

# EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATION. THE LEVELS OF TRANSLATION.



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PRAGMATIC ASPECT OF  
TRANSLATION.

Lecture 2.

# Equivalence

- Translation equivalence (TE) is the key idea of translation.
- Equivalent means equal in value, amount, volume, etc. (A.S.Hornby)

# Equivalence

- **Equivalence** is the central issue in translation.
- Its definition, relevance, and applicability within the field of translation theory have caused heated controversy.
- Many different theories of the concept of equivalence have been elaborated within this field for the past fifty years.

# Equivalence

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- The most innovative theorists (Vinay and Darbelnet, Jakobson, Nida and Taber, Catford, House, and finally Baker) have studied equivalence in relation to the translation process, using different approaches.
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# Equivalence

- V.G.Gark and Y.Lvin distinguish the following types of equivalents: formal, semantic and situational.
- Formal equivalence
- Semantic equivalence.

# Equivalence



- Formal equivalence may be illustrated by speech cases as:
- *The sun disappeared behind a cloud -  
солнце скрылось за тучей.*
- Here we find similarity of words and forms in addition to the similarity.





# Equivalence

- The differences in the plane of expression are determined by overall structural differences between Russian and English.
- The use of articles in English, the use of perfective aspect, gender, forms, etc., in Russian.

# Equivalence

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- Semantic equivalence exists when the same meanings are expressed in the two languages in a way.
- Example:- *Troops were airlifted to the battlefield-*
- Войска были переброшены по воздуху на поле.

# Equivalence

- The English word “*airfield*” contains the same meaning as the Russian phrase *перебросить по воздуху*.
- Different linguistic devices (in Russian and in English /a word group and a compound word),.

# Equivalence

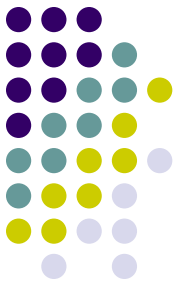
The word 'Equivalence' is positioned to the left of a series of five circles. The first circle is solid light purple, the second is an outline, the third is solid light purple, the fourth is an outline, and the fifth is solid light purple.

- “Situational equivalence”
- the description of the same situation.
- This description is not necessary semantically equivalent.

# Equivalence

- Texts in different languages can be equivalent in different degrees/ fully or partially equivalent/ in respect of different levels of presentation /equivalent in respect of context, of semantics, of grammar, of lexies, etc./ and at different ranks /word-for-word, phrase-for-phrase, sentence-for-sentence/.

# Equivalence



- Languages are different from each other; they are different in form having distinct codes and rules regulating the construction of grammatical stretches of language and these forms have different meanings.
- To shift from one language from another is to alter the forms.



# Equivalence

- There is no absolute synonymy between words in the same language.
- Something is always lost / or, might one suggest “gained”?/ in process and translators can find themselves being accused of reproducing only part of original and so “betraying” the authors intentions.

# Equivalence

- If equivalence is to be “preserved” at a particular level at all costs, which level is to be? What are the alternatives?
- The answer hinges on the dual nature of language itself.

# Equivalence

- Language is a formal structure – a code –which consists of elements which can combine signal semantic “sense” and, at the same time,
- a communication system which uses the forms of the code to refer to entities/in the word/and create signals which possess communicative “value”.

# Adequacy

- The notion of “adequacy” is closely connected with that of equivalence.
- Some scholars identify these terms and use them as completely interchangeable notions.
- For example:

# Adequacy



- J. Catford's notion of "translation equivalence" is treated as "adequacy of translation".
- R. Levitsky in his article "On the principle of functional adequacy of translation".
- V. N. Komissarov, for instance, thinks that adequate translation" has a broad meaning and is used as a synonym for "a good translation" that guarantees sufficient interlinguistic communication.

# Adequacy

- “Equivalence” is regarded as semantic similarity of the S. and T. language and speech units.
- Adequate translation- is the translation performed at the level sufficient and necessary to convey the information and preserve the norms of the TL.

# Adequacy

- Everything said in one language can be said in another.
- We mean by contents not only logical-semantic contents but all the information inherited in the original message including its emotional and expressive charge and stylistic peculiarities.

# Adequacy



- Equivalently adequate translation- is the translation when the contents of the message and its stylistic function are expressed by the synonymous ways.
- *E.g. bird cherry tree – черемуха.*
- In English it's only a botanical term.
- In Russian it has different emotional applications – “весна”, “любовь”.
- Apart from denoting a botanical tree the word “bird cherry tree” acquired additional stylistic meaning.

# Adequacy

- **NB!** Taking into consideration that equivalent is a constant correspondence that exists independently upon the context.
- We have the possibility to state that adequate translation may be non-equivalent and equivalent.

# Adequacy

- e.g. *The fresh air revived most of the men and **the thought of beer** at the nearest pub stimulated sluggish pulses.*
- **The thought of beer** – мысль о пиве – equivalent translation;
- - Мысль о кружке пива – adequate translation.

# Translation equivalents

- Y. Retsker differentiates:
- - Absolute equivalents – this is a case when a SL word is semantically, stylistically and emotionally synonymous to a TL word.
- *E.g. geographical and proper names, technical terms, etc.*

# Translation equivalents

- - Partial equivalents the range of meaning does not coincide in two languages.
- *e.g. character (British – 2 meanings, Russian - 1 meaning);*
- *differentiation – pyka: hand, arm.*

# Translation equivalents

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- Apart from equivalent lexis there are non-equivalent or culture loaded words.
  - They define objects, processes, realia.
  - *e.g. the House of Commons, peerage.*
  - Equivalence is functional coincidence between the source and the target text.
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## The levels of equivalence according to V.Komissarov

- **The first level** includes the translation in which the degree of semantic similarity with ST is the lowest.
- e.g. *Maybe there is some chemistry between us that does not mix.*
- *Бывает, что люди не сходятся характерами.*

# The levels of equivalence

- This translation contains information about the general intent of the message and it is called-
  - 1) The purport of communication- general intent of the message, its sense, orientation towards a certain communicative effect.

# The levels of equivalence

- The second level of translation shows that most of the words or syntactical structures of ST have no direct correspondences in TT. But there is a greater proximity of context.
- e.g. *He answered the phone.*

*Он снял трубку.*



# The levels of equivalence



- So here we can find:
- 1). The purport of communication.
- 2). Identification of the situation.

# The levels of equivalence

- **In the third level** of translation the part of contents is largely retained.
- *e.g. Scrubbing makes me bad-tempered.*
- - *От мытья полов у меня портится настроение.*



# The levels of equivalence

- So in TT there are:
  - 1). The purport of communication.
  - 2). Identification of the situation.
  - 3). The method of its description.

# The levels of equivalence

- *e.g. London saw a cold winter last year.*
- *e.g. You are not serious?*
- - *В прошлом году зима в Лондоне была холодной .*
- - *Вы шутите?*
- Two preceding informative complexes as well as the method of describing the situation.

# The levels of equivalence

- This means that the translation is a *semantic paraphrase* of the original, preserving its basic semes and allowing their free reshuffle in the sentence.



# The levels of equivalence

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- **The fourth level** of translation consists of 4 meaningful components of the ST. They are:
  - 1) The purport of communication.
  - 2) Identification of the situation.
  - 3) The method of its description.
  - 4) The invariant meaning of the syntactical structures.

# The levels of equivalence

- *E.g. I don't see that I need to convince you.*
- *- Не вижу необходимости доказывать это вам.*
- *E.g. He was standing with his arms crossed and his bare head bent.*
- *- Он стоял, сложив руки на груди и опустив непокрытую голову.*

# The levels of equivalence

- **In the fifth level** of translation we can find the maximum possible semantic similarity between ST and TT.
- e.g. *I saw him at the theatre.*
- - *Я видел его в театре.*
- e.g. *The house was sold for 10 thousand dollars.*
- - *Дом был продан за 10 тысяч долларов.*

# The levels of equivalence

- There are 5 levels of equivalence in this TT:
- 1) The purport of communication.
- 2) Identification of the situation.
- 3) The method of description of the situation.
- 4) The invariant meaning of the syntactical structures.
- 5) The level of word semantics.

# The levels of equivalence

- *E.g. the Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.*
- *- Организация основана на принципе суверенного равенства всех ее членов.*

# The levels of equivalence

- The relative identity of the contents of the two texts depends in this case on the extent to which various components of the word meaning can be rendered in translation without detriment to the retention of the rest of the information contained in the original.

# PRAGMATIC ASPECT OF TRANSLATION

- Pragmatics is the relationships between the word and its users.
- Pragmatic relations are superimposed on semantic relations and play an equally important role in analyzing the original text and in producing an equivalent text in the TL.

# PRAGMATIC ASPECT OF TRANSLATION

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- Semantically-equivalent messages do not necessarily mean the same thing to the source and target receptors and, therefore, are not necessarily pragmatically equivalent.
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# Types of pragmatic relations

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graph TD; A[Types of pragmatic relations] --- B[There are three types of pragmatic relations:]; B --- C[The relation of SL sender to the original message]; B --- D[The relation of TL receptor to the new TT]; B --- E[The relation of the translator to both messages];
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There are three  
types of pragmatic  
relations:

The relation of  
SL sender to the  
original message

The relation of  
TL receptor  
to the new TT

The relation of  
the translator  
to both  
messages



# PRAGMATIC ASPECT OF TRANSLATION

- **NB!** The translator should be aware of the fact whether the message is a statement of the fact, a request, an entreaty or a joke.

Very often the speaker's communicative intentions differ from what the message really states.

## The effect of the receptor to the text

- All kinds of texts were classified depending upon their orientation towards different types of receptors.
- 1). Texts intended for domestic consumption:
  - *e.g. local advertising, local legislation, home news.*
- 2). Texts intended for foreign consumption
  - *propaganda, advertising for foreign receptors.*

## PRAGMATIC ASPECT OF TRANSLATION

- 3). Texts intended primarily for SL receptors, but having also a universal human appeal.
- 4). Texts without any specific national addressee (technical literature, instruction).



# PRAGMATIC ASPECT OF TRANSLATION

- Typically in written translation translator deals with texts intended for TL audiences and, therefore, subject to pragmatic adaptation.
- Each word or text is able to have certain pragmatic influence (communicative effect) upon the receptor.

The character of such an influence depends upon three factors:

3 factors

Contents of  
the word  
expression

The character of the  
signs that the word  
expression involves

The receptor

Message can  
have different  
effect on receptors

e.g. a disco  
grand mother –  
a teenager

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## Four types of pragmatic relations according to Nyberg

- 1) the pragmatics of the ST is preserved in the fullest way, when this text is of the same interest both for the reader of the ST and of the TT (scientific literature);
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## Pragmatic relations

- 2) the pragmatics of the ST is preserved in the translation quite fully when the ST is created especially for the translation (different materials for foreign readers);

## Pragmatic relations

- 3) the pragmatic adequateness is quite restricted while translating the literature which is oriented to the receptor of the ST but has sth to say to other people;

## Pragmatic relations

- 4) the ST is oriented only for the receptor of the ST and does not have any relations towards the receptor of the translated text (governmental acts, political and economic press).

# Questions

- Text-book:  
Lectures 6, 7 – pp.49-54, 58-64.
- Questions – pp.55, 65.
- Ex-s: pp. 65-67.
- Presentation :”Different Approaches Of Translation Theorists To The Problem Of Equivalence”.