

Translation session 2, 3 and 4

Faithful translation: This method maintains a balance between the literal meaning of the SL word and the TL syntactic structures. It sounds more reasonable as it takes the context into consideration, aiming at producing more precise meaning of the SL texts. This is an extract from a play:

You see things; and you say, “Why?” But I dream things that never were; and I say, “Why not?”

It can be faithfully translated as: أنت ترى الأشياء وتقول لماذا؟ ولكني أحلم بأشياء لم توجد أبدا وأقول لم لا؟

Do not occupy yourself with the irrational figures of real life

لا تتشغل أو لا تشغل نفسك بأشخاص لا عقلانيين من الواقع المعيش

Under the wide and starry sky, Dig the grave and let me lie.

تحت سماء رحبة مرصعة بالنجوم ° لتحفر قبوري وتدعني أستلقي

Free translation : is the opposite extreme where there is maximum target language bias. Here there is only a global correspondence between the textual units of the source language and the target language.

For instance a possible free translation of the colloquial Arabic proverb اللي فات مات would be “let bygones be bygones”, here the grammar is completely different and the metaphor of dying is lost. Similarly, a free translation of the proverb يوم لك و يوم عليك might be “you win some, you lose some”, here the grammar and the vocabulary are completely different.

This strategy preserves the meaning of the original but uses natural forms of the TL, including normal word order and syntax, so that the translation can be naturally understood. It preserves the content at the expense of the form, and it provides a longer paraphrase of the original. It is a form of idiomatic translation that favours colloquialisms (informal speech) and idioms which do not exist in the SL.

Cinderella had a wonderful time at the ball until she heard the first stroke of midnight!

كانت سندريلا تمضي وقتا في غاية المتعة في حفلة الرقص عندما سمعت دقائق الساعة تعلن حلول منتصف الليل

Notice that we have longer expressions in the TL. For example, 'a wonderful time' is translated into *ممتع* instead of *غاية المتعة*

what a disaster *هذه هي الطامة الكبرى*

In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on. Robert Frost.

و تستمر الحياة هذا ما علمتني إياه الحياة

And a better translation would be

وتستمر الحياة هذا جل ما تعلمته

Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Harvey Fierstein.

لا تسمح لأحد أن يسكتك بالقوة. لا تجعل من نفسك ضحية

Free translation plays also the role of communicative translation in cases of public notices like No Smoking *ممنوع التدخين*, No entry *ممنوع الدخول* proverbs like *ضرب عصفورين بحجر واحد* To kill two birds with one stone,

Do not cry over spilt milk *لا فائدة من التحسر على ما فات*

or conversational expressions like do not mention it *لا شكر على واجب*, or goodbye *مع السلامة*

This type of translation attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original text in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the reader. It is particularly suitable when translating conventional formulae or proverbs and it involves some levels of cultural approximation. Communicative translation aspires to create the same effect created by the SL text on the TL reader. Though it is not as accurate as

semantic translation which sticks to the original text, it communicates the meaning at the expense of accuracy.

Charity begins at home. الأقربون أولى بالمعروف.

Diamonds cut diamonds. لا يفل الحديد إلا الحديد.

Notice here that ‘diamonds’ is rendered by حديد which is equivalent to iron in English. Literal translation would not convey the message here. In Arabic ‘diamond’ has positive associations related to beauty and noble characteristics while iron is associated with strength and physical power

Dead end طريق مسدود

Kim: Hi, Ann. What’s happening? Ann: Not much. You?

كيم: مرحبا آن, ما أخبارك؟ آن: لا شيء يذكر , ماذا عنك؟

Don’t count your chickens before they’re hatched

لا تتبع جلد الدب قبل صيده

A necessary evil شر لا بد منه

Equivalence at word level

The smallest unit which we would expect to possess individual meaning is the word.

If you consider a word such as rebuild or reconstruct, you will note that there are two distinct elements of meaning in it: re and build, meaning to build again and translated into Arabic as إعادة الإعمار . The same applies to disbelieve which may be paraphrased as “not to believe” لا يصدق. Elements of meaning which are represented by several orthographic words in one language, say English for instance, may be represented by one orthographic word in another and vice-versa. For instance, a tennis player is written as one word in Turkish: tenisçi but in Arabic it becomes three words لاعب كرة المضرب, this suggests that

there is no one-to-one correspondence between orthographic words and elements within or across languages.

What is noticeable is that even morphemes have an important role when it comes to word formation and translation. For instance “inconceivable” is written as one word but consists of three morphemes: “in” meaning not, conceive meaning think or imagine and able meaning fit to be. A suitable paraphrase of inconceivable would be cannot be imagined. A first attempt of translating it into Arabic would be لا يصدق أو لا يمكن غير قابل للتصديق تصديقه.

Non-equivalence at word level

Non-equivalence at word level means that the target language has no direct equivalent for a word which occurs in the source text.

- 1- *Culture-specific concepts*: the source-language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete, it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom or even a type of food, for instance the Speaker of the house of commons has no equivalent in many languages it is translated into Arabic as رئيس in fact speaker, chair, president and chairman all are translated as رئيس
- 2- *The source-language concept is not lexicalized in the target language*: the source-language word may express a concept which is known in the target culture but simply not lexicalized, that is not allocated a target-language word to express it. For instance landslide has no ready equivalent in many languages although it simply means overwhelming majority and is translated into Arabic as الاغلبية الساحقة as
- 3- *The target language lacks a specific term*: more commonly, languages tend to have general words (superordinates) but lack specific ones (hyponyms). English for instance has a variety of hyponyms such as bungalow, cottage, croft, chalet, hut, mansion, manor, villa... Same for Arabic it has several hyponyms for the word Lion to make distinctions in meaning that is relevant to its

particular environment but for which it is difficult to find precise equivalent in other languages -أسامة - ضرغام -هزير -أسد -سبع -ليث -هزير-هزاع - حمزة - غضنفر

Cultural borrowing

Cultural borrowing, called also transcription or transliteration, is the transfer of a source text expression verbatim into the target text. It introduces a foreign element into the target text. Cultural borrowing does not involve adaptation of the SL expression into TL forms.

An example of cultural borrowing would be the rendering of a culturally specific term by transliteration it without further explanation. For example فوطة as used in Iraq would be rendered by “futa” rather than wrap or robe (futa is a garment worn by women). A cultural borrowing of this kind might well be signaled by the use of italics.

The word قانون is a musical instrument that resembles a dulcimer but translating it as such would significantly distort what is meant in Arabic, so experienced translators would keep it as “qanun” and the same applies to الموشحات which, again, could be translated as strophic poems but such translation would disguise the precise nature of the material being used as well as the fact that what is being dealt with here is poetry set to music, so a better option would be to use the same word “Al Muwashahat”.

When the precise technical terms are important, one solution is for the translator to add a glossary at the end of the book or to use footnotes or endnotes. Alternatively, where the translator decides that for some reason it is necessary to retain a SL term, but also to make it plain to the reader roughly what is meant, it is sometimes possible to insert an explanation, or partial explanation into the TT alongside the cultural borrowing.

The word بدعة is translated as « Bid’a » in English but the translator has to add between brackets “an innovation that Islam opposes.”

Sometimes, a cultural borrowing becomes an established TT expression. Examples from Arabic into English are often religious in nature as imam, Allah, sheikh. A recent cultural borrowing is Intifada and Naqba. There are also forms which were originally borrowed but which are no longer regarded as foreign such as Algebra الجبر and Algorithm الخوارزمي.

When moving from English into Arabic sometimes we resort to total borrowing, where a full phonological borrowing of the terms takes place. For instance, computer is translated as كمبيوتر, facebook as فيسبوك, and email as إيميل which is mostly used by the people in the Middle East though البريد الإلكتروني would be a more appropriate equivalent.

This strategy works best for new scientific terms that have no equivalents in the TL, new inventions, new diseases or scientific discoveries. It is usually referred to as Arabisation.

In general, there are various ways to deal with these aspects of cultures as they occur in texts. For translating culturally bound words you can either make up a new word, explain the meaning of the SL expression instead of translating it. Preserve the SL term intact. Opt for a word in the TL which seems similar to or has the same 'relevance' as the SL term.

Domestication and foreignization

To sum up, translation is not simply a matter of translating words. When you translate, you are working with language and culture. Language is one of the many social activities through which the culture of its speakers is manifested. As a translator, you need to understand the culture of the audience you are communicating with. You are standing as a mediator between the SL and TL. If the SL is your mother tongue, then half of the problem is solved. All that you need to do is to understand the cultural background of the target reader/audience so as to be able to convey the SL message to them.

There are other strategies that can be utilized to bridge cultural gaps in translation. These include domestication and foreignization as coined by famous American translation theorist Lawrence Venuti. Domestication aims at making the translated text closer to the TL culture where ‘the foreign text is imprinted with values specific to the target-language culture’. Foreignization, on the other hand, preserves the values of the ST in the sense that it ‘resists dominant target-language cultural values so as to signify the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text’. Those who support domestication argue that it helps the reader understand the text easily. Others suggest that domestication blurs acculturation and discourage critical thought that challenges the TL. The following examples illustrate the distinction between domestication and foreignization.

English	Domesticated Arabic Translation	Foreignised Arabic Translation
I will see you Friday noon in the <u>bar</u>	سأراك ظهر يوم الجمعة في <u>المقهى</u>	سأراك ظهر يوم الجمعة في <u>الحانة</u>
Thousands were <u>killed</u> in the raid	<u>استشهد</u> الآلاف في الغارة	<u>قتل</u> الآلاف في الغارة
Their story reminds me of <u>Romeo and Juliet</u>	تذكرني قصتهم <u>بقيس وليلى</u>	تذكرني قصتهم <u>بروميو وجولييت</u>

A member of Hizbollah could be called by an anchor in Lebanon state-run media outlet as fighter and if he is killed he is a martyr, but in a US or Israeli context he becomes terrorist and if he is killed he is just a dead terrorist. Translation does shape the way we view the world and one should have deeply-rooted convictions and a balanced critical mind to avoid influence.

