

MODERN PERSPECTIVES ON TRANSLATION EQUIVALENCE

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Annotation. Translation equivalence has long served as one of the central concepts in translation studies, yet its theoretical interpretation has evolved significantly over the past century. This article examines modern perspectives on translation equivalence by reviewing key theoretical developments, identifying shifts from formal to functional models, and exploring how equivalence is reconceptualized within pragmatics, corpus linguistics and cognitive translation studies.

Key words: *equivalence, lexis, semantic translation, pragmatic, cultural contexts, translation practice, cognitive perspectives.*

Annotatsiya. Tarjima ekvivalentligi uzoq yillar davomida tarjima nazariyasi markaziy tushunchalaridan biri sifatida xizmat qilgan, biroq uning nazariy talqini so‘nggi asr mobaynida sezilarli darajada rivojlangan. Ushbu maqolada zamonaviy tarjima ekvivalentligi konsepsiyalari ko‘rib chiqiladi: asosiy nazariy yondashuvlar tahlil qilinadi, formal modellardan funksional modellarga o‘tish jarayonlari aniqlanadi hamda ekvivalentlikni pragmatika, korpus lingvistika va kognitiv tarjima tadqiqotlari doirasida qayta talqin qilish imkoniyatlari o‘rganiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: *ekvivalentlik, leksika, semantik tarjima, pragmatik, madaniy kontekstlar, tarjima amaliyoti, kognitiv yondashuvlar.*

Аннотация. Эквивалентность перевода на протяжении длительного времени служила одной из ключевых концепций переводоведения, однако её теоретическая интерпретация значительно эволюционировала за прошедшее столетие. В данной статье рассматриваются современные подходы к эквивалентности перевода: анализируются основные теоретические разработки, выявляются переходы от формальных моделей к функциональным, а также исследуются возможности переосмысления эквивалентности в рамках прагматики, корпусной лингвистики и когнитивных исследований перевода.

Ключевые слова: *эквивалентность, лексика, семантический перевод, прагматика, культурные контексты, практика перевода, когнитивные подходы.*

Equivalence has been among the most debated notions in translation studies. Researchers have been working for years to design what would constitute an equivalent translation, how it should be measured, and whether it is ever feasible. Early theorists such as Catford believed equivalence was a language correspondence between levels of grammar and lexis, and later scholars like Nida shifted the focus on receptor response and communicative effect. As stated in modern scholarship, equality is not a rigid, prescriptive category that is an unnegotiated outcome that is determined by cultural norms, conventions and pragmatic ideas. This paper provides an overview of these modern perspectives and provides context for translation practice. The old term linguistics used the structure of equivalence. Catford defined translation as “the replacement of textual material in one language with equivalent textual material in another language”. [1, 34]. The model assumes that equivalence is determined at various levels of language, morphemes, clauses, and sentences. But this view became

questioned by a few. Nida introduced formal and dynamic equivalence, stating that the translator must be concerned with the reader's response not just structural similarity. [2, 56]. This new shift marked the start of functionalism in translation theory.

Modern Functional Approaches

Communicative and semantic equivalence. Newmark established the distinction between communication and semantic translation, stressing that equivalence is task-oriented and dependent on translation purpose [3, 78]. Semantic translation is concerned with keeping meaning; communicated translation promotes readability and influence on the target reader. There is no definite need for equality in *Skopos theory* – it is not obligatory. Vermeer writes that “the adequacy of a translation depends on the purpose it is meant to serve” [4, 22]. Its relationship with function is equivalence. This model was essential to turning translation into a socio-pragmatic activity.

Equivalence in pragmatic and cultural contexts. Today views also emphasize the importance of equivalence over language transfer. Baker's equivalence demonstrates the importance of implicature, presupposition and speech act in translation [5, 91]. In addition to cultural equivalence, translators need to often replace cultural objects with culturally meaningful alternatives rather than literal counterparts, rather than dialects.

Hence, equivalence is in the process of satisfying communication goals while the form is not copied.

Corpus-Based approaches to equivalence. With the development of corpus linguistics, equivalence is analyzed through empirical data. Corpora allow researchers to compare patterns of usage, frequency, and collocation between source and target texts. Studies show that translation often “normalizes” language, reducing stylistic variation [6, 143]. Such findings demonstrate that equivalence is shaped by cognitive and systemic tendencies, not solely by deliberate choices.

Cognitive perspectives. Cognitive translation studies argue that equivalence is ultimately a mental construct. Translators form mental models of meaning and attempt to reproduce them in another language. According to Halverson's gravitational model, translators are influenced by cognitive biases that push them toward certain equivalence patterns [7, 67]. This perspective reframes equivalence as an outcome of cognitive processing rather than purely linguistic or cultural decision-making.

Applications in contemporary translation practice. Modern translation practices demonstrate that equivalence is context-sensitive:

- Literary translation seeks aesthetic and emotional equivalence.
- Legal translation requires terminological and structural equivalence for precision.
- Audiovisual translation emphasizes pragmatic equivalence due to time and space constraints.
- Machine translation post-editing relies on functional equivalence to correct output quality.

Literary translation seeks aesthetic and emotional equivalence, ensuring that the target text evokes similar feelings and literary effects in the original text, but remains consistent with style, tone, and cultural context. The legal translation requires terminology and structural consistency; interpreting in detail and using the syntactic structures is essential to ensure that the law is not overwritten and misinterpreted. Audiovisual translation emphasizes pragmatic consistency, e.g., time and space limitations in subtitles or dubbing require transferring meaning in an efficient manner that meets cultural and communicative contexts. It requires functional equivalence in machine translation after-editing: editors verify that automated translations function their intended communication function, changing to fluency, accuracy, and content. Thus, equivalence functions as a flexible guiding principle adaptable to text type, purpose, and medium.

To conclude, modern approaches to translation equivalence reveal that it is not simply a fixed, universal measure but a multidimensional and contextually dependent construct. Rather than being an isolated set of pairs of linguistic units, equivalence now reflects itself as a dynamic, negotiable space with a number of variables, such as linguistic structuring, sociocultural patterns, genre conventions, public and moral intentions and the cognitive mechanisms involved in meaning building. The current theory of translation stresses the fact that translator functions much beyond literal translation of the source text. Translators must reclaim interpretive reconstruction by determining which aspects of meaning – subtle, pragmatic, stylistic, affective, or cultural – represent the most meaningful function of the context in which they are translating. So, it follows that equivalence is not structurally simplification, but function-adjusted, so that the target text performs the same communicative and cultural functions for its reader as for the source text. Finally, contemporary understanding of translation equivalence finds translation equivalence as the adaptive process of interculture-mediated translation to generate not just linguistically accurate text, but also culturally resonant, communicative and pragmatically coherent texts that are culturally rich, vibrant, transliterative, and pragmatically consistent.

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