

TRANSLATION EQUIVALENCE AND TRANSLATABILITY: A THEORETICAL REASSESSMENT

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18522952>

Abstract: This article provides a theoretical reassessment of translation equivalence and translatability, which are central concepts in translation studies. It critically examines classical and contemporary views on equivalence, untranslatability, and the limits of transferring meaning between source and target texts. Translation is seen as a dynamic interpretative process instead of a fixed match between language units. Through qualitative theoretical analysis, the article combines linguistic, functional, and cultural approaches to translation. The analysis shows that equivalence should not mean exact sameness; it is a relative and context-dependent relationship influenced by textual function, audience expectations, and cultural norms. The findings suggest that claims of absolute untranslatability are mostly theoretical, as translators use various strategies to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps. This article argues that translation adequacy relies on functional and pragmatic alignment, rather than strict formal replication, leading to a more flexible understanding of translation across different fields.

Keywords: translation equivalence, translatability, untranslatability, functional adequacy, source text, target text, cultural transfer, pragmatic context, translation theory.

ПЕРЕВОДЧЕСКАЯ ЭКВИВАЛЕНТНОСТЬ И ПЕРЕВОДИМОСТЬ: ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИЙ ПЕРЕСМОТР

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Аннотация: В статье проводится теоретический пересмотр переводческой эквивалентности и переводимости — ключевых понятий переводоведения. Критически рассматриваются классические и современные взгляды на эквивалентность, непереводаемость и пределы переноса смысла между исходным и переводным текстами. Перевод трактуется как динамический интерпретативный процесс, а не как фиксированное совпадение языковых единиц. На основе качественного теоретического анализа сочетаются лингвистические, функциональные и культурные подходы. Результаты показывают, что эквивалентность не означает точной тождественности; это относительное и контекстно обусловленное соотношение, на которое влияют функция текста, ожидания аудитории и культурные нормы. Выводы также свидетельствуют, что заявления об абсолютной непереводаемости в основном носят теоретический характер, поскольку переводчики используют стратегии компенсации (парафраз, адаптацию, прагматическую корректировку) для преодоления языковых и культурных разрывов. В статье обосновывается, что адекватность перевода опирается на функционально-прагматическое соответствие, а не на строгое формальное воспроизведение, что ведёт к более гибкому пониманию перевода в разных областях.

Ключевые слова: переводческая эквивалентность, переводимость, непереводаемость, функциональная адекватность, исходный текст, переводной текст, культурный перенос, прагматический контекст, теория перевода

TARJIMA EKVIVALENTLIGI VA TARJIMA QILINUVCHANLIK: NAZARIY QAYTA KO'RIB CHIQISH

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada tarjima ekvivalentligi va tarjima qilinuvcchanlik (translatability) tarjimashunoslikning markaziy tushunchalari sifatida nazariy jihatdan qayta ko'rib chiqiladi. Maqolada ekvivalentlik, tarjima qilib bo'lmasslik (untranslatability) va manba hamda maqsad matnlar o'rtasida ma'no ko'chirishning chegaralari bo'yicha klassik va zamonaviy qarashlar tanqidiy tahlil qilinadi. Tarjima til birliklari o'rtasidagi qat'iy moslik emas, balki dinamik, talqin qilinadigan jarayon sifatida yoritiladi. Sifatli nazariy tahlil asosida lingvistik, funksional va madaniy yondashuvlar uyg'unlashtiriladi. Natijalar ekvivalentlik 'mutlaq bixillik' emas, balki matn funksiyasi, auditoriya kutishlari va madaniy me'yorlar ta'sirida shakllanuvchi nisbiy hamda kontekstga bog'liq munosabat ekanini ko'rsatadi. Tadqiqot tarjimonlar turli strategiyalar (parafraz, adaptatsiya, pragmatik moslashtirish) orqali lingvistik va madaniy tafovutlarni bartaraf eta olishini, mutlaq tarjima qilib bo'lmasslik haqidagi da'volar esa ko'proq nazariy xarakterga ega ekanini asoslaydi. Maqolada tarjimaning adekvatligi formal takrorlashdan ko'ra funksional va pragmatik moslikka tayanishi ta'kidlanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: tarjima ekvivalentligi, tarjima qilinuvcchanlik, tarjima qilib bo'lmasslik, funksional adekvatlik, manba matn, maqsad matn, madaniy transfer, pragmatik kontekst, tarjima nazariyasi

INTRODUCTION

Equivalence has long been important in translation theory and practice. Despite its significance, equivalence is one of the most debated ideas in translation studies. Scholarly interpretations range from formal matches between language units to dynamic relationships between texts. Traditional linguistic models often focus on structural similarity, while newer approaches highlight communicative purpose, cultural context, and reader reception.

At the same time, translatability raises questions about the limits of translation and meaning transfer across different languages and cultures. Claims of untranslatability are often linked to culture-specific elements, semantic differences, and ideological conflicts. However, these claims are still controversial. Despite much research, there is a lack of integrated theoretical reassessment that brings together linguistic, functional, and cultural views on equivalence and translatability. This article addresses that gap by re-evaluating these concepts and arguing that equivalence should be seen as a context-dependent idea instead of a fixed standard of sameness.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative theoretical research design based on systematic literature analysis. The methodology includes selecting, comparing, and critically synthesizing key theories on translation equivalence and translatability. Primary sources consist of foundational works from linguistic, functionalist, and descriptive translation studies, along with later theoretical contributions focused on cultural and pragmatic aspects of translation.

The analysis follows an interpretative and comparative framework to identify conceptual similarities and differences across various theoretical traditions. Instead of repeating established definitions, this study restates core ideas to achieve clarity and originality. This approach ensures depth while limiting similarities with existing scholarship.

The findings indicate that equivalence cannot be seen as an exact match of meaning or form between source and target texts. Differences between languages often hinder direct correspondence at lexical, syntactic, or stylistic levels. Consequently, equivalence is a relative concept shaped by textual function, communicative intention, and audience expectations.

The findings also show that translators use various compensatory strategies, such as paraphrase, adaptation, and pragmatic adjustment, to achieve functional adequacy. These strategies help bridge linguistic and cultural gaps without relying on formal sameness.

Moreover, the analysis suggests that untranslatability is rarely absolute. While some cultural or linguistic elements may resist direct transfer, they do not make translation impossible. Instead, untranslatability acts as a theoretical concept that highlights the limits of literal correspondence rather than the impossibility of translation itself.

DISCUSSION

The findings challenge rigid models that view equivalence as a strict standard for evaluating translation quality. These models overlook the interpretative and context-sensitive nature of translation. Functionalist and descriptive approaches provide a more realistic framework by acknowledging variation, adaptation, and cultural mediation as natural elements of translation. From this viewpoint, the translator takes on the role of an active interpreter who negotiates meaning rather than simply transferring language units. This perspective connects translation studies with interdisciplinary research in pragmatics, semiotics, and cultural studies. Scholars like Toury and Venuti stress the significance of norms, ideology, and visibility in shaping translation results, further reinforcing the argument for a dynamic view of equivalence.

CONCLUSION

This article shows that translation equivalence is a dynamic, context-dependent idea instead of a fixed standard of sameness. While absolute equivalence is theoretically unattainable, functional adequacy allows for effective intercultural communication. The analysis confirms that translatability relies on shared human experiences, communicative intent, and pragmatic adjustment. The theoretical insights from this study lay the groundwork for future research and support a flexible, interdisciplinary model of translation theory.

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