

IN HIS NAME



SHEIKHBAHAE UNIVERSITY
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**The Application of Baker's Strategies to Cope with Non-
equivalence Cases in Persian Translations of English Literary
and Political Texts**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULLFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ART IN
TRANSLATION STUDIES**

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To the one who watches me second by second

To my teacher

Mr.Hoseini

Who gave me the courage, motivation and respect

To my parents

For their love, support and tolerance

To my husband

For his great Love, support and respect

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Abstract

This research study sought to investigate the realization of Baker's strategies to cope with the problem of non-equivalence in translations of literary works of *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bells Toll*, and political works of *Regions and Powers* and *From Dictatorship to Democracy*. To do so, 240 paragraphs, 60 from each, were selected randomly. Then, the selected paragraphs and their Persian translations were compared in terms of the existence of non-equivalence problems and also strategies to cope with them. After that, all the cases of non-equivalence problems were identified in target Persian translated texts were examined to see what strategies had been used to deal with the problems. Finally, based on Baker's proposed strategies, the strategies were identified, counted and compared in the two corpora. The subsequent data analysis showed that the most frequent strategy in the political works was translation by omission by the frequency of 43. Translation by a more general word, translation by cultural substitution, translation by paraphrase using related words, translation by paraphrase using unrelated words and translation by illustration weren't used by the translators. The most frequent strategy in the literary works was translation by omission. Also, translation by illustration wasn't used by the translators. The strategies to cope with non-equivalence were mostly used in translation of literary texts rather than political texts. The translators ignored the strategies in translation of political texts and used literal translation to translate them.

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List of Abbreviations

TT: Target Text

ST: Source Text

TL: Target Language

SL: Source Language

Chapter One:

Introduction

1.1. Preliminaries

Equivalence is a central concept in translation theory, but it is also a controversial one (Baker, 2001). Approaches to the question of equivalence can differ radically; some theorists define translation in terms of equivalence relations (Catford, 1965; Nida & Taber, 1969; Toury, 1980a; Pym, 1992a; Koller, 1995) while others reject the theoretical notion of equivalence, claiming it is either irrelevant (Snell-Hornby, 1988) or damaging (Gentzler, 1993) to translation studies. Yet other theorists take a middle course; Baker (1992) uses the notion of equivalence “for the sake of convenience” (P. 5-6). Thus equivalence is considered as a necessary condition for translation, an obstacle to progress in translation studies, or a useful category for describing translations (Baker, 2001).

There are different types of equivalences, including; formal, dynamic, denotative, connotative, text normative, directional, pragmatic, etc. which are introduced by different scholars. According to Baker (1992), equivalences are of five types; a) equivalence at word level (dealing with the meaning of single words and expressions), b) equivalence above word level (dealing with combinations of words and phrases), c) grammatical equivalence (dealing with grammatical types), d) textual equivalence (dealing with text

level), e) pragmatic equivalence (dealing with the way texts are used in communicative situations).

Equivalence is of great importance in translation practice, but not every word in SL has equivalence in TL. As Baker (1992) believes, some of the problems of non-equivalence are of the commonest ones. The problems of non-equivalence are a commonly observed phenomenon including a) culture-specific concepts, b) non-lexicalized SL concept in TL, c) semantically complex SL word, d) SL and TL with different distinctions in meaning, e) TL lacking a superordinate, f) TL lacking a specific term, g) differences in form, h) use of loan words in ST, i) differences in physical or interpersonal perspective, j) differences in expressive meaning and, k) differences in frequency and purpose of using specific forms.

In fact non-equivalence in culture specific concepts occurs when the SL word expresses a concept which isn't known in the target culture (Baker, 1992). The concept in question may be an abstract or a concrete concept; it can also be related to a religious belief, a social custom, or a type of food. It's possible that the SL word expresses a concept which is known in target culture but not lexicalized, that is not "allocated" a TL word to express it (Baker, 1992). The SL word may be semantically complex. This is a common problem in translation. Words do not have to be morphologically complex (Bolinger & Sears, 1968). In other words, a single word which consists of a single morpheme can sometimes express a more complex set of meanings than a whole sentence. The target language may make more or fewer distinction in meaning than the SL. What one language regards as an important distinction in meaning another language may not perceive as relevant (Baker, 1992).

The TL may have specific words (hyponyms) but no general word (superordinate) to head the semantic field. Sometimes TL lacks a specific term. Mostly languages have general words (superordinates) but lack specific ones (hyponyms), since languages make only those distinctions in meaning which seems relevant to their particular environment. Sometimes there is no equivalent in the TL for a particular form in the source text. Certain suffixes and prefixes which convey propositional and other types of meaning in English often have no direct equivalents in other languages (Baker, 1992).

The above were the problems of non-equivalence. Any translator deals with them in his own specific way; however, Baker listed the strategies used by professional translators to cope with the problems of non-equivalence. They are, 1) translation by a more general word, 2) cultural substitution, 3) using a loan word or loan word plus explanation, 4) paraphrase using a related or unrelated word, 5) omission and 6) illustration (Baker, 1992).

In fact this study aims to investigate the above strategies and also the problems of non-equivalence in Persian political and literary translated texts. More specially, this study is an attempt to identify the strategies by comparing the translated texts with their original texts in English. Then it's tried to understand which translations are better than the others, political ones or literary ones. In fact this study helps to better translations of political and literary texts.

1.2. Statement of the problems

Equivalence is a relation, of equal value between a ST segment and a TT segment which can be established on any linguistic level from form to function (Pym, 2010).

According to Broek (1978) translation equivalence occurs when SL and TL texts or items have the same relevant features of situation substance. House (2009) says that in fact the notion of equivalence is the conceptual basis in translation. In fact the process of translation begins with translation of words. When there is no equivalence the text can't be transferred. Therefore it is not the exact word of the SL writer and in fact it is manipulated. Every translator chooses a strategy to deal with non-equivalence. To operationalize the concept, Baker (1992) proposed taxonomy of strategies to deal with non-equivalence. Baker's strategies are of those which can help to solve non-equivalence problems.

Translation of literary texts is one of the most important types of translations. Since the invention of language, men have taken pleasure in following and participating in imaginary adventures and imaginary experiences of imaginary people (Perrine, 1974). Fiction makes life less tedious and makes the hours pass quickly and pleasurably. In fact the first aim of reading fiction is enjoyment.

The experience of men through the ages is that "literature may furnish understanding" (Perrine, 1974, p. 3). Furthermore, literature is considered as identification of a nation. Then in order to show its identification, a nation has to transfer its literature, and the only way to do that is translation. Therefore literary translation is of great importance.

The other area of field which is of great importance is translation of political texts. In fact there is a close relationship between translation and political discourse. Choosing an inappropriate word or structure in a political context lead to great misinterpretations. A translator that translates political texts has to be aware why a word or a structure is

chosen. Political texts are of the most sensitive kinds of texts. Therefore, the translator has to render ST with great care. A few articles have focused on Baker's strategies, but no research has focused on political translated texts in order to examine translational strategies to realize applicability of Baker's strategies. Therefore, the researcher was motivated to conduct this study to examine Baker's strategies in the literary and political texts.

1.3. Research question

Accordingly, the following research question was formulated.

- To what extent do the political and literary translated texts differ in terms of the application of Baker's strategies for non-equivalence cases?

1.4. Significance of the study

It's hoped that the present study enriches and broadens our understanding of the strategies used to solve the problem of non-equivalence in translated political and literary texts and provides insights into their translations. It mainly focuses on the way non-equivalent words are translated. It can be useful for the translators because they can get familiar with several strategies like culture-specific concepts, loan words, non-lexicalized concepts, etc. used in political and literary texts. The provided examples will be helpful for those who are interested in translation studies. Specifically, they can be useful for the students who study English Translation. They are supposed to pass such translation courses as "translation of political texts" and "translation of literary texts".

1.5. Definitions of the key terms

Equivalence: Equivalence can be defined as “a relation of equal value between a ST segment and a TT segment. Sometimes the value is on the level of forms; sometimes it's on the level of function and sometimes on the level of reference” (Pym, 2010, p. 7).

Non-equivalence at word level: It means that the “target language has no direct equivalent for a word which occurs in the source text” (Baker, 1992, p. 20).

Culture-specific concepts: “The source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom or even a type of food.” Such concepts are referred to as ‘culture-specific’ (Baker, 1992, p. 21).

Non-lexicalized SL concept in TL: It occurs when “the source-language word express a concept which is known in the target culture but simply not lexicalized, that is not allocated a target language word to express it” (Baker, 1992, p. 21).

Translation by omission: It occurs “when the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression isn't vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations, translators can and often do simply omit translating the word or expression in question” (Baker, 1992, p. 40).

Chapter Two:

Review of the Literature

2.1. Overview

This chapter has five sections. The first section is concerned with the proposed definitions of equivalence. The second section reports on different types of equivalence. The third section describes non-equivalence at word level, reviews several studies and lists problems of non-equivalence. The fourth section is concerned with the strategies to deal with non-equivalence and explain them. Finally, the chapter concludes with the general statement of the research gap.

2.2. Equivalence

As Pym (2010) puts, what we say in one language, can have the same value (the same worth or function) when it is translated into another language. Then it can be said that the relation between the source text and its translation is of equal value. The relation may be at any level from form to function, or anything in between. Equivalence doesn't say that languages are the same; it just says that values can be the same (Pym, 2010).

According to the "Dictionary of translation studies" (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997), equivalence (or translation equivalence) is defined as a term used by many writers in order to describe the nature and the extent of the relationships which exist between SL and TL texts or smaller linguistic units. In fact, equivalence is the interlingual counterpart

of synonymy within a single language, though Jacobson's famous slogan "equivalence in difference" (1966, p.233) highlights the added complications which are associated with it. The issues related to the term equivalence are indeed complex, so the concept of equivalence is a matter of controversy. For instance, Hermans (1995, p. 217), defines it as a "troubled notion". As the term equivalence is also a standard polysemous English word, the precise sense in which translation equivalence is understood varies from writer to writer. For example, some commentators have by analogy with the mathematical notion of equivalence implied that translational equivalence –and consequently translation itself– is both symmetrical and reversible. Furthermore, it is in practice impossible to use the term with the level of precision assumed by writer (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997).

2.3. Typologies of equivalence

According to Nida (1964a), equivalence is of two types; the first one is formal equivalence which concentrates on the message in both form and content. In fact, the message in the receptor language should match, as far as possible, the different elements in the source language. Formal equivalence is oriented towards the ST structure, and determines accuracy and correctness.

Dynamic equivalence is on the basis of the principle of equivalent effect. According to the principle of equivalent effect the relationship between receptor and the message should be the same as the relationship between the original receptor and the message (Nida, 1964a). The message should be suitable for receptor's linguistic needs and cultural expectations and 'aims at complete naturalness of expression'. 'Naturalness' is a key concept for Nida. As Nida believes, the goal of dynamic equivalence is to look for 'the

closest natural equivalent to the source-language message' (Nida, 1964a, Nida & Taber, 1969).

Koller (1989) categorizes equivalence into five groups. 1) Denotative equivalence is related to equivalence of the extralinguistic content of a text. In other words, as Koller says, it is 'content invariance'. 2) Connotative equivalence deals with the lexical choices- especially between near-synonyms. As Koller puts, this type of equivalence is referred to as 'stylistic equivalence' elsewhere. 3) Text-normative equivalence focuses on text types. It in fact considers different kinds of texts behaving in different ways. This is closely linked to work by Katarina Reiss (1989). 4) Pragmatic equivalence, or 'communicative equivalence', deals with the receiver of the text or message. It is in fact Nida's 'dynamic equivalence'. 5) Formal equivalence, considers the form and aesthetics of the text. Word plays and the individual stylistic features of the ST are examples of formal equivalence. Formal equivalence is elsewhere referred to as 'expressive equivalence' and it is not to be confused with Nida's term (P. 99-104).

Catford (1965) believes in two types of equivalence. As he says "formal correspondent is any TL category (unit, class, element of structure, etc.) which occupies, as much as possible, the same place in the economy of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL. Textual equivalence is the other type of equivalence he defines. Textual equivalence is any TL text or portion of text which is observed on a particular occasion to the equivalent of a given SL text or portion of text."

Textual equivalence is based on a particular ST-TT pair, while formal equivalence is a system-based concept between a pair of languages. When the two concepts diverge a