Equivalence and the matter of non-equivalence are considered the major concept in translation. According to Pym (1992), equivalence is supposed to define translation, and translation, in turn, defines equivalence. Theorists of translation have studied equivalence in relation to the translation process, namely quantitative and qualitative approach.

1. Quantitative approach:
Kade (1968) divided equivalence into 4 categories. The first type is one-to-one equivalence, when a single expression in the TL for a single SL expression is used.
Eg. Information technology – công nghệ thông tin.
The second one is one-to-many equivalence; when more than one TL expression for a single SL expression is used.
Eg. Nuôi = to breed, to feed, to raise, to keep, to support
Bamboo = tre, nứa, trúc, mai, vầu
To wear = mặc, đợi, deo, đi, xức
Thirdly, when a TL expression covers part of a concept designated by a single SL expression, the phenomenon is called one-to-part-of-one equivalence.
Eg. Rồng = dragon
Bush – Thảo nguyên
Lastly, nil equivalence happens when there is no TL expression for an SL expression.
Eg. Internet = mạng internet
Bánh chưng
Áo dài

2. Qualitative approach.
   a. Functional-based approach
Nida and Taber (1982) presented two separate kinds of equivalence:
Formal equivalence: this kind of equivalence can be achieved when the source language and the target language have the closest possible match of form and content of the message. They also add that there is not always such a perfect match between two languages and suggests that formal equivalence be used whenever possible. Formal equivalence attempts to translate the text word-for-word (literally) (eg. In translating Bible, international diplomacy)

Eg. Oh my god: lạy chúa tôi, ốì chúa tôi

Dynamic equivalence/functional equivalence: unlike formal equivalence, dynamic equivalence places more emphasis on “equivalent effect”. In other words, this is a kind of equivalence in which translators attempt to convey the meaning in a way that has the same influence on the target audience as it does on the source language.

Eg. Oh my god: ốì giờ ốì, ốì mẹ ốì.

Form-based approach:

Baker (1992) introduced four types of equivalence:

- Equivalence at word level: Baker defines the term “word” and states that one word can have different meanings in different languages, and she also relates meaning of words with morpheme. Baker introduces problems at word level and above word level before suggesting some strategies to deal with them.

- Grammatical equivalence: Grammatical rules can vary across the language, and this may cause some trouble in finding a direct correspondence in the TL

- Textual equivalence refers to the equivalence between a SL text and a TL text regarding to information and cohesion. Whether the cohesive relations between TL and SL should be maintained is up to three main factors: the target audience, the purpose of the translation and the text type

- Pragmatic equivalence refers to implication of the TL text. The duty of a translator is to recognize the implied meaning of SL text, and then reproduce in such a way that readers of the TL can understand clearly without any misunderstandings.
c. **Meaning-based approach:**

Koller (1979) considered five types of equivalence:
- **Denotative equivalence:** the source language and target language words have the same denotations.
- **Connotative equivalence:** also referred to as stylistic equivalence, provides additional values besides denotative and is related to the lexical choices between near synonyms.
- **Text-normative equivalence:** the source language and target language words are used in the same or similar context in their respective languages.
- **Pragmatic equivalence:** also called communicative equivalence, is readership-orientated. It is the equivalence in which the source language and target language words have the same effect on the readers.
- **Formal equivalence:** produces and analogy of form in the translation by either exploiting formal possibilities of target language, or creating new forms in target language.

### III.2. The problems of non-equivalence

According to Baker (1992), non-equivalence at word level means the TL has no direct equivalent for a word in the TL. He also distinguished 11 types of non-equivalence and suggests that each type of non-equivalence requires different strategies, some very straightforward, others more involved and difficult to handle.

The 11 types of non-equivalence are as follows:

a. **Culture-specific concepts**

b. The SL concept is not lexicalised in the TL.

c. The SL word is semantically complex

d. The SL and TL make different distinctions in meaning

e. The TL lacks a super-ordinate

f. The TL lacks a specific term (hyponym)

g. Differences in physical or interpersonal perspective

h. Differences in expressive meaning
i. Differences in form
j. Differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms
k. The use of loan words in the source text

To deal with non-equivalence at word level, Baker listed the following strategies used by professional translators

1. Translating by a more specific word.
   In some cases, it may be necessary to use a more specific word to translate a SL word to a TL word. This strategy usually involves in selecting one word among several ones because there may be a SL word whose meaning can be expressed by several TL words.
   For example, the word “rice” in English can be translated into many different Vietnamese words depending on whether one person is planting it, cooking it or eating it. Therefore, the English word itself cannot determine the word it Vietnamese, but it is based on the context.

2. Translating by a more general word
   In some cases, the translators have to use a more general word since the specific word in the SL does not exist in the TL.
   One example can be found in the English-Vietnamese translation. The English distinguishes three types of vehicle: mopeds, motorbikes and scooters; on the other hand, Vietnamese only has “xe máy” to replace such three words.

3. Translating by cultural substitution
   This strategy often involves in replacing culture-specific items by a TL item which does not have the same propositional meaning, but is likely to have the same impact on the target readers. This strategy is beneficial to readers of the TL since they can imagine what that item looks like in their culture.

4. Translating using a loan word or loan word plus explanation
   This strategy is useful when the translator has to deal with concepts or ideas that are new to the audience, culture-specific items and proper names of diseases or medicines.
For example, the words HIV and AIDS are two of many loan words that are frequently in Vietnamese. In the past, this new disease was quite new to Vietnamese people; therefore, it was often used with an explanation. However, these words have long been used in Vietnam for a long time up to now, and most people seem to get accustomed to this concept; consequently, these two words are frequently used without any explanations nowadays.

5. Translating by paraphrase
This strategy can be used when a word or phrase in the SL does not exist in the TL, or when a term in TL does not include all the meanings conveyed by the SL term for the same concept.

For example:
Source text: “Pregnant should avoid alcohol”
Target text: “Phụ nữ không nên uống rượu”
In English, the word “alcohol” includes all alcohol drinks in its meaning, but that equivalent word in Vietnamese “rượu” does not include “bia” in its definition. Therefore, the Vietnamese sentence should add “bia” or use another phrase “đồ uống có cồn” to reflect the full meanings.

6. Translating by omission
Although some theorists may object to this strategy since it is too drastic, it is sometimes appropriate to omit some words or phrases that are not essential to the meaning or the impact of the text.

For example:
Source text: “Much can be done even without being physically present at the meeting”
Target text: “Nhiều việc có thể làm ngay cả khi không có mặt tại cuộc họp”
In this translation, the difference between “physically present” and “present” is so minimal that it does not seriously affect the meaning of Vietnamese meanings. Therefore, the omission of “physically” in Vietnamese sentence can be acceptable.

7. Translating by illustration
This is a useful strategy when a word which lacks an equivalent in the TL refers to a physical entity which can be illustrated. However, this strategy can hardly be found in translation.

REFERENCES


