ISSN 2229-5518

"Problems of Equivalence Choices between Global English and Local Kurdish Languages"

Kawa Mirza Salih

Al-Qalam University College

Summary

In this project I will seek to critically examine a number of ideological and cultural issues of difference and problems of using equivalence in both English and Kurdish languages in the field of translation. It will then a variety of theoretical models of translation have been argued to keep a balance between both languages. Regarding all the translation types and the strategies may provide the greatest help for both of the translators and the readership in terms of two basic aspects. Firstly, the translators can convey their message easily and perfectly. Secondly, to make the target message more sense by the readership, otherwise without the strategies and techniques it might be some terms or phrases or sentences would have stopped and failed the translators to translate them into any target language especially from English into Kurdish. But the translators should be aware how to use and adopt the strategies and techniques otherwise they may decrease fidelity of the message particularly the source one.

Another point is that translating from a very developed language like English into a minority language like Kurdish may result in unprecedented problems from different aspects of the translation process to render the message and finding natural equivalent and the ideological behaviors and special effects on the target readership.

Moreover, The equivalence choices is very significant aspect of translation, and there are many strategies that can be taken to make a good choice in translation, different text types may require different choices, and the equivalence choices may be affected by the text types.

IJSER

Introduction

Equivalence is a principal concept in translation theory, but it is not unproblematic.

As Catford points out, "the central problem of translation-practice is that of finding TL equivalents. A central task of translation theory is that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence" (Catford, 1965: 21). So finding and choosing equivalence for the translators is not an easy task, especially translation between global English and local Kurdish, where they are very different from each. Furthermore, there are no things in any two languages that are absolutely identical. Nida expresses this view as: There are no two stones alike, no flowers the same, and no two people who are identical. Although the structures of the DNA in the nucleus of their cells may be the same, no two sounds are ever exactly alike, and even the same person pronouncing the same words will never utter it in an absolutely identical manner (Nida 1986: 60).

Equivalence is also one of the procedures used in translation. By examining some examples drawn from certain languages, in the process of translating, it was discovered that equivalence belongs to language and culture. Roman Jakobson in Theories of Translation (1992:145) sees things this way and says "Likewise, on the level of interlingual translation, there is ordinarily no full equivalence between code-units, while messages may serve as adequate interpretations of alien code-units or messages. This means that equivalence in translation is almost always only partial."

Purpose

The aim of this research is to understand from equivalence and how can differentiate equivalence between the two English and Kurdish languages and find examples upon

ISSN 2229-5518

the both languages by using the techniques and strategies of translation. Another aim is to show many strategies that can be taken by the translators to make a good choice in translation process.

The Concept of Equivalence

As "equivalence" is a term which is broadly used outside of the field of enquiry at hand, it may be useful to start with a more general definition of the concept before mentioning more specific ones. Halverson maintains that equivalence can be defined as "A relationship existing between two (or more) entities and the relationship is described as one of likeness / sameness / similarity / equality in terms of a number of potential qualities" (Halverson, 1997: 207).

"Equal in value, force, power, effect, import, and the like; alike in significance and value; of the same import or meaning and equal in measure but not admitting of superposition; -- applied to magnitudes; as, a square may be equivalent to a triangle[1]."

The both definitions show the notion of equivalence is undoubtedly one of the most problematic and controversial areas in the field of translation. Long ago up to date, this term has been analyzed, evaluated and extensively discussed from different points of view and has been approached from many different perspectives by the theorists. The difficulty in defining equivalence seems to result in the impossibility of having a universal approach to this notion.

In addition to that to make sense, what does the concept of 'equivalence' come from? sometimes looking for the original point or starting point for any word or any science can make you reach a satisfaction level, here what I want to say is that the concept of 'equivalence' is from Latin originally which is 'equi and valence' means 'the same value' then can be described as 'equal in value'. Based on this the American theorist Eugene Nida has dealt with the concept of equivalence in translation. For instance, based on the word's etymology the first half of the phrase 'equal in value' can also be taken to mean 'like'. In getting a correct meaning of a word in a language (language 1) must focus on achieving equivalence in the target language (language 2), but this is not an easy task, and that's why Nida (1964) says that "no two languages are identical, either in the meanings given to corresponding symbols or in the ways in which such symbols are arranged" (p.156).

"Between the resultant text in language 2 (the target language text) and the source text in language 1 (the source language text) there exists a relationship which can be designated as a translational, or equivalence, relation" (Koller, 1995, Cited in, Hatim and Munday, 2004: 48). Pym also speaks about equivalence as a "fact of reception and expectation that TTs should stand in some kind of equivalence relation to their STs (1995, cited in, Baker and Saldanha, 2009: 98).

---

[1]http://www.brainyquote.com/words/eq/equivalent161240.html

Equivalence in translation

Unfortunately, few attempts have been made to define equivalence in translation. Newman (1994) describes equivalence translation as "a commonsense term for describing the ideal relationship that a reader would expect to exist between an original and it's translation" (cited in, Baker and Saldanha, 2009: 98). Roman Jakobson (2000: 18), on the other hand, describes three kinds of translation which is intra-lingual, inter-lingual and inter-semiotic, the first one is to replace linguistic signs by other linguistic signs in the same language. The second one refers to translation between two deferent written languages. The last third one is replacing linguistic signs by nonlinguistic signs as in translating a play into an opera or music.

The relation set out by Saussure between the signifier (the spoken and written signal) and the signified (the concept signified), together, the signifier and signified form the linguistic sign, but that sign is arbitrary or unmotivated (Saussure, 1983: 9). Thus, the English word cheese is the aural signifier which 'denotes' the concept 'food made of pressed curds' (the signified), there is no inherent reason for that to be so, though. Jakobson insists that it is possible to understand what is signified by a word even if we have never seen or experienced the concept or thing in real life. Examples he gives are (ambrosia and nectar) such words when the modern readers have read in Greek myths even if they have never come across the substances in real life; these contrast with cheese, they almost certainly have encountered first hand (ibid).

In Jakobson's description inter-lingual translation involves "substituting messages in one language not for separate

ISSN 2229-5518

code – units but for entire messages in some other language". The translator recodes and transmits a message received from another source. Thus translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes (Jakobson, 1995/2000: 114).

Typologies of Equivalence

Equivalence has been mentioned by the translation theorists at various levels. As equivalence is commonly established on the basis that the ST and TT words refer to the same thing.

1-Lexicon Equivalence

Kade (1968) on lexical equivalence, in particular in the area of terminology, combines qualitative distinctions with a quantitative scheme that categorizes equivalence relationships according to whether there is a single expression in the TL for a single SL expression, i.e. one-to-one equivalence (cited in, Baker and Saldanha, 2009: 97). Such as the following examples:

"Shoulder" in English may equal "neck" in Kurdish,
For example:
The blame rests on my shoulders. (English)
Berprsîarî dekewête ser estoî mîn. (Kurdish)

"Bed sheet" in English is equal "snow" in Kurdish.
For example:
As white as bed sheet. (English)
Spîe wek befr. (Kurdish)

"Inch" in English is equal "palm's long" in Kurdish.
For example:
They knew every inch of the field. (English)
Bst be bst şarezaî şwêneken. (Kurdish)

"Gold" in English may equal "mirror",
For example:
Heart of gold (English)
Awêneî dlan. (Kurdish)

"Thread" in English may equal "hair" in Kurdish.
For instance:
His life hangs by a thread. (English)
Jîanî be tale mwyekewe bende. (Kurdish)

The number "9" in English may equal the number "7" in Kurdish,
For example:
She has dressed up to nine. (English)
Ew kçe hewt car xoî gorî. (Kurdish)

Sometimes a term in Kurdish may equal several terms in English and vice versa. For instance, the term "ast" in Kurdish equal to:
Class, layer, floor, category, and stratum in English. Here, "changes of class" can be seen, where an adjective may be translated by a noun or a verb (Catford, 1965: 73).

The term "long" in English may equals:
(demek, zor, gewre, frawan, wşkw naxoş, drêj, be drêjaî) in Kurdish. "class shifts" (Ibid).

The word "eat" in Kurdish collocates with many other words, as follows:
(Nan xwardn, ça xwardn, swênd xwardn, lêdan xwardn, xem xwardn)
Back translation in English to make sense:
"To eat" for food, "to drink" for tea, "to take an oath", "to give a beat" and "to give a grief" respectively.

The verb "run" in English may use for different meanings, as in the following examples 'run' has given different equivalence.
(Note: The Kurdish translation sentences are in the brackets)

The bird is running. (Balndeke defrêt.)
The car runs well. (Utwmbêleke baş iş dekat.)
His eyes are running. (Cawî aw dekat.)
His nose is running. (Aw be lwtya dête xwarê.)
The tap is running. (Belweke awî lêdêt.)
The stockings have run. (Gorewîekan helweşawe.)
The watch is running fast. (Katjmêreke pêş dekewêt.)
The Ivy has run. (Lawlaweke cwan ruwawe.)

Some Kurdish words may be translated into compound words in English and vice versa. Catford (1965: 73) said that in changes of rank a word can be translated by a morpheme. For example:

(Goçan) = Walking stick
(Şakar) = Literary works
Clock = (Katjmêrî dîwar.)
Hound = (Segî raw.)

In Kurdish language "Xal" and "Mam" are two words used for different persons, "Xal" is a mother's brother, "Mam" is a father's brother, while in English language a word "Uncle" is used for both.
"Xal" = "Uncle"
"Mam" = "Uncle"

Also in Kurdish language "Pwr", "Xalozhn" and "Amozhn" are three separate words used for father's and mother's sisters, mother's brother's wife and father's brother's wife respectively, but in translation a single word "Aunt" in English language is their equivalence.
"Pwr" = "Aunt"
"Xalozhn" = "Aunt"
"Amozhn" = "Aunt"

Moreover, in Kurdish language the words "Amoza", "Xaloza" and "Pwrza" are three basic terms which have been used for different family relations but in English language the word "Cousin" is only used for all three of them. As follow:
"Amoza" = "Cousin"
"Xaloza" = "Cousin"
"Pwrza" = "Cousin"

A single word like "impeachment" is equal to the following long phrase in Kurdish:
Impeachment = (Tawanbarkrdnî karbedestî berzw danî be dadgay taîbety.)

Similarly in Kurdish language, when a word like "werdegîram" may stand for a clause in English language:
(Werdegîram) = I would have accepted. Catford (1965) describes this as "structure shifts where an SL item at one linguistic level has a TL equivalent at a different level" (cited in, Baker and Saldanha, 2009: 272).

2-Equivalence with compound words

Equivalence of a three-part compound word in English may has one single word in Kurdish,
"Daughter-in-law" = "Bwk"
"Father-in-law" = "Xezwr"
"Mother-in-law" = "Xesw"

3-Equivalence of Idioms and Proverbs

The translators should be aware in finding equivalence when they translate idioms or proverbs, because very broad knowledge is required in both source and target languages for the process of translating idioms and proverbs.
For example:
No pain, no gain
Hîç ştêk bebê xo hîlak krdn ancamî nabêt. (Kurdish), which means, nothing has a result without effort. The idiom can be translated as it is done, based on the theory of Catford (1965: 73) unit shifts when a group may be translated by a clause.

Time is money. (English)
Kat zor benrxe. (Kurdish), which means, time is important, you should know how to spend it.

Theoretical Approaches and Techniques in Translation

Basically there are some kinds and techniques for translation process, as the following:

1-Literal translation: is the translation in which the translator renders the sense and linguistic structure of source language to the target language (Ali, 1998: 10).
For instance:
He drew the water from the well. (English)
Awekey rakêşa le bîreke. (Kurdish)
The sentence was translated literally, and the message here is not clear for the readership.

2-Free translation: is the spirit not the letter, the sense not the words, the message rather than the form, the matter not the manner (ibid).
For example:
He drew the water from the well. (English)
Awy la biraka derhêna. (Kurdish)
Here the message is clear to the readership as the translation could make sense. So, from the above two kinds can be noticed, before attempting to translate it is better if you regard the purpose of the translation and the nature of the readership, otherwise it might be mistranslation happens.

3-Paraphrase translation: such translation is achieved by rendering the source language text and explaining it at the same time. This is adopted in poetic texts and old texts (ibid).
For example:
Rome was not build in a day. (English)
Hendê karî gewrew grîng pêwîsty be rencw mandwbwnw danbexodagrtnî heyew we beyek roj bnyatnanrêt. (Kurdish)
Just imagine this long sentence is the translation of that short sentence due to not have such equivalence to provide the message to the readership.

4-Precise translation: a translator resorts to such type of translation in which he summarizes or omits from the original text, when he feels that some parts of the idea doesn't suit or concern the target language reader (ibid: 11).
For example:
She can afford to spend a lot of money. (English)

Aw dewlemende. (Kurdish)

Contrastingly with the paraphrase translation, here in precise translation, the translator translated the sentence very shortly and precisely.

5-Foreignization: is a strategy in translation when, "the translator leaves the writer alone, as much as possible and moves the reader towards the writer" (Venuti and Schleiermacher, cited in, Munday, 2001: 147).

For example:

Mahatma Gandhi said: "I made mistakes when I was young". (English)

Mahatma gandî wty: "katê mnal bwm helem krduwe". (Kurdish)

In the above example, the translator replaced the English word just in Kurdish alphabet, it means he kurdized the word, the foreignization here is because the translator finds it difficult to choose a suitable cultural and ideological equivalence, Mahatma, in the target language and culture.

6-Domestication: this is also a strategy in translation, it can be made when: "the translator leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible and moves the author towards the reader" (Venuti and Schleiermacher, cited in, Munday, 2001: 146).

For example:

She bought two kilos of ham. (English)

Aw dw kilo goştî berxî kry. (Kurdish)

Back translation, (She bought two kilos of lamb)

In this example there is domestication because, the meat of ham or pork is not halal in our Islam religion, it is forbidden to eat in our country as a Muslim country. If the translator won't change it, it would be something boring and disgusting for the readership. So, it is better for the translators try to domesticate such word and find an appropriate equivalence for the target language in their translation.

7-Semantic translation: is the type, in which the translator renders the sense of the (SL) text without the linguistic structure of the (TL), this is a common type of translation. The semantic approach focuses on the message itself rather than on its effect or force (ibid).

For instance:

Segeke etgrêt. (Kurdish)

Semantic translation into English: This dog bites.

In semantic translation the translator's main concern is being loyal to the author of the original text, more than anything else, as it can be seen in the example.

8-Communicative translation: the translator is more concerned with the force and the effect of the message on the receiver (ibid: 12).

For example:

Segeke etgrêt. (Kurdish)

Communicative translation into English: Be aware of the dog.

This translation is completely different with the Semantic one.

9-Formal equivalence: "Formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content. In such a translation one is concerned with such correspondences as poetry to poetry, sentence to sentence, and concept to concept. Viewed from this formal orientation, one is concerned that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language. This means, for example, that the message in the receptor culture is constantly compared with the message in the source culture to determine the standards of accuracy and correctness" (Nida, 1964: 159).

For instance:

True love like ghosts, which everybody talks about and few have seen. (English)

Xoşewîsty rasty le tarmayî decêt hemw kes basî dekatw bedegmen kesêk deîbînêt. (Kurdish)

Based on the Nida's state and the example reveal that translators should be aware of the form and content of the source message, following that procedure the Kurdish sentence has very attractive meaning and very nice arrangement of the words.

10-Dynamic equivalence: "dynamic equivalence is based on what Nida calls, 'the principle of equivalent effect', where 'the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message" (Nida, 1964, cited in, Munday, 2001: 42).

In dynamic equivalence the translators are required to seek "the closest natural equivalent to the source language message" (Nida and Taber, 1969: 12). For example:

She is worst form of unlucky. (English)

Negbetey berokî grtuwe. (Kurdish)

For the translation English sentence into Kurdish, the translator used exact equivalence to render the source text so as to make the same connection between the target text and the readership.

IJSER

ISSN 2229-5518

Conclusion

Regarding all the translation types and the strategies for translation process, they provide the greatest help for both of the translators and the readership in terms of two basic aspects. Firstly, they are helper for the translators, in that the translators can convey their message easily and perfectly. Secondly, they are helper for the readership to make sense of the target message, otherwise without the strategies and techniques it might be some terms or phrases or sentences would have stopped and failed the translators to translate them into any target language. But the translators should be aware how to use and adopt the strategies otherwise they may decrease fidelity of the message particularly the source one.

Another point is that translating from a very developed language like English language into a minority language like Kurdish may result in unprecedented problems from different aspects of the translation process to render the message and finding natural equivalent and the ideological behaviors and effect on the target readership.

Moreover, The equivalence choices is very significant aspect of translation, and there are many strategies that can be taken to make a good choice in translation, different text types may require different choices, and the equivalence choices may be affected by the text types.

> As (Schaffner, 2002:95) explains that "different lexical choices and omissions may point to different ideological and socio- cultural values". From this point of view the translator should be aware how to make a choice over another one to transfer the original message to the readership, so "the translator should be curious how to choose a particular word, phrase or structure during the translation process over another" (Schaffner, ibid).

To summarize, the essay showed that dealing with translation and equivalence between two languages like English as a powerful and dominant language and Kurdish as a minority and powerless language is not an easy task, that's why the translators required working very proficiency in this field and thinking to select good equivalence and using the strategies and techniques at their disposal.

Finally, those above practical translation examples between the both English and Kurdish languages show that there can be more than one choice in any one or most of them, but the importance in that if the translator tries to make the equivalence choices according to the text type and the kind of readership, but it can be said that the best choices are the dynamic equivalences, since according to (Nida, 1964:156-159) "dynamic equivalence can be described as the closest natural equivalence to the source language message", on the other hand that statement by Nida is almost the same with a statement of Professor Khulussi, who states, in his book "Fan AL-Tarjama", "Translation equivalence is an empirical phenomenon depended on comparing the (SL) and (TL) texts. The purpose of any translation should be to achieve equivalent effect to produce the same effect or one as close as possible on the readership of the translation as it was obtained on the readership of the original; this is also called the equivalent response". (1989: 5)
Also this kind of equivalence has the same sense and manner for the target readership as it had for the source text readership.

Resources

Ali, W. ed. 1998. *Theories of Translation*. Baghdad: Al-Mustansirya.

Halverson, S. 1997. *The Concept of Equivalence in Translation: Much ado something*. London and New York: Routledge.

Halverson, S. 1997. *The concept of equivalence in translation studies: Much ado about something* [Online]. Available at: http://www.mendeley.com/research/concept-equivalence-translation-studies-much-ado-about-something/. [Accessed: 13th May 2013].

Hatim, B and Munday, J. 2004. *Translation: An Advanced Resource Book*. London and New York: Routledge.

Jakobson, R. 1959/2000. *On linguistic Aspects of Translation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Khulussi, A. 1989. *Fan AL-Tarjama*. Baghdad: Al-Mustansirya University Press.

Munday, J. 2001. *Introducing Translation Studies: theories and applications*. London and New York: Routledge.

Nabaz, J. 2008. *Translation is an Art* (In Kurdish). Stockholm: The Kurdish National Congress.

Nida, E. and Taber, C. 1969. *The Theory and Practice of Translating*. 2nd ed. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

IJSER

ISSN 2229-5518
Nida, E. 1964. *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating.* Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Saussure, F. 1983. *Cours De Linguistique Generale.* Translated by Harris, R. as: *Course in General Linguistics*. London: Duckworth.

Schaffner, C. ed. 2002. *The role of discourse analysis for translators*. Sydney: multilingual matters Ltd.

Venuti, L. ed. 2000. *The Translation Studies Reader*. London and New York: Routledge.

IJSER