Chapter five

The Problem of Equivalence in Translation مشكلة المكافئ اللغوي في الترجمة

<u>**5.1 Equivalence and Translation**</u> المكافئ اللغوي والترجمة **Presented by: Asst. Lect. Mazin Al-Ani**

   One of the common principles of translation is that the translated text should be equivalent to the source text. But the term 'equivalent' is vague; equivalent in what? In meaning or form? What meaning should be adopted as a basis for translational equivalence? What aspects of form are relevant to equivalence?

   One of the oldest dichotomy (انقسام)in translational equivalence is that between literal and non-literal translation. Thus Al-Safadi speaking of translation methods followed by ancient Arab translators says that they are of two types: the method practiced by Yohanna ibn al-Batriq and ibn al-Na'ima al- Himse, which is based on replacing single words in Greek (the source language) by their equivalents in Arabic (the target language).

   The tendency (الميل الى) to divide equivalence into either word by word translation or meaning translation is found in writings of translation theorists in the west, too. Catford (1965) proposes five degrees of literal translation bound to the five linguistic units in which a morpheme may be replaced by a morpheme, a word by a word, a phrase by a phrase, a clause by a clause or sentence by a sentence.

<u>**The Concept of Equivalence**</u> مبدأ المكافئ اللغوى

   Equivalence (المكافئ اللغوي) is a focal point in the translation process which has occupied a large area of research in Translation Studies. Although, equivalence can usually be produced to some extent in the target language text (TLT), it is basically affected by a number of linguistic and cultural factors and is therefore always relatively obtained (Baker, 1992:6). According to Bell (1991:6), there is no equivalence that can be obtained fully in the TL and the typical equivalence is something illusive or a chimera. Bell also states that "texts in different languages can be equivalent in different degrees (fully or partially equivalent), in respect of different levels of presentation(equivalence in respect of context, of semantics, of grammar, of lexis, etc.) and at different ranks (word-for-word, phrase-for-phrase, and sentence-for- sentence).

   Apparently (من الواضح),there is no consensus among translation theorists on the importance of equivalence notion. It sometimes poses a matter of controversary and a problematic issue to Translation Studies (TS). Theorists like (Catford 1965; Nida and Tiber 1969; Koller 1995) view equivalence as a central concept in translation theory and define translation in connection with establishing equivalence between SL and TL , whereas others such as (Snelly-Hornby 1988 and Gentzler 1993) allegedly consider it as either unimportant or having a bad effect on the translation as a whole (Baker, 1998:77). To a theorist like Baker (1992:2), equivalence is seen in different ways as an essential condition for translation, a barrier to make progress in TS or a useful factor for depicting translation. Nevertheless, Baker defines it as "the relationship between a source text (ST) and a target text (TT) that allows the TT to be considered as a translation of the ST in the first place". The notion of equivalence is used by most translators for the sake of convenience (ibid).