

Eugene Nida-Early Definitions of Translation Equivalence

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dynamic_and_formal_equivalence

In Bible translation **dynamic equivalence** and **formal equivalence** are two approaches to [translation](#). The terms are not found in general linguistics or translation theory but were coined by [Eugene Nida](#). In later years he distanced himself from the former term and preferred the term "functional equivalence." ^{[1][2][3]}

Dynamic equivalence (also known as **functional equivalence**) attempts to convey the [thought](#) expressed in a [source text](#) (if necessary, at the expense of [literalness](#), original [word order](#), the [source text](#)'s [grammatical voice](#), etc.), while formal equivalence attempts to render the text word-for-word (if necessary, at the expense of natural expression in the [target language](#)). The two approaches represent emphasis, respectively, on [readability](#) and on [literal fidelity](#) to the source text. There is no sharp boundary between dynamic and formal equivalence. Broadly, the two represent a spectrum of translation approaches. The terms "dynamic equivalence" and "formal equivalence" are associated with the translator [Eugene Nida](#), and were originally coined to describe ways of translating the [Bible](#), but the two approaches are applicable to any translation.

Theory and practice

Because dynamic equivalence eschews strict adherence to the grammatical structure of the original text in favor of a more natural rendering in the target language, it is sometimes used when the readability of the translation is more important than the preservation of the original grammatical structure. Thus a [novel](#) might be translated with greater use of dynamic equivalence so that it may read well, while in [diplomacy](#) or in some business settings people may insist on formal equivalence because they believe that fidelity to the grammatical structure of the language equals greater accuracy.

Formal equivalence is often more goal than reality, if only because one language may contain a word for a concept which has no direct equivalent in another language. In such cases a more dynamic translation may be used or a [neologism](#) may be created in the target language to represent the concept (sometimes by borrowing a word from the source language).

The more the source language differs from the target language, the more difficult it may be to understand a literal translation. On the other hand, formal equivalence can sometimes allow readers familiar with the source language to see how meaning was expressed in the original text, preserving untranslated [idioms](#), [rhetorical](#) devices (such as [chiasm structures](#) in the [Hebrew Bible](#)), and [diction](#).

Provided here by

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