemiotic transfer in interlingual translation, which involves the transfer of meaning from one reference system (source language) to another (target language). Jakobson's framework emphasized the role of equivalence in maintaining the communicative function and expressive purpose of the source text by adapting it to the linguistic and cultural norms of the target language.

Georges Mounin, a French linguist and translation theorist, contributed to the equivalence debate by exploring the challenges of finding appropriate equivalents for the special terminology of different languages. Mounin's work emphasized the consideration of different types of equivalence, including lexical, grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, and cultural equivalence, to ensure accurate and effective translation. of.

These basic theories laid the foundation for modern debates about the equivalence of translation theory and informed the development of practical methods and approaches to produce accurate and contextually appropriate translations.

Types of Translation Equivalence

Translation equivalence includes the various types necessary to accurately convey meaning and preserve the integrity of the source text. These types of equivalents include:²

1. Lexical equivalence: Lexical equivalence involves finding appropriate equivalents for individual words or terms from one language to another. Translators must consider factors such as denotation, connotation, register and stylistic appropriateness when identifying lexical matches so that the translated text accurately reflects the meaning and tone of the original.

2. Grammatical equivalence: Grammatical equivalence is about preserving syntactic structures, grammatical categories and sentence patterns across languages. Translators must ensure that the grammatical features of the source text are preserved in the target language in order to maintain the consistency and naturalness of the translation.³

3. Semantic Equivalence: Semantic equivalence focuses on conveying the same or similar meaning between the source and target texts. It involves capturing the main

² Kockaert, H., & Steurs, F. (Eds.). (2015). Handbook of terminology (Vol. 1). John Benjamins Publishing

³ Temmerman, R., & Van Campenhoudt, M. (Eds.). (2000). The need for specialised bilingual dictionaries: Terminology and lexicography research and practice in Belgium (Vol. 14). Leuven University Press.

semantic content, nuances and implications of the source text in a way that fits the context and is easily understood by the target group.

4. Pragmatic equivalence: Pragmatic equivalence implies taking into account the implication of the source text, speech acts and conversation when translating into another language. Interpreters must consider pragmatic factors such as politeness, indirectness and cultural norms to achieve an effective practical equivalent.

5. Cultural equivalence: Cultural equivalence concerns the adaptation of cultural references, idiomatic expressions and socio-cultural norms from the source culture to the target culture. Translators must ensure that culture-specific elements are properly represented in the target language so that they resonate with the target audience and convey cultural nuances accurately⁴.

This type of correspondence is interconnected and often intersects in practice, requiring translators to take linguistic, cultural and contextual considerations into account in order to achieve accurate and effective translations.

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⁴ Gaudin, F., & Lerat, P. (2008). Multilingualism in specialized communication: Linguistic and terminological aspects (Vol. 3). John Benjamins Publishing.