General introduction to translation and its role in laying bridges between cultures.

Basic definitions:

The source text which is the text requiring translation

The target text which is the translation of the source text

The source language which is the language used in the source text

The target language is the language into which the source text will be translated.

Before a translator gets down to business he must ask himself few questions like what is the message content of this particular source text? What are its salient linguistic features? What genre does it belong to? And what audience is it aimed at?

Basically, the component processes of translation are not very different from familiar things that all speakers and listeners do every day. Comprehension and interpretation are processes that we all perform whenever we listen to or read a piece of linguistically imparted information. Understanding even the simplest message potentially involves all our experiential baggage as the beliefs, suppositions, inferences and expectations that are closely related to the personal, social and cultural life.

Word-for-word translation or interlinear translation

This type of translation keeps the Source Language word order; words are translated out of context according to their most common meaning. Such kind of translation can be used as a preliminary translation step but it is not applied in real translation tasks.

The child was fairly eating me up with his eyes

الطفل كان تماما يأكلني بعينيه

Such translation is very mechanical and is meaningless to an Arab reader since neither its grammatical structure nor its semantics can help the reader make sense of what he or she is reading.

Word-for-word translation does not take context into consideration. A great deal of editing and modifications have to be made in order to convey the message to the TL reader. The translator has to make sure that the translation follows the word order of the TL and that the choice of semantic equivalents is carried out accurately.

An acceptable translation would be:

<div dir="rtl">

كان الطفل يحدجني بنظراته بشكل واضح

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Literal translation

In literal translation, the denotative meaning of words is taken as if straight from the dictionary (that is out of context) but the target language grammar is respected. This type of translation, the safest for some, unavoidably involves grammatical transposition (Transposition involves moving from one grammatical category to another without altering the meaning of the text.) This translation technique introduces a change in grammatical structure.

Example: *The President thinks that* ⇒

<div dir="rtl">

يفكر الرئيس أن

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Here the verb « think » was literally translated into يفكر but a more acceptable translation would be يعتقد

This type of translation preserves the grammatical structures of the SL where they are translated into their nearest TL equivalents. Words are translated out of context paying no attention to their connotative meanings. The following example illustrates this point.

To throw dust in the eyes. يلقي التراب في العيون

The word 'dust' is translated literally as التراب while the equivalent expression in Arabic is يذر الرماد في العيون where 'dust' is translated into الرماد