

Lecture 4

Types of translation equivalence

Equivalence implies variability and consequently several types of equivalence can be distinguished.

First Type – Formal Equivalence

Children go to school every morning.

The content, the structure of the sentence and the semantic components (language units) are similar. Each element of the SL text has a corresponding one in the TL text. But such cases of complete similarity are rather rare.

Second Type – Partial Correspondence Equivalence

Non-corresponding elements may be lexical, grammatical or stylistic. Equivalence of the second type is usually achieved by means of various transformations: substitution or replacements (both lexical and grammatical), additions and omissions, paraphrasing and compensation.

All through the long foreign summer the American tourist abroad has been depressed by the rubber quality of his dollar.

Although a considerable degree of equivalence has been achieved a number of transformations, certain losses have been incurred, namely, compactness and vividness. They are accounted for by existing discrepancies in collocability (valency).

Attention should be paid to the *Stylistic aspect* of equivalence because of its importance in achieving the second type of equivalence. The stylistic aspect of equivalence implies the rendering in translation of stylistic and emotive connotations. Stylistic connotations presuppose the use of words belonging to the same layer of the vocabulary (literary, neutral and colloquial). Emotive connotations presuppose the use of words evoking similar connotations. The following example illustrates the rendering of stylistic connotations:

Delegates to the conference in San Francisco, April, 1945, from European countries have been traveling three weeks. The German U-boats which were hanging around were most effectively scared off by depth-charges from accompanying destroyers.

The colloquial verb “to hang around” is rendered by a stylistically equivalent colloquial verb.

Emotive connotations must also be rendered in translation to achieve equivalence.

If for some reason (absence of a corresponding lexical-semantic variant, different collocability, etc.) there is no equivalent correlated word in the TL the translator is expected to preserve the emotive meaning sometimes at the expense of the referential, e.g.:

At night passers would see the fierce dead glare of the patent lamp (W. Faulkner).

Attention should also be drawn to the *pragmatic aspect* of equivalence.

Pragmatic equivalence can be achieved only by means of interpreting extra-linguistic factors.

Mr. Healey by his decision presented a Christmas package so small that it is hardly even a Christmas stocking-filler.

The literal translation of “a Christmas stocking-filler” – “що вони навряд чи могли б наповнити різдвяну панчошу” would hardly convey any sense to the Ukrainian receptor unfamiliar with the custom. In this case the pragmatic aspect motivated the translation “a Christmas stocking-filler” by “різдвяний подарунок”. The addition of the words “міністр фінансів” is also necessitated by pragmatic considerations.

Here is another example of interesting substitution.

The Elgin marbles seem an indisputable argument in favor of the preservation of works of art by rape.

The substitution of the subject and the addition of the participle construction convey the necessary pragmatic information. If a detail denoting some national feature is not important enough it may safely be omitted, e.g.

He could take nothing for dinner but a partridge with an imperial pint of champagne (J. Galsworthy).

The word “imperial” does not convey any significant information and may therefore be omitted in the Ukrainian translation without impairing equivalence.

The pragmatic aspect of the content is sometimes closely interwoven with the linguistic aspect and their interaction also requires explanatory additions, e.g.

I was sent to a boarding school when I was very little – about five – because my mother and father ... couldn't afford anything so starchy as an English nurse or a French governess (Ilka Chase).

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The difficulty there lies not only in the pragmatic aspect of the adjective “starchy” but also in its use in two meanings, direct and indirect, simultaneously (1. *накрахмалений*; 2. *манірний*).

Third Type – Situational or Factual Equivalence

The content or sense of the utterance is conveyed by different grammatical and lexical units.

Situational equivalence is observed when the same phenomenon is described in a different way because it is seen from a different angle, e.g.

The police cleared the streets.

Unemployed teenagers are often left without means of gaining food and shelter.

Hold the line.

The Commonwealth countries handle a quarter of the world's trade.

This type of equivalence also comprises the translation of clichés, orders, warnings and notices, phraseological units and set expressions, formulae of politeness, etc.

There were no survivors.

Fragile – обережно, скло;

Keep off, wet paint – не сідати, пофарбовано;

Many happy returns of the day – вітаю з днем народження.

In this way, the third type of equivalence conveys the sense, the meaning of the utterance without preserving its formal elements.

(For a detailed analysis of the levels of equivalence problems and the structural level patterns the reader is referred to the studies of Soviet linguists В.Н.Комісаров «Слово о переводе» and В.Н.Крупнов «Сборник научных трудов», вип. 203, с. 183-199).

Levels of equivalence

Equivalence may occur at different linguistic levels: phonetic, word building, morphological, at word level, at phrase level, at sentence level and finally at text level.

The sound form of corresponding English and Ukrainian words seldom coincide, consequently this level of equivalence is not common and is of primary importance only in poetic translation.

Word-building Level of Equivalence

e.g.: *irresponsible* – *безвідповідальний; unpredictable*
– *непередбачений; counterbalance* – *противага*, etc.

Morphological Level of Equivalence

e.g.: *The report's proposals were handed to a political committee.*

Equivalence at Word Level

e.g.: *She clasped her hands round her handbag.* (Agatha Christie).

Вона міцно стиснула в руках свою сумочку.

Equivalence of Phrase Level

Equivalence at phrase level is of two kinds: a SL word corresponds to a TL phrase (*to negotiate – вести переговори*), a SL phrase corresponds to a TL word (*Hippies are in revolt against an acquisitive society.* –

Equivalence at Sentence Level

It occurs: a) in phraseology – *two is company, three is none – тремію зайвиї*; b) in orders and regulations – *keep off the grass – по газону не ходити*.

Equivalence at Text Level

It is usual in the translation of poetry as seen in the translation of William Blake's stanza by S. Marshak.

- 1. To see a World in a Grain of Sand,*
- 2. And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,*
- 3. Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,*
- 4. And Eternity in an hour.*

(W. Blake, Auguries of Innocence)

*В одно мгновенье видит вечность,
Огромный мир – в зерне песка,
В единой горсти – бесконечность
И небо – в чашечке цветка.*

The translation by S. Marshak may be regarded as excellent. The text as a unity is reproduced most fully and this conception of unity justifies the change in the order of the lines within the stanza.

A strict observance of equivalence at all levels ensures a similar reaction on the part of the S and T language receptors and can be achieved by means of functional substitutions.

7. Types of translation

The following three types of translation can be distinguished: equivalent translation, literal translation and free translation.

Equivalent translation

Equivalent translation has been considered in the preceding pages. Achieving equivalence is the goal aimed at in translation.

Literal translation

In spite of the fact that there are cases of semantic and structural coincidences they are rather an exception. A literal or word translation is obviously unacceptable because it results in a violation of form, or a distortion of sense, or both.

No desire on the part of the translator to preserve in his translation the lexical, grammatical or stylistic peculiarities of the original text can justify any departure from the norms of the TL.

Literal translation imposes upon the TL text alien lexical and grammatical structures, alien collocability, alien connotations and alien stylistic norms.

In literal translation form prevails over content and the meaning of the text is distorted. Literalism may be lexical, grammatical or stylistic, e.g.

He wagged a grateful tail and climbed on the seat (Georgetta Heyer).

Він вдячно завивав хвостом і витеребився на сидіння.

She was letting her temper go by inches (Monica Dickens).

Вона потроху втрачала терпіння. (Вона все більш і більш втрачала терпіння.

The pragmatic aspect of translation does not admit literalism either – and requires interpreting translation or substitution.

The Tory Team, however, aren't all batting on the same wicket?

The metaphor is taken from cricket, a very popular game in Britain but hardly known to Ukrainian readers.

Однак, консерватори не спільні.

Однак, команда консерваторів грала не одностайно.

Translation Loans

Literal translation should not be confused with *translation loans*. A translation loan is a peculiar form of word-borrowing by means of literal translation. Translation loans are built on the pattern of foreign words or phrases with the elements of the borrowing language, e.g. *collective farm* is a translation loan of the Ukrainian *колгосп* but in a full and not in an abbreviated form: *oil dollars* –; *goodneighbourly relations* –

Free Translation

Free translation, that is, paraphrasing is a special type of translation used as a rule in annotations, précis, abstracts, etc. free translation is rendering of meaning regardless of form. The aim of such translation is to convey information to people in other countries in a most compact and condensed manner.

There is another interpretation of the term “Free translation”.

The translator in this case considers himself as co-author and takes great liberties with the original text resorting to unjustified expansion or omissions.

“She burst out crying” is translated as “(Ch. Dickens, tr. By J.V. Vedensky).

TO CONCLUDE: the three parameters of translation are: rendering of contents, rendering of form and observance of TL norms. These fundamentals are of equal significance and are to be duly taken into account in the process of translation. The

vast resources of the Ukrainian language enable the translator to achieve excellent and the fundamental principle of translation – what is said in one language can as well be said in another – remains inviolable.

8. Factors influencing the choice of equivalents

The choice of translation equivalents depends on the *context, situation* and *background information*. They are well-known, but their definitions by various scholars substantially differ.

To start with, let us define the context. For the purpose of practical translation we shall call the context the length of speech (text) necessary to specify the meaning and translation of a given word. Also for the purpose of practical translation we shall distinguish between *immediate* and *general* context.

Immediate context is a sequence of syntactically and semantically related words that determines the meaning and syntactic function of a given word and *forms the basis* for its translation.

Usually immediate context is limited to a sentence, though in many cases a length of text shorter than a sentence is sufficient as an immediate context.

However, to get all information necessary for translation one should take into account the general context as well.

General context is the source text as a whole.

To feel the difference, compare the translation of the following two examples.

After becoming involved in city politics, he was rewarded for his services to the King by being made Lord Mayor of London, serving four terms between 1397 and 1420.

The hope that we can still pare down our choices to a list of essentials is the other faith, besides religion, that we need to survive as the new millennium rushes toward us – the illusion that we can stop the clock and somehow, even at this late date, master space and time.

In the first instance the immediate context is all that one needs for translation whereas to translate properly the text of the second example one will need broader context and, probably, some additional background information as well. This brings us to the first conclusion:

The choice of translation equivalents depends both on immediate and general context.

Any source text, however, consists of words and word combinations which you are to translate to finally end up in a target text. And to say the least, words and word combinations are very different as to the problems they present for translation.

Compare, for example, words and word combinations in the left and right columns of the Table below.

organization	society	territory	insider	power-broker	mainstream	hot
development	region		button	marginal		

It is easy to note that the entries in the left column present no problem for translation whereas to find proper equivalents for those in the right column one needs at least broad context and desirably also a piece of background information.

The explanation lies in the fact that unlike those in the left column the right column words are relatively new language formations standing for also relatively new phenomena of the American culture. Then the next conclusion may be:

The choice of translation equivalents for individual words and word combinations depends on the translator's awareness in the underlying cultural background.

To get a better idea of the above equivalent selection factor consider an example:

The conservative commentator David Brooks argues in "Bobos in Paradise" that the old bourgeoisie and the old bohemians have in the last generation morphed into what he calls "Bobos" – bourgeois bohemians. The long-haired, tie-dye-shirted, sandal-shod free spirit is now in the corporate boardroom, and the things that seemed to divide the counterculture from the business culture have largely disappeared as a result.

These Bobos are obviously far less inclined than their Rotarian predecessors to fight the prudish battles against popular culture. They are products of that culture, and they like it.

So, to select proper equivalents one needs to be aware of the cultural background underlying the source text being translated.

The semantic structure of words presents a complicated problem as the so-called correlated words of the T languages are far from being identical in this respect. The only exception is some groups of monosemantic words which will be dealt with later.

Divergences in the semantic structure of words of the S and T languages are one of the primary cases of lexical transformations. These divergences or dissimilarities are connected with certain peculiar features of a word or a group of words. Even words which seem to have the same meaning in the two languages are not semantically identical. The primary meanings of correlated words often coincide while their derivative meanings do not. Thus there is only partial correspondence in the structures of polysemantic words as their lexical semantic variants do not cover one another. Semantic correlation is not to be interpreted as semantic identity and one-to-one correspondence between the semantic structures of correlated polysemantic words in the two languages is hardly ever possible.

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ADDITIONAL

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