



TEXTUAL PRAGMATICS AND EQUIVALENCE

By:

Donald J. Nababan S.S., M.Hum

TRANSLATION PROPERLY DEFINED

- Koller : what he takes to be translation:

Between the resultant text in L2 (the TL text) and the ST in L1 (the SL text) there exists a relationship which can be designated as a translational, or equivalence, relation.
(1995:196)

- ‘**translational**’ (or ‘translatory’) → ‘strictly pertaining to translation’ (as opposed to original writing)
- & by **equivalence** relation: different from ‘deriving texts’ in summaries or ‘explaining’ in a dictionary entry.
- A great deal to: differences in linguistic code, cultural values, the ‘world’ and how it is perceived, **style** and aesthetics, etc.



LANGUE- ORIENTED VS PAROLE-ORIENTED EQUIVALENCE

- **equivalence** : the narrowly quantitative approach vs the open-ended text-and-beyond view.
- – Koller (1979) maintains a distinction between formal similarity at the level of virtual language systems (*langue*), and **equivalence** relations obtaining between texts in real time at the actual level of *parole*.



- **Textual equivalence** → not between the languages themselves at the level of the linguistic system but between real texts at the level of text in context.
- **One way** : to define **equivalence** .

- Translation approaches informed by **pragmatics**: **dynamic** view of **equivalence**,
- SO the model of **equivalence** by Koller is variable and for relationships between comparable elements in the SL and TL.



EXAMPLE

I had wanted for years to get Mrs Thatcher in front of my camera.
As she got more powerful she got sort of sexier.
(*Newsweek 21 May 2001 [bold in original]*)

1. the ultimate *formal Equivalence* : where a *SL form is strictly replaced by an identical TL form*.

e.g., *strategy, bureaucracy* → Arabic *stratiijiyya, biirokratiyya*).

BUT in the case of *sexy*, we have to move up one level in the **equivalence hierarchy**,

e.g., ‘sex–sexy’ highlighted.



2. THEN, the next level is *referential or denotative equivalence* →

SL form is replaced by a TL form that basically refers to the same ‘thing’

3. A denotative may (in the case of Arabic) convey something like ‘pornographic’.

→ we should seek **equivalence** at the next higher level of ‘similarity of association’ →

connotative equivalence,

sexy → ‘attractiveness’.



5. 'attractiveness' : physical term 'gravity' that are too 'direct' and 'scientific' for this context. → we should seek **equivalence at the higher level of textual context** and aim for so-called *text-normative equivalence*.

6. Contexts of use and the effect on the TT reader are close to that experienced by the ST reader. To achieve : by *pragmatic* or *dynamic equivalence*.



DECISION MAKING

- Jir'i Levy' (1967) defined in terms of moves as
- in a game of chess, and choices to make from several alternatives.
- In doing any kind of translation, there will always be a 'problem', and a number of possible 'solutions'. At every stage of the translation **process, choices are made, and these obviously** influence subsequent choices



WHAT MOTIVATES TRANSLATOR DECISION- MAKING

- Aesthetic
- Cognition and knowledge
- Commission



TEXTUAL PRAGMATIC

- Linguist and translation theorist Robert de Beaugrande sees equivalence relations in terms of the translation generally being ‘a valid representative of the original in the communicative act in question’ (1978:88).



- Example:

NEWSWEEK: It is a bid [sic] odd, *isn't it, that a journalist who was held captive by the Taliban would, several months later, be converting to Islam?*

RIDLEY: I know, *you couldn't make it up. It is strange.*

