THE CONCEPT OF EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATION: A MULTIFACETED APPROACH

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Annotation: This article examines the concept of equivalence in translation, exploring diverse approaches, types, and ongoing debates surrounding its application. It highlights the challenges of non-equivalence and the search for effective strategies to convey meaning across languages, emphasizing the dynamic nature of translation studies.

Key words: denotative equivalence, connotative equivalence, text-normative equivalence, pragmatic equivalence, formal equivalence, functional-situational content equivalences, non-equivalence.

Translation, as its core, begins with the analysis of words, the smallest units of a language. Translators must possess a nuanced understanding of not only how to translate words, but also which words require translation and the specific nuances of their usage within the source text [1, 31]. Relying solely on dictionary definitions often proves insufficient, as words carry significantly different contexts across languages. Certain words lack direct equivalents in the target language, presenting a unique challenge for translators. To navigate these complexities, the concept of equivalence emerges as a crucial theoretical and practical tool [1, 31]. Equivalence extends beyond simple word-for-word substitution, aiming to capture the essence of the source text's meaning, intent, and context within the framework of the target language. By strategically applying equivalence, translators bridge the gap between languages, ensuring that the intended message resonates with the target audience.

According to Komissarov, the concept of *equivalence* refers to the actual semantic closeness achieved between the source text translation through the translator's efforts [4, 49]. This translational equivalence can be achieved by preserving and consequently losing different elements of meaning present in the original text [4, 49]. Thus, the translator's role is to navigate the delicate balance, striving to maintain the essence of the source text while adapting it to the conventions and nuances of the target language. Just as various definitions of translation have reflected the evolving landscape of translation studies, different understandings of equivalence have mirrored the evolution of perspectives on the very essence of translation. For instance, within the theory of *regular correspondences,* pioneered by Retsker, a prominent figure in linguistic translation studies in Russia, the concept of equivalence was limited to the relationships between micro-units of a text, neglecting inter-textual relationships [6, 76]. In this framework, equivalence was understood as a constant, context-independent, and equivalent correspondence. This approach failed to fully capture the dynamic and nuanced nature of translation, particularly in the realm of inter-textual relationships.

Viewing the theory of equivalence as a theory of what is possible given the translator's maximum competence emphasizes its complexity [3, 104]. Equivalence is

not a simple, static concept but rather a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by a range of factors. W. Koller, for instance, proposes a set of criteria that must be satisfied to achieve equivalence in translation. These criteria encompass a comprehensive range of equivalence types, encompassing denotative equivalence, connotative equivalence, text-normative equivalence, pragmatic equivalence, and formal equivalence. These distinct categories, as visually represented in Figure №1, provide a framework for understanding the complexities of achieving equivalence across languages and cultures [6, 80].
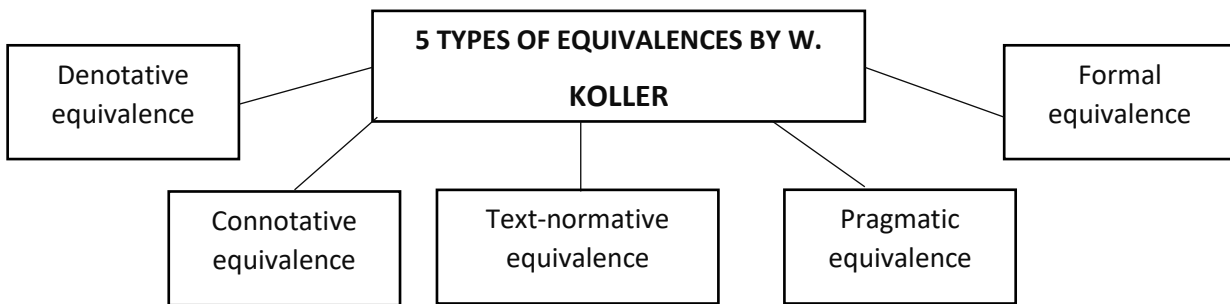

Figure №1. Five Types of Equivalences by W. Koller

Denotative equivalence preserves the factual content of the text (also known as *content invariance*). Connotative equivalence transmits the connotations of the text through strategic selection of synonymous linguistic resources (often referred to as *stylistic equivalence* in translation studies). Text-normative equivalence focuses on the genre characteristics of the text and linguistic norms (also frequently classified as *stylistic equivalence* in translation studies). Pragmatic equivalence considers the intended effect on the receiver (also known as *communicative equivalence*). Formal equivalence preserves the artistic, aesthetic, humorous, individualizing, and other formal features of the original [6, 80].

Besides these criteria, Komissarov defines three different types of equivalence based on how functional-situational content is conveyed in translation.

Type 1 – preserves the communicative goal of the original, neglecting specific details [4, 50];

Type 2 – preserves both the communicative goal and reflects the same extra-linguistic situation [4, 52];

Type 3 – characterized by a lack of parallelism in lexical composition and syntactic structure. The original and translation cannot be linked through syntactic transformation, but they maintain the same communicative goal and situation [4, 59]. Table №1 provides concrete examples illustrating these different types of equivalence, further clarifying their application and impact on translation outcomes.

The translation process is frequently confronted with the non-equivalence, where finding a perfect match between languages is impossible [2, 64]. The choice of an equivalent depends on numerous factors, ranching from linguistic structures like collocations and idioms to cultural context and the expectations of the target audience. Mona Baker examines the complex issue of non-equivalence, highlighting the absence of universally applicable solutions.

	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
Original	I am completely broke.	It is raining cats and dogs outside.	Scrubbing makes me bad-tempered.
Translation	У меня совсем нет денег.	На улице льет как из ведра.	От мытья полов у меня настроение портится.

Table №1. Examples of Functional-Situational Content Equivalences

While strategies exist for addressing non-equivalence, context remains paramount [1, 37]. Translators must carefully consider the author's intended meaning, the target audience's expectations, and external factors like censorship when choosing the most suitable equivalent. Building upon her exploration of non-equivalence, Mona Baker expands the concept of equivalence to include the flow of information and the use of literary devices. She terms this broader concept *textual equivalence*, acknowledging that a successful translation should not only capture the meaning of the original but also convey the way information unfolds and the impact of literary devices within their respective contexts [5, 28].

In conclusion, this exploration of equivalence in translation reveals a complex landscape where achieving perfect correspondence between languages is often intangible. While various types of equivalence exist, the challenge of non-equivalence persists. Contemporary research in translation studies is actively addressing these challenges, embracing corpus-based research, translation technology, interdisciplinary approaches, and investigations into the translator's role. These advancements are leading to a more nuanced understanding of equivalence, non-equivalence, and the dynamic interplay of languages and cultures in the translation process. Through continued exploration and innovation, translation studies remain a vibrant field, ensuring accurate and impactful communication across languages.

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