Translation Salience:
A Model of Equivalence in Translation
(Arabic/English)

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Abstract

The term equivalence describes the relationship between a translation and the text from which it is translated. Translation is generally viewed as indeterminate insofar as there is no single acceptable translation—but many. Despite this, the rationalist metaphor of translation equivalence prevails. Rationalist approaches view translation as a process in which an original text is analysed to a level of abstraction, then transferred into a second representation from which a translation is generated. At the deepest level of abstraction, representations for analysis and generation are identical and transfer becomes redundant, while at the surface level it is said that surface textual features are transferred directly. Such approaches do not provide a principled explanation of how or why abstraction takes place in translation. They also fail to resolve the dilemma of specifying the depth of transfer appropriate for a given translation task. Chapter One reviews English and Arabic approaches to human translation.

By focusing on the translator's role as mediator of communication, equivalence can be understood as the coordination of information about situations and states of mind. A fundamental opposition is posited between the transfer of rule-like or codifiable aspects of equivalence and those non-codifiable aspects in which salient information is coordinated. The Translation Salience model proposes that Transfer and Salience constitute bipolar extremes of a continuum. The model offers a principled account of the translator's interlingual attunement to multi-placed coordination, proposing that salient information can be accounted for with three primary notions: markedness, implicitness and localness. Chapter Two develops the Translation Salience model.

The model is supported with empirical evidence from published translations of Arabic and English texts. Salience is illustrated in Chapter Three through contextualized interpretations associated with various Arabic communication resources (repetition, code switching, agreement, address in relative clauses and the disambiguation of presentative structures). Measurability of the model is addressed in Chapter Four with reference to emerging computational techniques, and further research is suggested (in connection with theme and focus, text type, cohesion and collocation relations).

In English, lectured the linguistics professor, *a double negative forms a positive. In some languages, though, such as Russian, a double negative is still a negative.*
However, there is no language in which a double positive can form a negative.
A voice from the back of the lecture hall cried: *Yeah, right.* *

• I N   M E M O R I A M •
Stan Young & Jenny Skempton

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* Unsourced press clipping.

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Figures and Tables

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