UNIT 4 — II M.A., (ENGLISH)

TRANSLATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

SECTION A :

1. Define the Sociolinguistic Approach?
2. What are the types of Equivalences?
3. Define Untranslatability?
4. What are the problems of Equivalences in Translation?

SECTION B

1. Differentiate Formal Equivalence and dynamic equivalence?
2. Elaborate on Main Approaches of translation Theory?

SECTION C :

1. Write a detailed account on Fidelity versus transparency?
2. Explain in detail the problems of Untranslatability?

Main Approaches of Translation Theory

There are six main approaches within contemporary translation theory: the sociolinguistic approach, the communicative approach, the hermeneutic approach, the linguistic approach, the literary approach, and the semiotic approach.

1. The Sociolinguistic Approach

According to the sociolinguistic approach to translation, the social context defines what is and is not translatable and what is or is not acceptable through selection, filtering and even censorship. According to this perspective, a translator is inevitably the product of his or her society: our own sociocultural background is present in everything we translate. This approach is associated with the School of Tel Aviv and figures such as Annie Brisset, Even Zohar and Guideon Toury.

2. The Communicative Approach

This perspective is referred to as interpretive. Researchers like D. Seleskovitch and M. Lederer developed what they called the "theory of sense," mainly based on the experience of conference interpreting. According to this perspective, meaning must be translated, not language. Language is nothing more than a vehicle for the message and can even be an obstacle to understanding. This explains why it is always better to de-verbalize (instead of transcoding) when we translate.

3. The Hermeneutic Approach

The hermeneutic approach is mainly based on the work of George Steiner, who believes that any human communication is a translation. In his book After Babel he explains that translation is not a science but an "exact art": a true translator should be capable of becoming a writer in order to capture what the author of the original text "means to say."

4. The Linguistic Approach

Linguists like Vinay, Darbelnet, Austin, Vegliante, and Mounin, interested in language text, structuralism, and pragmatics, also examined the process of translating. According to this perspective, any translation (whether it's a marketing translation, a medical translation, a legal translation or another type of text) should be considered from the point of view of its fundamental units; that is, the word, the syntagm and the sentence.

5. The Literary Approach

According to the literary approach, a translation should not be considered a linguistic endeavor but a literary one. Language has an "energy": this is manifested through words, which are the result of experiencing a culture. This charge is what gives it strength and ultimately, meaning: this is what the translation-writer should translate.

6. The Semiotic Approach

Semiotics is the science that studies signs and signification. Accordingly, in order for there to be meaning there must be collaboration between a sign, an object and an interpreter. Thus, from the perspective of semiotics, translation is thought of as a way of interpreting texts in which encyclopedic content varies and each sociocultural context is unique.

Problems of Equivalences in Translation

While translating a text, it is always felt that no two languages are identical either in meanings given to the corresponding symbols or in the way in which such symbols are arranged in phrases and structures. Since there can be an absolute correspondence between two languages there can be no fully exact translations. Hence there is always a problem of equivalence in translations.

Types of Equivalences:

There are different types of translations of which some translations aim at close, formal and semantic correspondences. Since there are no identical equivalents the translator has to find the closeout possible equivalent. There are different types of equivalents according to different Translation theorists.

Popovic distinguishes four types of equivalences in translation. They are:

(1) Linguistic equivalence where there is homogeneity on the linguistic level of both source language (SL) and the Target language (TL) texts. It is used in word for word translation.

(2) Paradigmatic Equivalence, where there is equivalence of the elements of a paradigmatic expressive axis (This refers to the elements of grammar, which Popovic sees as being a higher category than lexical equivalence).

(3) Stylistic Equivalence, also called (translational equivalence), where there is functional equivalence of element both as original and translations aiming at an expressive identity with an invariant of identical meaning.

(4) Textual or Syntagmatic Equivalence - Where there is equivalence of the syntagmatic structuring of a text. This refers to the equivalence of form and shape (feel rhythm)

Translation involves far more than the replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages and, as can be seen in the translations of idioms and metaphors. The process may involve discarding the basic linguistic elements of the SL text so as to achieve Popovic's goal of expressive identity between the SL and TL texts.

Eugene Nida distinguishes two types of Translation Equivalences – they are Formal Equivalence and Dynamic Equivalence.

i) Formal Equivalence is source - oriented. It attempts to reproduce several formal elements like grammatical units. This type of equivalence demands accuracy and correctness. Poetry is translated as poetry; a sentence as a sentence and all the phrases in the SL text are kept intact. Also even the formal indicators such as punctuation, paragraphs etc are preserved in this type of equivalence. Nida calls this "gloss translation". This type of correspondence allows the readers to understand as much of the SL Text as possible. For example, a phrase such as "Holy Kiss", as used in the Bible (Romans 6:18) would be translated literally and supplemented with a footnote explaining that this was a customary method of greeting in the New Testament Times. (Nida finds fault with J.B. Phillips's rendering of the same phrase "greeting with a holy kiss" as "give one another a hearty handshake all round. It is inadequate translation in poor taste).

It is admitted in a formal equivalence translation (F.E.T) to make use of brackets, parenthesis, etc for words added to make sense in translation. Footnotes and marginal notes are used not only to explain some of the formal features but also to make intelligible some of the formal equivalence employed. To find formal equivalent for everything is impossible. For example, (puns) instances of assonances, alliterations, consonances, idioms (defy) equivalent rendering.

ii) In contrast to the Formal Equivalence, Dynamic quivalence is based on the principle of 'equivalent effect'. Equivalent may be defined as the closest natural equivalent) the SL, messages. It is concerned with the bilingual and icultural aspects. The effect that the TL readers experience nust be the same as the effect experienced by the original SL readers). It aims at complete naturalness of expression. E.V. Rich's deliberate .c .on to translate Homer into English prose may be cited as a good example; because the story of Homer n prose produces the same effect on the modern readers as Homers poetry produced on the ancient Greek readers.

As Dynamic Equivalence Translation is based on equivalence of response rather than equivalence of form, it is mportant to define the implication of the word 'natural'. The natural rendering of DE translation must fit into three areas of he communication process - namely,

a) The receptor language and culture as a whole

b) The context of the particular message.

c) The receptor language audience.

A natural translation involves two principal areas of adaptation:

(a) grammar and (b) lexicon

The grammatical modifications can be made readily since many of them are directed by the obligatory structure of the Receptor language, but the lexical structure of the source

message is less readily adjusted to the semantic requirement of the Receptor language. There are three lexical levels to be considered. They are:

a) Terms for which there are readily available parallels (e.g. river, stone, knife, etc)

b) Terms which identify culturally different objects with somewhat similar functions (e.g. 'book' in which the pages are bound together but in the original Bible it meant a long papyrus sheet rolled together in the form of a scroll)

c) Terms which identify cultural specialties (e.g. Synagogue, Houses, Cherubim, etc)

The first set of terms involves no problems as that of the second; hence one must use another term which reflects the form of the referent. In translating terms of the third set, certain foreign associations can rarely be avoided, for these expressions are deeply embedded in the very thought and structure of the language (SL)

There are four principal means of dealing with problems arising out of conflicts between formal and functional equivalents.

a) One may place a term for the formal equivalent in the text of the translation and describe the function in a footnote.

b) One may place the functional equivalent in the text, with or without identifying the formal referent in the margin.

c) One may use a borrowed term with or without descriptive classifiers

d) One may use the descriptive expressions employing only words of the Receptor language.

To sum up, the process by which one determines the equivalences between source and target language is obviously a highly complex one. However, it may be reduced to two quite simple procedures such as:

a) the decomposition of the message into the simplest semantic structure (componential analysis) and

b) the recomposition of the message into the Receptor Language in the suitable form.