“Equivalence” Term/Concept Challenges vs. Alternative

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Abstract

The term ‘equivalence’ has been employed in translation studies literature to denote a ‘translation concept’ that reflects on inter-lingual ‘matching’ of items (open to all categories and units) across the language pair involved in any translating activity. The wide range of relevant issues to this concept and their implications, so far, have been discussed in the context of the general contrastive approach, and challenged, also amongst other aspects, for the objective of finding equivalent, coined new word and/or concept when translating at any point in time. The arguments and debates on the validity of the mentioned term (denoting the state of being ‘equivalent’) range, according to the reviewed literature, from achieving communicatively effective translation ‘equivalence’ on the one hand and/or virtually the abandonment of the ‘concept of equivalence’ on the other. Nevertheless, there is general consensus amongst most translation researchers and theorists quoted below, which says the term ‘equivalence’ (representing a translation concept) is a goal to be achieved rather than accepting it in its referential property. A concept of an inter-lingual matching of corresponding linguistic items/units being in the state of “counterpart” interchangeably is to be suggested as an alternative for substituting the widely used term ‘equivalence’ and the concept it denotes for achieving translation that to reflect on the ST in focus.
Chronological Account

A review of the translation studies literature reveals the word ‘equivalent’ generally has been used as a term that presumably encodes the ‘concept of equivalence’ achieved or to be achieved across the language pair involved in translating process. Translation studies researchers and theorists are divided on the issues of using this mentioned term. ‘Equivalence’ on the one hand means it is there and translator has to search for or to work towards achieving it or ‘equivalence’ is absent across the language pair and translator is required to finding a relatively approximate ‘equivalent’ when matching inter-lingual correspondences is sought on the other. An ‘equivalent’ achieved or to be achieved by all means implies a ‘misleading’ statement, in particular, in relation to the controversy surrounding its’ use. The term has been employed in translation studies with the presumption that its application relates to a range of linguistic levels starting at word (the composing unit of a larger syntactic unit) right through across other levels of more complex structures of the linguistic strata; such as phrase, collocation, clause, sentence, technical term and/or any other stretches of words that go beyond word up to a full text. The problems entailed from the term’s use therefore literally result not only in ending up trying to do an impossible task, but also in questioning the validity of produced total or partial ‘equivalent’ of language 1 unit/item that is to be matched to correspond to another unit of language 2. Consequently, applying the term in translation reflects on the state of presumably existing concept in the course of carrying out an inter-lingual activity. The review also revealed the term ‘equivalence’ has been used in its general sense to relate to the transfer of a source language unit into target language unit, mainly, at the three mentioned levels of linguistic structures. The following account is focused on
revealing what problem/s of what may/may not constitute ‘equivalent’ unit from various linguistic and non-linguistic perspectives.

‘Equivalence’ term vs. concept

The term ‘equivalence’ use, so far, has fallen in the heart of translation studies, its theories, issues’ discussions and arguments. Its employment and application, which reflect on a translation concept for research and studies, have been controversial whenever discussed, argued for or suggested. Besides confusing the term’s signifying attribute, according to the literature review, this has been used variably and ambiguously on a wider scale to describe the state of matched ‘sense’ or ‘form’ of a word, ‘sentence’ and/or ‘text’ in one language as being corresponding to x ‘unit/s’ in another language interchangeably in translating as a process and translation as its product. Catford (1965) wrote ‘… the term equivalent is the central problem of translation practice.’ (1965: 21). Its’ use, however, led some researchers, at any given stage, even to express extreme views in relation to its validity as that of Svejcer (1981), who says “equivalence” ‘is one of the central issues in the theory of translation and yet one in which linguists seem to have agreed to disagree’. (1981: 321; cited in Gutt, 1991: 10). The term use, which triggered endless debates, led other researchers such as Gutt (1991) even to oppose the theoretical part of substantiating this term as a translation concept, as according to Dolitsky (1992), Gutt (1991) ‘is strongly against equivalence theories’ (cited in Dolitsky, 1992: 177). The term’s employment in translation studies has also become a case of abstruseness. It is may be fair to say in this context that the term ‘equivalence’, by all means, has created not only controversy, but also one of the most complicated issues for the theory of
translation and its studies to encounter and/or to deal with. This statement is tenable in terms of the reviewed literature. ‘Equivalence’ (as a word) has been used on a wider scale, mainly, in its two semantic properties. These are: (I) the semantic property of the word ‘equivalence’ vs. the ‘concept’ it denotes, and (ii) the contextual meaning of a ranked ‘term’. Neubert and Shreve (1992) say

‘There is no defence for linguistic equivalence’, and that ‘we are not stubbornly committed to the term equivalence.’ (1992: 142).

The same also stated

‘If scholars do not insist on definition of equivalence that imply complete identity, then equivalence can remain a valid concept in translation studies.’ (1992: 143), and ‘that equivalence can hold between constituent units of texts and not just between texts.’ (Ibid: 144).

**Implications resulting from using the term**

*Achieving or producing ‘equivalence’ in translation, definitely as a controversial issue, has implications for translation studies, in particular, in terms of relating to topics such as those of ‘translating’ vs. ‘transferring’ and the ‘translatability’ vs. ‘untranslatability’ of any linguistic and non-linguistic (cultural) items across human languages.*
One of the implications resulting from the use of the term ‘equivalence’ is the handling of the issue of ‘transference’ in translation studies. In the context of achieving or seeking to achieve ‘equivalence’ in translation Catford’s (1965) translation theory suggests the term *transference* to denote the act/process of transferring an item/unit (word or compound-unit beyond word) from ST into TT. Occasionally, transference has been extensively used in translation literature, and it is conflated in its application with the word ‘translation’. ‘Transference’ is an implantation of SL meanings into the TL text. However, in the view of other translation theorists and in the context of the ‘stages of transfer’, according to Nida & Taber (1969), this term ‘is a linguistic activity that has to do with relaying message of the SL into the TL.’ (1969: 104). When translation is not possible ‘transference’ has been suggested for application with the aim of achieving ‘equivalence’ in the TL. Catford (1965) suggests ‘transference’ … requires three linguistic activities to be carried out; those are: (I) semantic adjustments, (II) structural adjustments and (III) reduction adjustments.’ (1965: 168), where according to Newmark (1988) ‘transference’ specifically ‘applies to ‘brand names’, ‘geographical’, ‘topographical’ and ‘street names’ and ‘acronyms’’ (1988: 84 and 181- 2). Transferred items are not necessarily translated as those represent items such as ‘loan translation’ (claque), ‘names’, ‘titles’, ‘transliterated words’, ‘cultural concepts’ and ‘words’, which have no ‘equivalence’ in the target language.

Under other implications of the term ‘equivalence’ use, which also triggered pro or against stands, are the issues of translatability and untranslatability, as these have been in the focus of translation studies, its’ theory and research since studying of translation rapidly expanded some decades ago. Both concepts have been dealt with
separately, as they represent two poles or two issues contradicting each other in relation to what translation, in the absolute term’s reference, is about. The literature reviewed reveals that ‘translatability’ and ‘untranslatability’ of material (any linguistic and non-linguistic category of items/units) range in the order of relaying meaning (or other means of transference), across one language pair, from ‘everything is translatable’ to the adverse extreme about the ‘untranslatability of everything’.

Under translatability, generally speaking, it can be claimed that translation studies literature in its majority is based on the assumption that ‘translation’ is possible between or across most human languages. This statement, however, represents common sense in terms of its relevance to the discipline of translation as an approach, theory and practice. The issues of ‘translatability’, or the possibility of translating everything from one language into another have been discussed in detail based, in particular, on departing from the extreme view that there is nothing, which cannot be translated. Nevertheless, this has been challenged within the context of selected designated language pairs, and critique has been directed in its application at the various levels (linguistic, cultural) of translation. ‘Translatability’ for some researchers is always a relative term. It is about a transposition that departs from the perspectives of the linguistic world of the SL to make the journey into the opposite system (the TL). In spite of taking such stand in relation to adopting translatability, nevertheless, this is not a valid concept across all languages (especially between unrelated languages) as for example translating mathematics from one of the European languages into the Hopi language, as this latest has no words for digits in its system.
At the text level vs. word, according to Neubert and Shreve (1992), experienced translators and translation scholars corroborate the fact, that ‘translatability is possible only on textual grounds.’ (1992: 147). In the same context the review, nevertheless, revealed the concept ‘translatability’ has been discussed in its general application to undesignated languages, but this hasn’t been conclusively related to the concept of ‘equivalence’ as compared with that of ‘transference’.

The adverse concept ‘untranslatability’, as a translation issue, attracted more attention and research than its adverse concept. Translation theorists and researchers have pursued the issue of ‘untranslatability’ to question whether translation in its absolute concept and understanding is anywhere near being possible to be carried out, and the literature reveals conflicting stands on the possibility of doing translation in the first place. Due to an apparent confusion amongst some researchers in regard to possibly doing translation, ‘untranslatability’ has been brought to the fore in terms of claiming the concept’s legitimacy for research purposes. There is, however, a general consensus amongst most translation researchers, which says that due to the different systems of human languages, ‘untranslatability’ in the end is an issue of translating obstacles to be faced with. On the basis of this statement ‘untranslatability’ as a concept, brought the use of the term ‘equivalence’ to the fore for debating purposes. Untranslatability covers in its general application ‘linguistic untranslatability’, ‘textual untranslatability’ and ‘cultural untranslatability’, and the literature reviewed reveals ‘untranslatability’ has been linked in most cases to the cultural component (undesignated language unit) vs. the linguistic component (within contrastive linguistics). In translation studies the term ‘untranslatability’ has been commonly used to denote the ‘impossibility’ of translating cultural words/terms that have/have not
corresponding units (concepts) in the target language. In the context of ‘cultural untranslatability’, according to Catford (1965), it says ‘untranslatability’ arises

‘when a situational feature, functionally relevant for the SL text, is completely absent from the culture of which the TL is a part’ (1965: 99).

Furthermore, in the same context, the review also reveals arguments were directed at resorting to ‘transliteration’ when ‘untranslatability’ occurs. Due to difficulties that may arise when transferring linguistic/cultural aspects and semantic elements across languages takes place, and an overlap in application of ‘untranslatability’ and ‘transliteration’ is therefore likely to happen. In the end, it is about arguing for or against the linguistic designation of a language pair that has the potential to demonstrate possibly corresponding ground for total/partial matching of items (linguistic as well as cultural).

**General approaches to the use of the term ‘equivalence’**

The dilemma of translation, so far, has been manifested in working towards achieving ‘equivalence’ at various linguistic/non-linguistic structural levels and aspects, and this has resulted in producing a trail of positive as well as negative arguments postulating claims of contribution towards the development of various trends to be pursued for studying translation based on using the term ‘equivalence’. Such trends, which claim endeavoring towards the expansion of translation studies, mainly, are focused on explaining and understanding the translating process and its product phenomena. In the context of chronologically demonstrating how it came about to suggest
approaching ‘equivalence’ (term and concept or term vs. concept) Cauer (1896) spoke of ‘equivalence’ or ‘equivalent effect principle’ (Cauer 1896; cited in Farghal, 1991: 138). Nida (1964) and Catford (1965) formulated the notion about what a unit of language for transfer means for translation, and what may correspond to an ‘equaling unit’ in the target language to be translated into. Nida’s (1964) concept of ‘equivalence’ is not ‘about a state of correspondence between identical situations in the SL and TL, but the result of reduced to deep structures or kernels…’ (Cited in Farghal, 1991: 138). Nida arrived at what he calls ‘dynamic equivalence’, which, mainly, means a special attention is paid to the transfer of word and sentence, where for Catford (1965)

‘a formal correspondence is any TL category which may be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the ‘same’ place in the economy of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL.’ (1965: 32).

Komissarov (1977) shifted the debate on the validity of the term ‘equivalence’ away from its focus on linguistic aspects by sharply relating to its communicative function, intention and situation. We find by this latest theorist ‘translation equivalence’ is achievable if ‘Equivalence can be established only at the level of the general message …’ (Komissarov 1977; cited in Fawcett; 1997: 61-2). Broek (1978), by drifting from focusing on the linguistic aspect of the term ‘equivalence’, nevertheless, derailed the debate further away from its original focus, in particular, in the general employment of the term, and argued in favor of focusing on a suggested hierarchical classification of what ‘equivalence’ may constitute. An ‘equivalence’, according to this researcher,
'can be achieved on three levels; 'namely: form, meaning and situation’ [and] ‘an equivalence’ is to be achieved if the three aspects of ‘the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic’ elements of a “unit” of the SL can match their corresponding elements in the TL’ (Broek, 1978; cited in Fawcett; 1997: 61).

‘Equivalence’ at the word level

The issues of achieving ‘equivalence’ at the word level have been discussed by Nida & Taber (1969), it says

‘the response in the receptor language can never be identical as of the source language for the cultural and historical settings are too different, but there should be a high degree of equivalence of response, …’ (1969: 24).

In the target language, according to the same source, the receptor’s comprehension is the determining factor when it comes to an expressive and imperative response. The response of the receptor (the dynamic equivalence) ‘is substantially equivalent to the response of the original receptor’ (Ibid: 27-28). For other researchers ‘equivalence’ at the word level, however, is associated with experience. Amongst the representatives of this notion are de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) who introduced the term ‘equivalence of experience’ (1981: 261). Newmark (1995) differentiates between ‘cultural equivalence’ and ‘non-cultural equivalence’ by saying the

‘parameter for cultural equivalence is: (a) the existence of shared components of culture … (b) the dynamic presence of the translator… and (c) the non-cultural truth …’ (1995: 49).

Fawcett (1997) also discussed the issues of ‘equivalence’ at the word level through the semantic approach, and adopts Koller’s (1979) five frames of reference, which are:
'(1) Denotation meaning (called referential meaning), (2) Connotation meaning, … (3) Textual norms … (4) Pragmatic meaning (reader expectations), and (5) Linguistic form (rhyme, rhythm, metaphor …’ (1979: 188-89; cited in Fawcett, 1997: 53).

‘Equivalence’ at the sentence level

Translation researchers discussed the issues of the concept of ‘equivalence’ at a level, which goes beyond word as a unit but lesser than text. This is meant where ‘sentence’ (including other units such as phrase and clause) is considered relevant. Amongst those is Catford (1965) who spoke of ‘sentence equivalence’, and found ‘translation equivalence can nearly always be established at sentence-rank’ (1965: 70). Newmark (1988) finds the issue of ‘equivalence’ beyond word level is relevant to the concept of ‘collocation’ (1988: 50-3), where Reiss (1989) correlates sentence-for-sentence translation with equivalence on the sentence level (1989: 113 and 115). Hatim & Mason (1991) are of the view that achieving an ‘equivalence’ in ‘translation’ ‘each sentence needs to be treated in isolation.’(1991:76), where Neubert and Shreve (1992) are of a different view as that ‘equivalence’ at the sentence level is possible at its linguistic surface. (1992: 144-5).

‘Equivalence’ at the text level

At this level theorists found in using the concept of ‘equivalence’ and its application in translation a problem, which goes beyond the linguistic aspects of the term. Jakobson’s (1959) ‘equivalence’ [communicative and textual] [is about]
‘… the relationship between a source language text and the corresponding target language text [which] is not fully symmetrical and reversible’ … [and that] ‘… back-translation provides overwhelming evidence that language and meaning are culture-specific.’ (Jacobson, 1959; cited in Jacobsen, 1993:162).

In the context of applying ‘equivalence at the text level’ the review also revealed that this is even more complex than those of lower level (Neubert, 1986: 89). The same researcher also establishes ‘a hierarchy of different kinds of equivalence’, and ‘argues that the text as a whole influences grammatical-lexical choice and thus relativises equivalents on the lower level’ (1986: 89, cited in Gutknecht, 1996: 297-8). Neubert (1989) also ‘distinguishes between pragmatic and textual equivalence’ (1989: 154, cited in Gutknecht, 1996: 297-8). However, according to Neubert and Shreve (1992), it says

‘Most criticisms of equivalence stem from a narrow linguistic and lexical interpretation of equivalence. It is clear that L1 words and L2 words are almost never equivalent in meaning.’ (1992: 142).

The last mentioned notion about interpreting ‘equivalence’, by all means, seems untenable, in particular, when it comes to reflecting on a concept of equivalence that may never exist even across related languages (more detail to follow in the conclusions), and this view albeit complicates further explaining ‘equivalence’ from a wider perspective. Thus, in the view of Neubert and Shreve (1992) ‘Equivalence is a

The inter-changeability of ‘translation’ and its source text, according to Jakobsen (1993), is no-test of translational equivalence, and equivalence cannot be defined in terms of it’ (1993: 161-2), where Malmkjaer (2005) departs in her definition of ‘equivalence’ at the text level from the empirical approach to tackle its issues. She finds

‘scholars are freed from the need constantly to deliberate about the degree of equivalence – never the total equivalence required of course …’ (2005:15)

Proponents of the term use support using it for pragmatic and semantic property objectives, and claim pragmatic ‘equivalence’ can be achieved between texts, and ‘textual equivalence’ is the ‘cohesion of a text’.

**Discussion & Conclusions**

The above detailed account should by now have revealed the seriousness of the problems associated with using the term ‘equivalence’ and the struggle to relate to a presumed existing concept for doing and studying translation purposes. On the basis of the aforementioned statement (resulting from the review), it can be claimed that this term has been employed to refer to a ‘translation concept’, which universally presumes reflecting on the possibility of ‘matching’ items (open to all categories and
units) assuming achieving an ‘equivalent’/near-equivalent’ effect across any language pair to become involved in translating process. Researchers and theorists studied in detail most aspects of this ‘concept’, applied and employed the term it encodes to resolve inter-lingual correspondences in the process of translating and to achieve the matching of items with the objective borne to write TT for the ST in focus. The mentioned arguments set the background to suggest an alternative concept vs. term that is ‘counterpart’ (to follow) when translating is to be carried out. It has been already mentioned that ‘equivalence’ (representing a controversial translation concept) is a goal to be achieved rather than assuming endeavouring to accept the term for its ‘semantic’ reference only. As a result of the review it has been also revealed that occasionally the term has been linked to ‘translation’ concurrently to its both aspects (the translating process/s and its end product the TT). The following example about using/abandoning the concept of ‘equivalence’ demonstrates how such struggle is manifested in terms of relating to the use of a term when translator tries to search or find an ‘equivalent’ in the TL that may correspond to whatever linguistic/cultural item of the ST in focus.

Gutknecht and Rölle (1996) spoke of “zero-equivalence” in the context of ‘translating by factors’. The researchers mentioned discuss its use, in particular, in the context of translating linguistic items, mainly modals (from English into German) or other units that go beyond word but lesser stretches than a ‘text’. It says:

‘Other cases of zero-to-one or one-to-zero correspondence are linguistic in nature. Remember the following pair of sentences:

[89] Can you play tennis? Yes, I can/No, I can’t.
As the result of elliptical partial change factors, the second part of (90) is an extreme case of zero equivalence to a whole clause (albeit a short one). In other renditions at least the subject is retained.

(789) Can anyone of you play tennis? Yes, I can.


Note that Yes, I can in both (89) and (789). In the latter sentence I is main element of the answer. The corresponding pronoun ich in (790) serving the same purpose cannot be omitted. As regards the verbal aspect, the answers in (90) and (790) share a ‘zero for verb group.’ In other examples at least the full verb is retained:

[624] I can see two ships.


My reading into this quotation (in the context of using the term ‘equivalence’ vs. presumed concept it encodes) leads me to suggest the followings:

1. A presumption of an existing ‘equivalence’ as a concept as a departing point to translate between English and German reflects on providing the correspondence unit of [89] as [90]; this led both researchers to resort to using/suggesting ‘zero-equivalence’.

2. The English sentences were translated into the TL (German) based on what their ‘equivalent’ or ‘non-equivalent’ can/cannot be provided. Those translations, in the end, reflect on the linguistic independence of each system (language) rather than being formulated or abiding by what the ST
requirements determining the translator’s selection of ‘equivalent’ in the TL; as for the researchers mentioned expressing what is meant by the German sentences vs. their English counterparts (it is implied but not spelled out) should be in focus.

3. The German translations provided for the English sentences mean ‘no-equivalence’ is possible to be provided; this is described with “zero-equivalence”.

4. Thus, reading into the mentioned quotation is also marked by confusing suggested corresponding German ‘equivalents’ vs. the English sentences provided, where in actual terms no ‘equivalent’ has been delivered, but a case of German sentences that are matched to their English “equivalents” (in the view of the researchers) as being (in my view) in the state of counterpart to each other.

The two researchers, who found themselves confined to using a term that doesn’t reflect on the concept it encodes, have realized in the absence of a recognized alternative that the mentioned translations cannot be done without having to resort to suggest ‘zero-equivalence’ a leeway to resolve the impasse they have encountered. Such impasse the two researchers have experienced, at the same time, means that the used term doesn’t serve their purpose for explaining that matching inter-lingual correspondences represents an unresolved matter, and explaining matching between English and German (two related languages) cannot be resolved otherwise.

In the light of what already has been stated or argued about, I may suggest the term’s application and employment at all levels (word and stretches beyond word) of its
introduction (including ‘pragmatic’ and/or ‘textual equivalence’) always have triggered unresolved serious problems. Consequently, this may suggest the term has been heavily used in translation studies (open to speculations), and its concept issues have become more and more a pressing subject that needs to be addressed in its totality. A working alternative (as a concept vs. term in its referential meaning or vice versa) thus needs urgently importunateness than ever before. Suggesting an alternative first requires being distinguished between ‘equivalence’ as a ‘term’ or ‘concept’. Concurrently, researchers in some cases also confused both aspects of the term’s application and employment (through translating from L1 into L2) vs. concept when debating the status and relevance to ‘translation’ at any point in time.

The review revealed that discussing the term vs. the concept it denotes has centred on the two major fields of the translation discipline; namely the linguistic use (or linguistic aspects) and relevance within the context of contrastive linguistics. It has been also revealed the application of the term to its both mentioned aspects has been mainly confined to a general approach to the linguistic use, where designation hasn’t been made conspicuously enough to demonstrate how relevant it is to the concept (in terms of translating from ST in TT) it encodes. This statement is detailed in the points to follow. Most researchers and theorists, nevertheless, agree on the associated and existing problems of the term’s application and employment. Those are identified as three categories, which are:

1. The application of the term doesn’t lead to a possible description (literally) or refer to a state of matched corresponding unit/s that in actual terms cannot be matched (totally or partially) across any language pair or more.
2. Some researchers acknowledge the fact that there is no absolute ‘equivalence’ to match corresponding units/categories across any language pair (albeit amongst related languages).

3. In the absence of a suggested convincing alternative term, researchers and translation studies theorists were not bothered to continue using the term, which presumably representing a concept that is not overtly applicable and employable in its translation absolute reference, but in the term’s relative semantic property.

In relation to the aforementioned third point the review revealed that under ‘equivalence probability’ measurement has been left hypothetical, and when ‘equivalence’ is discussed at the three levels of ‘form’, ‘meaning’ and ‘situation’ and the ‘equivalence’ of a ‘unit’ that goes beyond word but smaller than a sentence, no designated language pair has been made relevant for matching purposes. In the context of achieving ‘equivalence’ at the levels of ‘form’ and ‘meaning’ of a unit beyond word, the following example is to test the term ‘equivalence’ use vs. the concept it denotes. This is about the English phrase breaking news (noun and adjective) and the suggested matching to the widely Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) used phrases/sentences

1 خبر عاجل
   1 khabar  ‘aajel

or

2 خبر جاء للتو
   2 khabar jaa?a liltaw

or
آ خر الأ خبار 3
3 aakhir al?akhbaar

or

آ حدث الأ خبار الواصلة 4
4 ?aHdath al?akhbaar alwaaSilah

as its equivalents. The translation mentioned can never function the ‘equivalence’ as a result of using the term nor for the concept it denotes. This example highlights the seriousness of questioning continuing using the term ‘equivalence’ to reflect on the translation concept considered manifesting the state of being ‘equivalent’.

Based on the aforementioned discussion and arguments (resulting from assessing the literature reviewed) it should have become plausibly enough that the issues of using the term has triggered not only endless debates and arguments in translation studies research, translation theories’ assessments, articles, books and essays (mainly published in English) but also a serious problem for continuing carrying out translation as a trans-lingual activity. Translation researchers’ objectives, which have been demonstrated either explicitly or implicitly in relation to what stand is pro or against the term’s use, generally, are to be defined as consenting to that debating and/or criticising the term has to proceed on the basis of its discussion at the stage of reading the ST, ‘translating/transferring’ its items/units’ and at formulating/writing the equivalent in the TL. The applicability of the term to the concept it assumes denoting to units beyond sentence (this mainly relates to the ‘communicative’ and ‘textual equivalence’) again is untenable, as this constitutes another problem that needs strong persuasive arguments. All those problems have been overtly spelled out
in discussing the ‘text equivalence’-concept as ‘in the context of achieving ST and TT ‘equivalence compromise’ (Di Biase, 1987: 55). Suggesting ‘equivalence’ as a concept relevant to translation across all languages that are contrasting each other experiences is also a universal claim the current research has not satisfied and fell short of coming up with the needed convincing arguments that can be relevant to translating at any point in time. The debate about the validity or invalidity of the term use led its’ opponents to search for a widely acceptable alternative to be suggested. According to Jakobsen (1993),

‘Reiss [1989] introduced adequacy (‘Adäquatheit’) instead of ‘equivalence’ (Äquivalenz’) as the general criterion for translations in order to make theoretical allowance for textual changes in translation which are due to cultural differences…’ (Cited in Jakobsen, 1993: 162-3).

In the context of a presumed existing equivalence or in the event of existing more equivalence Reiss (1989) suggests to resort to ‘adaptation’. Hatim and Mason (1991: 8) also suggest the term ‘adequacy’ to substitute ‘equivalence’. Gutknecht (1996: 294) also finds the term adequacy an alternative term vs. the concept it encodes. Critique directed at this alternative ‘relates ‘adequacy’ to a general concept, where, according to Jakobsen (1993),

‘‘equivalence’ is a special case of ‘adequacy’… there is full semantic, pragmatic and cultural adequacy in the context of a communicative text’ (1993: 159).
In the context of translation for specific purpose, adaptation has been suggested as another alternative to substitute the concept ‘equivalence’ (Gutknecht, 1996: 294). Other researchers introduced ‘pragmatic equivalence’ and ‘semantic equivalence’ to be used within the socio-linguistic approach to study and analyse translation. The relatedness of the concept ‘pragmatic equivalence’ has been very controversial in its application. The same also applies to achieving ‘semantic equivalence’ at the word and morpheme levels. Thus, a suggested ‘no-equivalence’ at the semantic level appeared to function as an achievable or workable term, which in turn dictates what departing points can make ‘semantic relatedness’ an ‘equivalence’. Consequently, the ‘no-equivalence’-concept has been made relevant to achieving ‘cultural equivalence’ and/or ‘no-cultural equivalence’. On the basis of arguing pro or against the suggested alternatives mentioned, it seems that the following suggestion and arguments in the current translation research situation are more persuasive, and the main driving force behind the following alternative is the neutrality of the term to be suggested and the concept it denotes.

**Alternative term to substitute the concept/no concept of ‘equivalence’**

Based on departing from the arguments already brought in this paper, it seems that besides the mentioned problems the major relevant serious one, however, concerns translating from L1 into L2 in relation to the perceived concept’s referential implications it encodes. The following suggested alternative term/concept is to clear the activity of carrying out translating/transferring of items (linguistic, cultural) from any anticipated conflation of a **concept** with a **term**, as is the case of ‘equivalence’ in use.
**Counterpart** is to be suggested as an alternative **term** encoding the **concept** of inter-lingual matching correspondences to substitute *equivalence* when translating from ST into TT takes place. The suggested alternative semantic neutral reference denotes a concept that might exist across more than one language pair. It is about a term that linguistically and semantically works when considering matching items at the stage of translating as an inter-lingual activity in focus. It also implies or denotes the concept of being ‘simile’, ‘resembling closely’ and/or ‘functioning’ in a state of sameness at the various linguistic/semantic and textual levels, and reflects on producing/generating textual function if this turns to be a counterpart at the various levels of textual components such as word, sentence and up to text; and also at the communicative and discourse levels as well. At the stage when an already produced TT is to be compared, studied and/or analyzed with its corresponding ST the neutrality of the suggested concept (as being in the state of counterpart of ST vs. TT), nevertheless, this doesn’t confuse matched correspondences of ST and TT being ‘simile’ in ‘context’ or ‘situation’ but not necessarily being ‘equivalent’. It is always likely, when translating from SL into TL, to allow saying things in the TL that constitutes counterpart to what is been said/written in the SL, and this refers matched corresponding items of language pair as being specific at any point in time and it excludes perceived general orientation or universal application and employment.
References


Summary

The term ‘equivalence’ has been employed in translation studies literature to denote a ‘translation concept’ that has been challenged for the objective of finding equivalent, coined new word and/or concept when translating at any point in time, and the arguments on the validity of the mentioned term (denoting the state of being ‘equivalent’) range; according to the reviewed literature; from achieving communicatively effective translation ‘equivalence’ on the one hand or virtually the abandonment of the ‘concept of equivalence’ on the other. Nevertheless, there is general consensus amongst most translation researchers, which says the term ‘equivalence’ is a goal to be achieved rather than keeping searching for its’ achievement at any designated level at any point in time. Achieving or producing ‘equivalence’ in translation, definitely as a controversial issue, has implications for translation studies, in particular, in terms of relating to topics such as those of ‘translating’ vs. ‘transferring’ and the ‘translatability’ vs. ‘untranslatability’ of any linguistic and non-linguistic (cultural) items across human languages. The literature review revealed discussing the term vs. the concept it denotes has centred on the linguistic use (or linguistic aspects) and the relevance within the context of contrastive linguistics. **Counterpart** is to be suggested to substitute *equivalence* when translating from ST into TT takes place. This alternative term encodes the concept of inter-lingual matching correspondences, as it embodies semantic neutral reference denoting a concept that might exist across more than one language pair. It is always likely, therefore, when translating from SL into TL, to allow saying things in the TL that might constitute the counterpart to what is been said/written in the SL.
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