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B.Com Honours

Semester I

Calicut University

Additional Language - Malayalam or Hindi or Arabic or French

Course Code: AEC2 • Module 2 Notes

1. The Art and Theory of Translation

Translation is not merely replacing words with equivalents in another language; it is the process of conveying meaning and cultural context across languages. A successful translation preserves the original tone, intent, and style. This module covers the primary principles of translation, technical vs. literary translation, and challenges in resolving structural and cultural differences.

Core Principles of Translation

- Fidelity (Accuracy):** How closely the translation represents the meaning of the source text.
- Naturalness (Transparency):** How grammatical and natural the translation sounds to a native speaker of the target language.
- Dynamic Equivalence:** Focusing on translating the *meaning and impact* of the sentence, rather than literal word-for-word translation (Formal Equivalence).

Technical vs. Literary Translation

Translation Type	Primary Focus	Main Challenges & Methods
Technical Translation	Legal contracts, financial sheets, and software manuals.	Requires precise terminology, formal equivalence, and absolute clarity. No room for creative interpretation.
Literary Translation	Poetry, drama, and novels.	Requires conveying style, tone, emotion, and rhythm. Focuses heavily on dynamic equivalence.

Challenges in Cross-Lingual Translation

Structural Differences

Differing grammatical structures (e.g., active/passive voice conventions, gendered pronouns, prepositions) make literal translation impossible.

Cultural Untranslatability

Many words describe unique cultural items, foods, or social concepts (e.g., Malayalam *Tharavadu*, Arabic *Majlis*) that lack direct equivalents in English.

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