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**Translation Equivalence**

Equivalence is a key concept in the translation process in general and in the linguistic theories in particular. Ideally, equivalence is a bilingual synonymy or sameness based on lexical universals and cultural overlaps (As-Safi, 1996:11). Linking equivalence to substitution, Steiner (1998:460) believes that equivalence is sought by means of substitution of ‘equal’ verbal signs for those in the original. Baker (2005:77) rightly maintains that equivalence is a central concept in translation theory, albeit certain miner controversies about this concept. Proponents define equivalence as relationships between ST and TT that allows the TT to be considered as a translation of the ST in the first place. Equivalence relationships are also believed to hold between parts of STs and parts of TTs. Many theorists think that translation is based on some kind of equivalence depending on the rank (word, sentence or text level). It must be acknowledged here that this equivalence in Arabic and English is in many cases unattainable on all levels.

**1. Typologies of Equivalence**

In surveying the typologies of equivalence, Baker (2005:77) cites on the word level **referential** or **denotative** equivalence between the SL and TL words which refer to the same thing in the real world, in addition to **connotative** **equivalence** where the SL and the TL words are expected to trigger the same or similar associations in the minds of 67 the native speakers of the two languages. She bases typologies on Koller (1989:187-191) who presents what he calls **text-normative equivalence** in which the SL and TL words have the same effect on the SL and TL readers, which he also calls **pragmatic equivalence** (ibid). She refers to Nida‘s (1964) **dynamic equivalence** which aspires at creating similar response on the TL readers, so as to make translation communicative as contrary to **formal equivalence** which underlies literal translation.

Based on Nida’s classification of equivalence into **formal** vs. **dynamic**, As-Safi (1994) propounds two types of translation: static or literal and dynamic which is non-literal and even creative translation, especially in rendering literary texts ( as elaborated in literary theories of translation above).

Four types of translation equivalence are also distinguished by *Popovic* (in *Bassnett*, 1988: 32):

 **(1) Linguistic equivalence:** where there is homogeneity on the linguistic level in both the original and text;

**(2) Paradigmatic equivalence,** where there is equivalence of the elements of a paradigmatic expressive axis, the elements of grammar, which Popovic sees as being a higher category than lexical equivalence;

**(3) stylistic equivalence,** where there is 'functional equivalence of elements in both original and translation aiming at an expressive identity with an invariant of identical meaning; and

**(4) textual (syntagmatic) equivalence,** where there is equivalence of the syntagmatic structuring of a text; i.e. 'equivalence' of form and shape.

Pertinently, however, three things of great import are to be considered:

(1) Equivalence is achieved when items in the original and translation have some common features in their contexts;

(2) The degree of contextual meaning is proportionate to the number of common features: equivalence increases as the number of common features increases; and

(3) Translation may be ranged on a general scale of evaluation of accurate to inaccurate according to the degree of equivalence of the lexical items in both texts.

On the word level too, Hann (1992, in Baker, 2005:78) categorizes equivalence relationships into **four**, to which we may propound a fifth one.

**One-to-one equivalence:**  where there is a single expression for the TL for a single SL expression;

**One-to-part-of-one equivalence:** wherein a TL expression covers part of the concept designated by a single SL expression as in the equivalence of the concept ***zakat*** into English as ***alms*** or ***charity*** which reveals part, but not the whole concept which denotes a regular , obligatory charity or more elaborately a certain fixed proportion of the wealth (2.5%) of every Muslim to be paid yearly for the benefit of the needy in the Muslim community;

**One-to-many equivalence:** wherein more than one TL expression for a single SL expression as in the English words of ***kinship***, i.e. ***uncle*** which denotes ***paternal or maternal uncle***, ***spouse*** for either ***husband or wife*** , ***cousin*** for the ***son or daughter of the uncle or aunt***; in addition to the semantic level, this kind of equivalence can be seen on the syntactic level wherein, for example the Arabic diminutive nouns may have more than one lexical item, e.g. nuhayr نُهيْر small river or rivulet.

**Many-to-one:** wherein more than one TL lexical item for a single SL expression or lexical item, which reverses the above type.

**Null or zero equivalence:** wherein there is no TL expression for a SL expression, such as the word ***ijtihad*** or ***mujtahid*** and ***qiyas*** and many other ***Islamic concepts*** which have no equivalence in English. This kind of non equivalence has led to the phenomenon of **borrowing** among languages as is found in many words in English and Arabic, such as **Television**, **Video** in Arabic and **Algebra** in English among many examples. Before concluding equivalence, it is worth referring to **Baker’s** ***In Other Words*** which is devoted in six chapters to six types of equivalence, namely:

1. Equivalence at word level which has just been discussed above;

 2. Equivalence at above the word level exemplified in collocation, idioms and fixed expressions;

 3. Grammatical equivalence which deals with the diversity of grammatical categories across languages and word order;

4. Textual equivalence which deals with thematic and information structures;

5. Textual equivalence which focuses on cohesion externalized by substitution and ellipsis, and merging syntactic structures by conjunctions and finally;

6. Pragmatic equivalence which deals with coherence, implicature or the process of interpretation and translation strategies.

The common types of equivalence propounded by **Baker** that are pertinent to the process of transference between English and Arabic are pragmatic, lexical and grammatical, the last of which requires further elaboration. In Arabic, the nominal (verbless) sentences correspond to verbal sentences.

For example, the following nominal sentences expressing jurisprudential maxims must be rendered into verbal counterparts in English:

الأمور بمقاصدها =Matters are judged by intentions.

الخراج بالضمان =Yield is guaranteed. .

جناية العجماء جبار =The beast’s injury is squander.

للمقاصد والمعاني لا للألفاظ والمباني العبرة في العقود =In contracts, intentions and meanings, not words and structures, shall be taken into consideration.

**2. Collocational/Idiomatic Equivalence**

**2.1. Collocational Equivalence**: Collocation refers to a sequence of co-occurring words or simply as, Firth puts it, “the company words keep together”, in a combination in which a word tends to occur in relatively predictable ways with other words, often with restrictions on the manner of their co-occurrence, as explicitly seen in restricting certain verbs or adjectives to certain nouns or certain prepositions.

Collocational restrictions are described by Baker (1992: 285) as ‘semantically arbitrary’ because they do not logically follow from the propositional meaning the word outside the collocational combination. It is the collocates, Larson (1984: 155) contends, that determine which sense is indicated in a given phrase. Larson (ibid) cites the example of the word ‘dress’ which has two drastically different meanings in the phrase ‘dress the chicken’ and 71 ‘dress the child’. **To ‘dress a chicken’** involves **‘taking the feathers off’** whereas **‘dressing a child’** is **‘putting clothes on’**.

Likewise, the adjective ‘good’ denotes two divergent meanings in the phrases: ‘good time’ and ‘good Friday’. AsSafi (1994: 69-70) cites fifty different meanings of the adjective ‘good’ before fifty nouns. It is widely accepted that to produce an acceptable, accurate or appropriate TL equivalent for a SL counterpart poses a challenge even to the most competent and experienced translator. Achieving appropriate collocations in the TT, *Basil* and *Mason* rightly assert, has always been seen as one of the major problems a translator faces, because SL interference may escape unnoticed, and by corollary, an unnatural collocation will flaw the TT. The translator’s arduous task is due to the semantic arbitrariness of collocations as explicated by the following examples. We normally say in English “make a visit”, but not “perform a visit”. *Baker* (1992:47ff) points out that synonyms and quasi or near-synonyms often have quite different sets of collocates: “break rules” but not “break regulations”, or “wasting time” but not “squandering time, “strong tea” but not “powerful tea”. *Baker* (ibid) also gives the example of the verb “drink” in English which collocates naturally with liquids like “juice and milk”, but not with “soup”. In Arabic, on the other hand, the verb “drink” collocates with almost all sorts of liquid, hence it collocates with “soup”, e.g., yashrabu-l-hasaaa يشرب الحساء . All the above examples and others below display that collocations cannot be literally transferred from SL into TL.

Consider the verb “**catch**” in the following collocations:

**catch** a fish يصطاد سمكة

**catch** flue يصاب بالانفلونزا

**catch** the train يلحق القطار

**catch** the meaning يفهم المعنى

**catch** attention يثير الانتباه

**catch** one’s breath يلتقط أنفاسه (يستريح)

There is another category of collocations that are almost literally rendered into Arabic which seems to have accommodated them as ‘borrowed collocations. Here are some of them:

A black market سوق سوداء

Adopt a plan/project يتبنى خطة/مشروعا

 Anarchy prevailed سادت الفوضى

At a stone throw على مرمى حجر

Blind confidence ثقة عمياء

Blind imitation تقليد أعمى

By sheer coincidence محض مصادفة

Devote time يكرّس وقتا

Draw a policy يرسم سياسة

Fire lines خطوط النار

Exert an effortيبذل جهدا

Hard currency العملة الصعبة

Honourable defeat هزيمة مشرّفة

Kill timeيقتل الوقت

On equal footing على قدم المساواة

Point of view وجهة نظر

Policy of rapproachementسياسة التقريب

Political tension التوتر السياسي

Raise the level يرفع المستوى

Safety valve صمام الأمان

Save a situationينقذ موقفا

Starting point نقطة البدء

Show interestيبدي اهتماما

Striking forceقوة ضاربة

Teach sb a lessonيلقّن شخصا درسا

Turning point نقطة تحوّل

War of nerves حرب أعصاب

The following collocations assume the form of simile: as+adj+as+ noun or like + noun :

As brave as a lion شجاع شجاعة الأسد

As clear as day واضح وضوح النهار

As cunning as a fox ماكر مكر الثعلب

As fast as an arrow سريع سرعة السهم

As innocent as a child بريء براءة الطفل

As obstinate as a mule عنيد عناد البغل

As old as the hills قديم قدم التلال

As slow as a tortoise بطيء بطء السلحفاة

As strong as a lion قوي قوة الأسد

As strong as a horse قوي قوة الحصان

As strong as a an ox قوي قوة الثور

As sweet as sugar/honey حلو حلاوة السكر/الشهد

To talk like a child يتحدث حديث الأطفال

To behave like children يتصرف تصرف الأطفال

To run like the wind يجري جري الريح