محاضرة 10

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**Equivalence**

**Translation equivalence:** is an empirical phenomenon which can be discovered by comparing the S.L. text with the T.L. text (Catford: 1965). Since every language is unique and independent of all other languages. Of the world (its categories being defined within each specific language itself) equivalence between different languages is not expected to be matched by formal correspondence (and this is why formal correspondence is considered to be a matter of approximation). A textual equivalent in the T.L. is any T.L. text or portion of text (i.e. textual material) which is found to be the equivalent of a certain S.L. text or textual material.

Such an equivalence in fact can be discovered in two ways. The first method or approach is to rely on a competent bilingual or translator who can provide the equivalent. The second method is that of commutation. One can make use of commutation for such purposes by systematically changing an Item in the S.L. text, and observing the consequential changes that may take place in the T.L. The portions that are changed in the S.L. text and their counterparts in the T.L. are thus found to be translation equivalents. e.g.: S.L English T.L. Arabic اشترى علي دارا يدة ً جد

house new a bought Ali Ali bought a new car

Ali bought a new book

Ali bought a new chair

Layla sold a new car

Lyla sold an old car

Lyla sold a car

The example “a car” is translated as “سيارة “in Arabic, since there is no indefinite article in Arabic.

In other words, the equivalent of the English Indefinite article happens to be "nil" In such cases, however, equivalence is not usually established at the word rank, but at the group rank (a car ,)سيارة etc. When a certain linguistic Item does exist in the T.L. but is not used as a result of divergence between equivalence and formal correspondence, the absence of that Item from the T.L. text is called Zero equivalence (Catford, 1965). For Instance, S.L. (Arabic): T.L.(English): .home went Ahmed ذهب احمد الى البيت English does have a definite article "the", but it is not used in front of the lexical Item "home" in the above example.

This is a case of zero equivalence. Equivalence is affected by conditioning factors such as the linguistic context (I.e. co-text) as well as the extra-linguistic context of situation. In fact, the S.L. text and the T.L. text that are found to be equivalent rarely have the 'same' meaning, despite the fact that they are good equivalents. They are considered to be successful equivalents if both the S.I and the T.L. text can function in the same situation.

The necessary condition for such successful functioning in the same situation (or being translation equivalents) is that the S.L. text and the T.L. text should share (or be related to) at least some of the features of the situation. S.L. {English) Situational Features T.L (Arabic) He has left. Third person sing. Male لقد غادر Departure Prior event Linked to present completed Three of the situational features only of the above Instance (le. departure, prior event, and third person singular) are shared by both the S.L. and the T.L. texts; whereas both texts differ in three other situational features (gender, being linked to present, and completion) as manifested in the diagram. Different languages use different means to fulfill their ends.

This is why one may find a lexical item in one language to be the equivalent of a grammatical category in another For Instance. Arable uses the grammatical category " t h e dual' whereas English may express that in terms of the lexical item "two" which can serve as an equivalent of the dual if necessary: ذهب الوالدان الى المدرسة :(Arabic (.:L.S T.L.: (English): The (two) boys went to school. In certain cases, however, it is not necessary to make any mention of such a lexical item since " number can be irrelevant: كانت عيناه سوداوان (Arabic (.:L.S T.L.: (English): His eyes were black. The use of the lexical item "two" in the above example is in fact redundant, and awkward. When the direction of translation is the opposite, i.e., from English into Arabic, the situation in fact becomes more problematic, for the translator has to decide whether to render the English plural into the Arabic plural, or the Arabic dual. e.g., He went to school accompanied by his brothers. If "brothers' refers to two brothers, the Arabic equivalent would be المدرسة الى اخواه رافقه but if they are more than two, the Arabic equivalent would then be المدرسة الى اخوته رافقه the context sometimes specifies the situation; but if it does not, the translator has to make his choice, and mention the second possible rendering in a separate footnote.

Since equivalence is not based on sameness of meaning, as already mentioned elsewhere, one has to distinguish it from the process of transcoding. as well as transference. In the case of transcoding the same message is expressed in more than one code as in the case of expressing a message once in terms of a linguistic code, and another time in terms of morse signals. Switching from the spoken to the written code most nearly corresponds to transcoding too (Catford, 1965). As for transference, it will be discussed in more detail because of its relevance to translation. In an attempt to translate the Navaho color terms into English, Landar, Ervin, and Horowitz coined a new English term (yoo) to translate the Navaho color term 'tico' which signifies yellow or orange. They also coined the term 'bogop' to translate the Navaho term 'dootliz' which signifies three colors blue, green, and purple. The coined term "yoo" is phonologically and graphologically English, but its formal and contextual meanings are not but those of the S.L. (Navaho). When translating an S.L. item, the translator is not supposed to transfer the original meaning of the S.L. but to look for its equivalent meaning in the T.L. What Landar, et al, did is not translation but a case of transference since one does not need the item "yoo" (which is coined by them to refer to a situation where the two colors: yellow and orange are implied) In an English situation. This is also applicable to the other coined term "bogop" When 'tico’ in the S.1 associated with something yellow, the translator should render it Into the English color "yellow" as a translation equivalent, but when It is used in the original (Navaho) in association with an Item that is orange, one has to translate it into the English color term "orange" When the Navaho term "bogop" is used in the S.L. with association with the grass, its translation equivalent in English should be the English cooler term 'green', but infused with something that is blue (sky), its translation equivalent in English should be "blue" Catford (1965) discusses how one may formulate a general statement of textual equivalence for a certain S.L. Item.

A frequently occurring item in a relatively long text may have more than one T.L. equivalent, each of which may occur a certain number of times. To obtain the equivalence-probability of each equivalence, one should divide the number of occurrences of each equivalent by the total number of the S.L. Item's occurrences. One may express the results of general textual equivalence in terms of figures (e.g., S.L. × which occurs 90 times in the text has z as its equivalent in every occurrence, i.e., 90 times out of 90). One may also express them in terms of percentage (S.L. x = T.L. z, 100%), or in terms of the probability scale in which I =absolute certainty; and O = impossibility (S.L..x T.L.z,I.). Such statements about the probabilities of textual equivalence are in fact unconditioned probabilities (i.e., probabilities of equivalence that do not take the co-textual and contextual factors into consideration). Taking the co-text (the linguistic context), and the context (situational relevant features) into consideration will achieve a better standard of accuracy and reliability with regard to probabilities of equivalence. If the unconditioned probability of the S.L. item x =T.L. item z in 40% of the cases, the probability of equivalence becomes higher when the conditioning factors are considered. Translation rules (for human translators, based on conditioned and unconditioned probabilities of equivalence) as well as translation-algorithms (for Machine Translation which are a form of more rigid translation rules based on co-textual conditioning factors) can be formed provided the sample (which is employed for generalizing the probabilities of translation equivalence) is big enough.