

EQUIVALENCE AND BEYOND: KEY CONCEPTS IN TRANSLATION THEORY**Ugiloy Karimova**

BA student at UzSWLU

karimovaogiloy2301@gmail.com, +998 91 596 23 01

Annotation: Equivalence has long been the key concept in translation theory, providing a way of describing the relationship between source and target texts. However, as the discipline matured, equivalence was insufficient to cope with the complexity of culture, intention, and ideology in translation. The article argues that today's translators must move beyond equivalence, adopting flexible, context-based strategies to broker language, culture, and purpose.

Keywords: Translation theory, equivalence, dynamic equivalence, communicative translation, Skopos theory, functionalism, cultural translation, domestication, foreignization, deconstruction.

Аннотация: Эквивалентность долгое время была ключевым понятием в теории перевода, предоставляя способ описания взаимосвязи между исходным и целевым текстами. Однако по мере развития дисциплины эквивалентности стало недостаточно, чтобы справиться со сложностью культуры, намерения и идеологии в переводе. В статье утверждается, что сегодняшние переводчики должны выйти за рамки эквивалентности, приняв гибкие, основанные на контексте стратегии для посредничества в языке, культуре и цели.

Ключевые слова: Теория перевода, эквивалентность, динамическая эквивалентность, коммуникативный перевод, теория Skopos, функционализм, культурный перевод, одомашнивание, форенизация, деконструкция.

Annotatsiya: Ekvivalentlik uzoq vaqtdan beri tarjima nazariyasida asosiy tushuncha bo'lib, manba va maqsadli matnlar o'rtasidagi munosabatni tavsiflash usulini ta'minlaydi. Biroq, intizom yetuklashgani sari, tarjimadagi madaniyat, niyat va mafkura murakkabligiga dosh berish uchun ekvivalentlik yetarli emas edi. Har bir tushuncha kundalik misollar yordamida tavsiflanadi va foydalilik va chegaralar nuqtai nazaridan muhokama qilinadi. Maqolada ta'kidlanishicha, bugungi tarjimonlar ekvivalentlikdan tashqariga chiqib, vositachilik tili, madaniyati va maqsadiga moslashuvchan, kontekstga asoslangan strategiyalarni qabul qilishlari kerak.

Kalit so'zlar: Tarjima nazariyasi, ekvivalentlik, dinamik ekvivalentlik, kommunikativ tarjima, Skopos nazariyasi, funksionalizm, madaniy tarjima, mahalliyashtirish, chet ellashtirish, dekonstruksiya.

Introduction

Equivalence in its early forms dominated translation theory during the mid-20th century. Scholars like Eugene Nida and J.C. Catford attempted to define translation as a systematic equivalence between two linguistic systems. Although this gave a scientific model, it was

incapable of handling cultural nuance, functional variation, and ideological power in language. When translation shifted from a linguistic problem to a cultural and communicative one, theorists began challenging the sufficiency of equivalence. The rise of Skopos theory, cultural translation, and deconstructionist theories was a reflection of this.

This essay traces the evolution of translation theory, starting from equivalence and moving on to more functional, cultural, and philosophical theories. Each theoretical shift is labeled with a concrete example to indicate its impact on translation practice.

Example Preview:

How would you translate "freedom" in the U.S. Declaration of Independence into a culture that does not have an equivalent concept? Literal equivalence will not do; functional and cultural approaches are needed.

Methodology

This study follows a theory-descriptive methodology based on literature review and comparative analysis. It draws upon seminal texts by Nida, Newmark, Vermeer, Nord, Venuti, and Derrida. Examples are drawn from a range of genres, including literary texts, advertising slogans, religious texts, and official documents, with a view to seeing how theory informs real translation choices. Each theory is tried out with the assistance of a suitable example and a critical discussion thereafter.

Results

Formal and Dynamic Equivalence (Nida)

Theory:

- Eugene Nida (1964) suggested two types of equivalence:
- Formal equivalence: attempts word-for-word precision.
- Dynamic equivalence: seeks equivalent effect on the target audience.

Nida emphasized that meaning is not in words only but in response and advocated translations that would have the same effect on the TL reader as the original had on the SL reader.

Example:

Biblical translation – Hebrew "shalom" (peace, wholeness, harmony) is generally translated into English simply as "peace." In Uzbek, a dynamic translation could be "tinchlik va xotirjamlik", expressing the broader semantic field.

Analysis:

Formal translation ("tinchlik") is concise but too restrictive. Dynamic translation expresses emotional and conceptual richness, especially vital in religious texts. Nida's dynamic equivalence works best in literary or religious texts where affective impact is more significant than form.

Communicative vs. Semantic Translation (Newmark)

Theory:

- Peter Newmark (1988) proposed two opposing approaches:
- Semantic translation: near the source text meaning and structure.
- Communicative translation: adapts to the reader's context, prioritizing function and clarity.

Example:

Uzbek poem:

"U sevgini deb jon berdi"

Literal: "She died of love."

Communicative: "She died of a broken heart."

Analysis:

The semantic version retains poetic ambiguity, while the communicative one defines the emotional cause by using target culture words. Semantic translation can be used to preserve author purpose in poetry or art, but communicative translation for readability is employed in journalism or public information.

Text Types and Functionalism (Reiss and Nord)

Theory: K. Reiss and C. Nord (1997) categorized texts functionally:

- Informative (e.g., manuals)
- Expressive (e.g., literature)
- Operative (e.g., advertisements)

Functionalism has the belief that translation should be adapted for the target culture's purpose.

Example:

Instruction manual: "Turn the knob clockwise."

Formal translation: "Tutqichni soat strelkasi bo'yicha burang."

Expressive text: "The city sleeps beneath a moonlit veil."

Translation: "Shahar oy nuriga cho'mgan holda uxlaydi."

Analysis

The initial translation prioritizes clarity (informative), the second poetic imagery (expressive). According to Functionalist theory, translators are guided to adapt tone, register, and syntax depending upon the purpose of the text and intended audience.

Skopos Theory (Vermeer)

Theory: Hans Vermeer's Skopos Theory (1989) hypothesizes that the purpose of the target text (skopos) should direct translation decisions.

Example:

Tourism brochure line:

Original: "Discover the magic of Samarkand."

Skopos-based translation for German readers: "Erleben Sie die geheimnisvolle Schönheit Samarkands!" (Experience the mysterious beauty of Samarkand!)

Analysis:

The translator tailors emotional appeal and cultural link to a specific audience. Skopos theory leaves space for creative independence and is optimally appropriate for PR, advertisement, and localization. Skopos views the translator as an agent exercising decision-making authority.

Domestication vs. Foreignization (Venuti)

Theory: Lawrence Venuti (1995) introduced these opposing approaches:

Domestication: adapts cultural allusions in order to be familiar to the target readership.

Foreignization: preserves foreign characteristics in order to maintain the source culture unique.

Example:

Original: "He served her miso soup."

Domesticated (into Uzbek): "U unga sho'rva taklif qildi."

Foreignized: "U unga miso sho'rvasi taklif qildi."

Analysis:

Domestication is more comfortable for the reader but loses cultural specificity. Foreignization promotes intercultural understanding but can confuse or alienate. Foreignization can serve

pedagogical purposes in literature or pedagogy; domestication is suitable for mass-market books.

Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction (Derrida, Spivak)

Theory: Post-structuralist critics believe that absolute equivalence is not attainable because meaning is context-dependent and unstable. Derrida (1985) interpreted translation as ongoing reinvention, whereas Spivak (1993) emphasized fidelity to the original's linguistic uniqueness, especially for subaltern voices.

Example:

African novel: Igbo word "ogbanje" (spirit child who dies repeatedly and is born again).

Rather than translate it with "ghost" or "demon," a translator can retain ogbanje and provide contextual explanation.

Analysis:

This preserves cultural integrity and resists colonial effacement. Post-structuralism puts heavy emphasis on the ethical contribution of translators, and especially of translating marginalized or non-Western voices. It's essential in postcolonial, feminist, and indigenous contexts.

Discussion

All theories listed above are very useful, but none is always sufficient. The appropriateness depends on:

Text Type Most Suitable Approach

- Technical Manual Functionalism - Communicative Translation
- Literary Work Semantic - Cultural / Post-structuralist
- Advertisement Skopos - Domestication
- Historical Document Dynamic Equivalence - Foreignization
- Subaltern Texts Foreignizing - Contextualized Postcolonial

This movement away from equivalence towards more complex models reflects the sophistication of translation in contemporary years. Translators must be cognizant of language structure, cultural convention, audience, and ideology.

Conclusion

Equivalence, while fundamental, is but the beginning of translation theory. Exigency in translating between cultures and language necessitates broader, more flexible models. Skopos,



functionalism, cultural mediation, and post-structuralism offer good models for addressing that complexity.

Modern translators are required to be strategic thinkers, ethical negotiators, and cultural mediators. An unstinting focus on equivalence at the cost of everything else can actually end up reducing meaning and cultural density. To truly "translate," one must step away from equivalence—toward communication, context, and cultural sensitivity.

References:

1. Nida, E. A. (1964). *Toward a Science of Translating*. Leiden: Brill.
2. Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. New York: Prentice Hall.
3. Vermeer, H. J. (1989). *Skopos and Commission in Translational Action*.
4. Reiss, K., & Nord, C. (1997). *Translating as a Purposeful Activity*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
5. Venuti, L. (1995). *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London: Routledge.
6. Derrida, J. (1985). *Des Tours de Babel*. In *Difference in Translation*, ed. J. F. Graham.
7. Spivak, G. C. (1993). *The Politics of Translation*. In *Outside in the Teaching Machine*. Routledge.
8. Bassnett, S. (2002). *Translation Studies* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
9. Tymoczko, M. (2007). *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*. Manchester: St. Jerome.