



Research Paper

Achieving Correspondence and/or Equivalence in Translation, An Evaluation of the Translation Ekwensi's *Burning Grass* into French as *La Brousse ardente* by Françoise Balogun

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ABSTRACTS

This paper is titled *Achieving Correspondence and/or Equivalence in Translation, An Evaluation of the Translation Ekwensi's Burning Grass into French as La Brousse ardente* by Françoise Balogun attempts to explore challenges faced by translators and efforts made to achieve correspondence in meaning which is the ultimate goal of translation. The concept of correspondence and/or equivalence has been a complex issue among translation experts and theorists due to the cultural dimension involved in the languages involved (source language and target language). The researchers observed that obstacles like equivalence, wording and cultural elements presented difficulties. However, the translator applied qualitative and comparative approaches to critically arrive at an acceptable correspondence and/or equivalence. Theories of Nida, Vinay and Darbelnet, Pym and Hickerson came into play as what correspondence and equivalence are or represent. Finally, the authors observed that the translator tried as much as possible to achieve assumed equivalence which can only be possible since each language sees things differently.

KEYWORDS: culture, correspondence, equivalence, cultural shift, assumed equivalence

Received 26 April, 2021; Revised: 08 May, 2021; Accepted 10 May, 2021 © The author(s) 2021.
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I. INTRODUCTION - EXPLAINING THE CONCEPT OF TRANSLATION

A clear picture of the term “correspondence and/or equivalence” cannot be capture without an explanation of the concept of translation. Zona, (2008:10) states that translation could not have developed without culture. Also, “culture could not have developed without translation, since translations enrich nations with the cultural values of other nations”. For Yakasai et al, (2004):

Translation helps in bringing to the speaker or reader of one language, those things that one can see on paper, those ideas scripted in books, those projections, those strategies that can make a nation develop, but are hidden from one because one cannot read or comprehend the language they are written in.

In other words, translation explores hidden knowledge through language and its culture. No wonder Literature, Science and Philosophy influence translators.

For Lokman, (2017:15):

Translation should achieve the aim of the source text writer and on the other hand, it should function by serving to the determined aim established in accordance with the target world's cultural properties. While functioning in this direction a new text should be produced in such a way that it should create the same effect in the target language.

In effect what he says is that a translation should be at establishing world's cultural properties through a new text which should create the same effect in the target language (henceforth, TL). This let of agreement or harmonization of the source text and the target text refers to correspondence and/or equivalence or.

The Concept of correspondence and/or equivalence

Most translation theorists and even practitioners agree that the goal of translation is equivalence and equivalence is most times referred to as correspondence. However, it is believed that perfect correspondence can be achieved between a source text and a target text. While most translation theorists accept that the two notions are the same, Lederer (2014:45) tries to explain the little difference. For her, the basic difference between equivalence and correspondence is this: “equivalence exists between texts while correspondences between linguistic elements, words, syntagms, set expressions or syntactic forms within the text”. For her, “equivalence is an original correspondence and it is the general mode of translation”.

This scenario can be traced from the debate around the 1950’s and 1960’s which focused on literal translation and liberal translation giving rise to primacy to systematic analysis of translation depending on the linguistic components. We are of the opinion that despite the slight differences in the analysis of correspondence and equivalence, equivalence is the goal of translation irrespective of correspondences between words or expression either evoked out of context or employed within the text.

Theoretical Approaches towards Correspondence and/or Equivalence

Vinay and Darbelnet’s *Stylistique Comparée du Français et de l’Anglais* (1958) translated as *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology of Translation*, (1995), a comparative approach between the French language and the English language. Here, they applied the Cultural shift and equivalence oriented translation. To achieve what they referred to as “the result of which replicates the same situation as in the original whilst using completely different wording”. In other words, if this procedure is applied during the process of translation, it will maintain achieve the stylistic impact of the source language text (SLT) in the target language text (TLT). They presented seven translation procedures which they categorized into two (direct and indirect techniques). The first classification is the direct procedures which include borrowing, calque and literal translation. Borrowing is when the source language (henceforth, SL) word is transferred directly to the TL. Calque as a procedure is referred to a special kind of borrowing where the SL expression or structure is transferred in a literal manner. The literal translation itself is a word for word translation which is most common between languages of the same family and culture as in English and French languages.

The second classification is referred to as oblique or indirect procedures include transposition, modulation, equivalent and adaptation. Transposition involves the change of a part of speech for another without changing the sense or meaning. Modulation involves the change of the semantic point of view of the SL. The technique is applied when a literal translation or even transposition seems grammatically correct but limits the genius of the TL. Equivalence implies the representation of the same situation in the TL using different stylistic structures. For example, merci (French) thank you, you are welcome (English). Adaptation is a technique used when the SL situation does not exist in the TL allowing the transfer to create another equivalent situation like in proverbs.

Therefore, a translator is free to choose from either the direct techniques or indirect ones because of the structural or metalinguistic differences in languages. Certain stylistic effects that cannot be transposed into the TL need the upsetting of the syntactic order or even the lexis of the SL. Nida (1964, 1969, 2001) realized the problem of equivalence. This can be seen in his famous works like *Context in Translating* (2001), *Towards a Science of Translating* (1964) and *The Theory and Practice of Translation* which he co-authored with Taber (1969) Nida, (2001) attempted a scientific analysis of problems related to translation. Gentzler, (2010) in his work titled *Contemporary Translation Theories* argued that Nida through extensive fieldwork identified the fact that religious message is often misinterpreted due to different cultured contexts and would views. Nida persisted that meaning cannot be divorced from the personal experience and the conceptual framework of the person receiving the message.

He was influenced by Noam Chomsky’s generative transformational grammar and tries to ensure a more scientific approach to exploring the fields of translation studies. But Gentzler in his work *Contemporary Translation Theories* (2010) argued that Nida’s drew on extensive fieldwork that showed the religious message is often failed to be communicated because of different cultural contexts and world views. Thus, Nida came to understand that meaning cannot be divorced from the personal experience and the conceptual framework of the person receiving the message. Depending on Nida’s proposition, Kumdu, (2017:2) said Nida as a Protestant Bible translator insists that translator aim is to “affect the appropriate response one which will start dialogue not between the receiver and a text but between the receiver and the God”. Thus Nida explained that there can be two types of equivalence: “formal and dynamic” equivalence. For him, the entire focus in translation is on the message itself both form and content.

Formal equivalence for him supposes that a TL item represents the literal equivalent of an SL item. Here, there is a complete correspondence between two texts in terms of structure and content while dynamic equivalence represents a translation principle where a translator seeks to translate the meaning of the original

text in such a way that the TL wording will trigger the same effect or impact on the TL audience as the original wording did to the ST audience.

Dynamic equivalence is based on “the principle of equivalent effect”. Here, its SL and the target texts are not compared for correspondence and the translator is not under any obligation to reproduce the cultural underpinnings of the original text. What the translator tried to do is to reproduce the text in such a way that the TL reader can relate to a different cultural context. Despite Nida’s use of the source text and its semantic quality. He, therefore, insists that the translator must make sure that the message is clear and exact in the target text. According to Nida, “differences in translation can generally be accounted for by three basic factors in translating: the nature of the message, the purpose of the author or by proxy of the translator and the type of audience”. Therefore, achieving dynamic equivalence is geared towards achieving “equivalence and meaning correspondence”.

Pym’s view on equivalence, Anthony Pym, a professor of Translations and Intercultural Studies made his contribution towards realizing equivalence in translation. Pym (2010, 2013 and 2014) argued that “there is no such concept as perfect equivalence between languages because no two languages can be exactly the same, therefore, it is always

‘assumed equivalence’ ”. This idea is seen as revolutionary in the history of equivalence. According to him, “equivalence is a relation of “equal value” between an ST and a TT and can be established on any linguistic level from form to function. He, therefore, distinguished between what he refers to as “natural” and “directional” equivalence.

Based on his classification, “natural” equivalence supposes that the translator sees to equivalence problem, grasp the value and looks around the target language culture for the item of the same value. In other words, the translator looks for an equivalent that already exists somewhere into the language and culture is presumed to exist prior to the act of translation. While “directional” equivalence on the other hand supposes that the translator is actively going to create something new in the TL and culture which will maintain an equivalent relationship between the source culture and the target culture. In directional equivalence, there is no guarantee of return from text B to text A. This is important because it recognizes from the onset that what the translator does is not wholly determined by the ST or that the ST opens the range of opportunities within which the translator has to form action and that action is somewhere unpredictable. It only means that there are several kinds of equivalence to choose and this is what is meant by directional equivalence. These did not mean therefore the result is not equivalent. It means there are several kinds of equivalence to choose between and therefore it is called “directional equivalence”.

Other researches conducted by experts in translation theory like Chishiba, (2018), Kumdu, (2017) and Panou, (2013) made practical contributions to the equivalence concept. Panou used theories based on equivalence and evaluated theories of different theoreticians in the field of translation studies and observed the challenges faced by translators in the process of translation hence he provided possible solutions to translators.

In all, it could be argued that the theories of correspondence and/or equivalence are embedded in two forms. Those can be seen in Vinay and Darbelnet’s direct and oblique (indirect) translation. Also in Nida’s formal and dynamic equivalence and Pym’s natural and directional equivalence. The writers of this article observe that linguistically oriented translation approaches are getting weaker elude cultured oriented translation theories are gaining ground. Also, translation studies seem to divert from source text-oriented approaches to the target text paradigm. Despite its shortcomings, we observe that equivalence is still relevant to translation since it functions as a reminder of the central problems encountered by the translator especially in literary texts.

In effect, equivalence in translation refers to the degree to establish a term or a text in one language that is semantically similar to its translated counterpart. It is considered as a relationship of equivalence that is possible between the source text and the target text. Obviously, equivalence theory has not proven that a translated text has the same value as the source text in form or in function rather, it portrays a relationship of “equal value” or “sameness”. In other words, the equivalence theory does not necessarily imply the equivalence of text in form and expression. Indeed the paradigm of equivalence according to Kumdu (2017:8) needs to be properly explained and examined. Also, the following questions need to be answered.

1. Where does the equal value lie?
2. Is it in the form or in the length of the text?
3. Is it the message of the text or the qualities of the text?
4. Should we contrast the function of the source text on the target culture?

According to Pym (2010:37), the concept of correspondence and/or equivalence is that “there is no perfect equivalence between languages of the translated text. The translated text is always taken as assumed equivalence”. He further explained that we only assume the equivalence based on the fact that the two languages function closely or in the same direction. Each language sees things differently. The language of people represents their spirit. Hickerson, (1980:109) confirms this when he says thus: “a speaker’s native language sets

up a series of categories which act as a kind of grid through which he categorizes and conceptualizes different phenomena”.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative and comparative approaches of translation to explore the challenges faced by the translator. We will extract variables from the two texts: ST – *Burning Grass* and TT or translated text – *La Brousse ardente*. The variables will help us in analyzing the results considering the challenges in translating text, especially cultural shift. The variables will be presented in tabular form, following its interpretations. The table constitutes the author, novel of origin and the text extract. The author of the original text is Cyprian Ekwensi and the translator is Françoise Balogun. It is of course difficult as stated above that no two languages think in the same way in terms of linguistic patterns and structure of the language.

Analysis and Discussion of Results

The evaluation of equivalence in translation from the two texts will be based on the challenges of cultural equivalence of the Fulani as portrayed in the texts (ST and TT) by the author as well as the translator – Françoise Balogun. Textual analysis will be used which is a conceptual division of a complex semantic entity into phonetic, morphological, syntactic, lexical and stylistical components and the observation of their relevance in the translation process. A partial analysis will be necessary considering wording, syntactic structure and cultural elements by bolding or marking the selected part from the two texts.

Table 1:

Author	Novel	Language	Text
Ekwensi	<i>Burning Grass</i>	English	... it is time for the herdsmen to be moving the cattle southwards to the bank of the great river. P.1.
Balogun	<i>La Brousse ardente</i>	French	... c'est, pour les bergers, le moment d' emmener le bétail vers les rives du grand fleuve, au sud . P. 9.

Syntactically, the structure of sentences in the two texts are not the same; the complete sentence is presented in English while comas are inserted in French sentences. Lexically, the author uses “moving” and the translator uses “*emmener*” which maintains the message. The same goes for the word “southwards” replaced by “*au sud*” in the translation.

Table 2:

Author	Novel	Language	Text
Ekwensi	<i>Burning Grass</i>	English	“I am still a cattleman ,” ... ‘My business is with cattle, not with wood.’ P. 19.
Balogun	<i>La Brousse ardente</i>	French	<i>Je suis toujours berger, ... Je m'occupe de bétail, non de bois.</i> P. 35.

Stylistically, the translator uses active voice unlike in ST with passive voice. He tries to maintain the culture of Fulani from ST by portraying the same culture for French to get the message, showing a Fulani man “*berger*” as in the ST “cattleman” has no business with wood while there are cattle.

Table 3:

Author	Novel	Language	Text
Ekwensi	<i>Burning Grass</i>	English	... Jalla lashed out with his whip. Kai! He made clucking noises with his tongue, bullying this, calling out to that one by name , colour and habits. P. 25.
Balogun	<i>La Brousse ardente</i>	French	... Jalla faisait claquer son fouet. Kai! il claquait la langue, grondait celle-ci, appelait celle-là par son nom. Un bon berger doit connaître le nom. La couleur et les habitudes de chaque bête. P. 42.

The translator managed to convert the message as appropriate using wording as the original. He showed us Fulani culture in French by describing how the cattleman controlled his cattle by using a stick, manage them and even calling their names with his voice. This is a mastery of the herdsman’s culture displayed by the translator. The expression “calling out to that one by name” is translated as “*Un bon berger doit connaître le nom*”. The translator used mastery of the language structure and understood the culture of the ST. “Kai” is a borrowed word from the Hausa language which is also used in the translation in order to have a similar effect of ST.

Table 4.

Author	Novel	Language	Text
Ekwensi	<i>Burning Grass</i>	English	The cattle waded into the stream before him and he let them find their own way, retiring to a little hill some distance away. From here he could see them spread along either bank and along the flat grassland adjoining. They knew the land as well as he did, and he settled down and watched them. P. 27.
Balogun	<i>La Brousse ardente</i>	French	<i>Les bêtes entrent dans le ruisseau devant lui. Il les laissa trouver leur chemin et se retira sur une petite colline à quelque distance. De là, il pouvait les voir s'éparpiller le long des deux rives et de la bande de terre plate et herbue qui les bordait. Elles connaissaient le terrain aussi bien que lui, et il s'installa pour les surveiller.</i> P. 44.

The word “cattle waded” in the original text is replaced by “*bêtes entrent*” in the translated text as “savages enter” into the stream. This might be difficult for the translator because he tried as much as possible to maintain the message and effect of the original. In many instances in the original text, he used the words interchangeably “*bétail*”, “*bêtes*” and “*vaches*” referring to “herd”, “savages” and “cows” for cattle.

Table 5:

Author	Novel	Language	Text
Ekwensi	<i>Burning Grass</i>	English	... she could milk the cows, separate butter and cheese from the milk, ferment the milk and cook. ... to hawk the sour milk ... P.5
Balogun	<i>La Brousse ardente</i>	French	<i>... elle savait traire les vaches, préparer le beurre et le fromage, faire fermenter le lait et cuisiner ... vendre le lait caillé ... p. 15</i>

The technique applied here is by changing of noun “milk” by verb (infinitive) “*traire*” is semantic translation. He continued replacing “separate” with “*préparer*”, “ferment” with “*fermenter*”. Also, he portrays the culture of Fulani women and their business of milking, separation process of milk, butter and cheese and its preservation.

Table 6:

Author	Novel	Language	Text
Ekwensi	<i>Burning Grass</i>	English	Sunsaye, being Fulani, would not eat the meat of cattle : it was forbidden by herdsmen. P. 38.
Balogun	<i>La Brousse ardente</i>	French	<i>Etant Fulani, Sunsaye ne mangeait pas de bœuf : c'était interdit aux bergers.</i> P. 59.

The expression “would not eat meat of cattle” translated as “*ne mangeait pas de bœuf*”. This is a tradition of typical Fulani that they do not eat “beef”, the word used by the author was “cattle” is not comfortable for the translator which he replaced it with “*bœuf*”. This is another cultural aspect of translation.

Table 7:

Author	Novel	Language	Text
Ekwensi	<i>Burning Grass</i>	English	You have given up cattle, just for this (sugar cane mill)? You whom I brought up with the cattle in your veins? p.43.
Balogun	<i>La Brousse ardente</i>	French	<i>Tu as laissé tomber le bétail juste pour ça (un moulin à canne à sucre) ? toi que j'ai élevé avec le bétail dans le sang ?</i> p. 67.

Civilization is taking over culture in some tribes as described by the author as well as the translator “You whom I brought up with the cattle in your veins?” translated as “*toi que j'ai élevé avec le bétail dans le sang?*” The author used “veins” and the translator used “blood” in French “sang” that flows in the veins. This shows that each language sees things in a different form. And the translator tried to get the message straight by making some adjustments in his translation to fit in.

Table 8:

Author	Novel	Language	Text
Ekwensi	<i>Burning Grass</i>	English	She was his only wife, though under Muslim law he could have three others beside her . He loves his wife ... P. 4.
Balogun	<i>La Brousse ardente</i>	French	<i>C'était sa seule femme, bien que, selon la coutume musulmane, il eût droit à trois autres femmes. Il l'aimaitp. 14.</i>

The expression “he could have three others beside her” translated “*il eût droit à trois autres femmes*” is a cultural aspect of religion. It is allowed in Fulani culture to marry more than one wife. Most Fulanis are Muslims and Islam allowed marrying four wives if the husband can do justice between them. It is not compulsory but a choice for those who can.

Research Findings

Panou (2013) added that “the usefulness of equivalence to the translation process varies according to the stance of the translators concerned on what they regard are the virtues of equivalence itself”. We come out with the following findings that translators should:

- put into consideration that there is no two languages that have identical values in terms of wording, phrases and structures of sentences,
- make a replica of the same situation as in the original text while using completely different wording in the TT to accomplish a successful translation,
- modify the text to fit with the conceptual map of experience of the different context,
- consider the differences in translation which can generally be accounted for by three basic factors: the nature of the message, the purpose of the author or the translator and the type of audience,
- know that there is no perfect equivalence between languages because no two languages can be exactly the same, therefore, it is always “assumed equivalence,
- emphasize the idea of equivalence which is significant especially in the literary translation where it functions as the central problem a translator encounters in the translation process.
- possess a working knowledge of colloquialism, dialect, slang and cultural elements in both languages.

III. CONCLUSION

The concept of correspondence and/or equivalence in the translation of *La Brousse ardente* is a complex issue that the translator did not find easy to handle. The translation of culture is a different aspect of translation studies in its entirety. The challenge of equivalence has been a debate among theoreticians and is significant especially in literary translation. This article tried to explore some difficulties or challenges in translating cultural items into French. It has proven that no two languages have identical values in terms of wordings, phrases and structures of sentences as seen in the extracts of the two texts. The translator – Françoise Balogun has the competence of the two languages, comprehending the original – English and especially the translated text, French his native language.

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Abbreviations

Source Language	-	SL
Source Text	-	ST
Source Language Text	-	SLT
Target Language Text	-	TLT
Target Text	-	TT
Target Language	-	TL