



LECTURE THREE

TYPES OF TRANSLATION

1. Literal Translation

It is probably the oldest type of translation practice. It involves the conveyance of denotative meaning of phrases and sentences in a text from one language to another. Literal translation works when there is correspondence between two languages in terms of semantics and structure as can be illustrated by the following English sentences and their Arabic translations:

a. Ali went to the market yesterday → ذهب عليٌّ إلى السوق أمس

b. Hanan is a young kind-hearted woman → حنان امرأة شابة و طيبة القلب

It should be mentioned that literal translation is different from word-for-word translation.

Word-for-word translation is considered a bad translation because it does not take structural mismatches such as word order and modification differences between languages into consideration. By way of illustration, take a look at the following sentences and their Arabic word-for-word translations:

a.	I	bought	a	red	car.	} word-for-word	انا اشتريت حمراء سيارة
	انا	اشتريت		حمراء	سيارة		

As we can see, the Arabic word-for-word translation here is ungrammatical and not understood. The translator should opt for literal translation where structural differences between English and Arabic are taken care of, thus it should be like this :

a. I bought a red car → اشتريت سيارة حمراء

Literal translation often fall apart , especially in the case of multi-word units like collocations and idioms as can be illustrated below (the correct translation in Arabic is between brackets):

to pay a visit

يدفع زيارة (يقوم بزيارة)

to take after

يأخذ بعد (يشبه / يطلع لـ)

to rain cats and dogs

تمطر قططا" و كلابا" (تمطر بغزارة)

strong tea

شاي قوي (شاي ثقيل)

In fact word-for-word translation method can be very risky and destroys meaning and ,hence, translation, because of more than one reason:

1.It ignores the target language completely, making it subject to the source language wholly and entirely, for example:

-That child is intelligent.

ذكي يكون الطفل ذاك

(ذاك الطفل يكون ذكيا)

2. It disregards the differences between the grammars of the two languages, especially when they belong to two different families, like English which is an Indo-European, West Germanic Language, and Arabic which is a Semitic language. For example:

- Mary wanted to take tea.

شاي تأخذ أن أرادت ماري

(ماري أرادت أن تأخذ شاي)

3. It does not acknowledge the different word order (s) of the two languages. For example:

- He is living from hand to mouth.

فم إلى يد من عائشا" يكون هو

(هو يكون عائشا" من اليد إلى الفم)

4. It has no respect for the context of words in language, which does not allow words to be understood in isolation, but in combination with other surrounding words. For example:

- Please, stay with me on the campus.

الحرم الجامعي على معي ابق من فضلك

(من فضلك ابق معي على الحرم الجامعي)

5. It dismisses ابعاد the possibility of any special, indirect and metaphorical use of words, which is essential part of any language in the world. For example:

- Stop beating about the bush.

الشجيرة حول الضرب أوقف
(أوقف الضرب حول الشجيرة)

6. It can do nothing for the SL words which have no TL equivalents. For example:

- This man is a big shot.

رمية كبيرة يكون الرجل هذا
(هذا الرجل يكون كبيرة رمية)

7. It views meaning as the product of words only, which is not acceptable.

- I know this information.

المعلومة هذه أعرف أنا
(أنا أعرف هذه المعلومة)

On these grounds, the Arabic versions are unacceptable and can be corrected as follows (the unacceptable words are underlined):

- a. (ذاك الطفل ذكي) → (ذاك الطفل يكون ذكياً)
- b. (أرادت ماري أن تشرب (تتناول) شايًا) → (ماري أرادت أن تأخذ شايًا)
- c. (يعيش على الكفاف) → (هو يكون عائشاً من يد الى فم)
- d. (من فضلك ابق معي في الحرم الجامعي) → (من فضلك ابق معي على الحرم الجامعي)
- e. (كف عن اللف و الدوران / عن المراوغة) → (أوقف الضرب حول الشجرة)
- f. (هذا الرجل عظيم الشأن / مهم) → (هذا الرجل يكون كسرة رمية)
- g. (أعرف هذه المعلومات) → (أنا أعرف هذه المعلومة)

2. Metaphorical Translation

It involves the translation of SL metaphors into TL metaphors. Metaphors are not always creative, they are frequently used as decorative metaphors that are basically intended to decorate the text by injecting it with flowery language that is full with figures of speech. A quick look at advertisements and various forms of media, among their things, reveals how metaphorical the language used for general purposes has become. For example :

a wilds goose chase , raise the roof , flog a dead horse , as dry as a bone , etc.

By way of illustration, note the metaphorical English sentence below and its possible Arabic translations (the first two renditions exemplify metaphorical translation, while the third exemplifies non-metaphorical translation):

- Ahmed will be flogging a dead horse if he never tries to do a Ph.D. in linguistics.
- ستذهب جهود احمد ادراج الرياح اذا ما حاول ان يحصل على شهادة الدكتوراه في اللغويات .
- سيعود احمد يخفي حنين اذا ما حاول ان يحصل شهادة الدكتوراه في اللغويات .
- سيفشل احمد اذا ما حاول ان يحصل على شهادة الدكتوراه في اللغويات .

3. Precis Translation

It is a translation method where the translator gives TL summary translations of the SL text he is dealing with. Such TL summary translations usually provide the reader with only the main points of the SL text, thus ignoring many fine details that are contextually unimportant or, even, irrelevant. This translation practice is often common in different forms of media like newspapers and News Agencies. And in various business news reports as ordinarily dealt with firms among their contexts.

4. Adaptation and Free Translation

Adaptation is a translation method whereby the SL text is freely Translated into the TL. This procedure is appropriate for translating plays, drama, etc. for the stage. The themes, characters, plots, are usually preserved, while the SL culture is converted to the TL culture and the text re-written.

As for free translation, it is another method translation means to translate freely without any constraints. The translator is not constrained by the text or context, or the direct and available meaning of words and phrases. He translates as he understands with no limitations.

All other terms used nowadays to substitute for free translation such as “communicative”, “dynamic”, and “creative”.

It has two types:

- A. Bound free translation.
- B. Loose free translation.

A. Bound free translation

This type of free translation is derived from the context in a direct way, though it may go out of it in some way or another, in the form of exaggeration, expressivity, effective, rhetorical, and very formal language.

For example :

1. Proverbs:

He got nothing at the end. (عاد/رجع بخفي حنين (خالي الوفاض)

2. Collocations:

She was sad deep down (تفطر قلبها من الحزن/ اصبحت فؤادها فارغاً)

You look quiet. (تبدو رابط الجأش)

My friend got to the top very soon.

(امتطى صديقي صهوة المجد في اسرع من البرق).

3. The Prophet's Tradition:

Swearing is a bad habit.

(سباب المسلم فسوق)

4. Poetry:

East or west, home is best.

(كم منزل في الأرض يألفه الفتى و حنينه أبداً لأول منزل)

Love me, love my dog . (أحبها و تحبني و يحب ناقتها بعيري)

5. Pompous , exaggerated expressions :

Come down to earth.

(كفاك تيهاً / أقلع عن اوهامك)

6. Popular religious expressions:

She had a new baby.

(رزقها الله مولوداً جديداً)

7. Expressions from the Holy Quran:

Are you lying to me ?

(أتفتي على الله كذباً)

The common point among these translations is their expressive, effective, and very formal Arabic. They derive that from the points used above.

All these free translations are derived in one way or another from the original. Although they may have gone far from the context, they have not gone too far from it, or outside. This means that his type of free translation is not loose, or without limitations, but is still bound to the linguistics context in some way. For these reasons, this method of free translation is sometimes acceptable. However, when translation is quite strange to the context, it is unacceptable. Still direct, literal translation of meaning is a better version for these statements, as suggested below :

١. لم يحصل على شيء في النهاية .
٢. كانت حزينة من الأعماق / جداً .
٣. تبدو هادئاً .
٤. السب عادة سيئة / مذمومة .
٥. لا شيء مثل الوطن.
٦. من أحبني أحب أولادي
٧. كن واقعياً / تواضع .
٨. وصل صديقي إلى القمة بسرعة فائقة .
٩. وضعت مولوداً جديداً .
١٠. أتكذب علي ؟

B. Loose free translation

Some free translations do not relate directly to the original. They are concluded from it by the translator for different personal reasons. Here are some examples:

1. Thank you, Mr. Wilson. Next please. (تفضل بالانصراف يا سيد ويسلون، عندنا غيرك)
2. Its half past nine. (انتهى الوقت/انتهت الحصة/علينا المغادرة/حان الوقت/تأخرنا كثيراً)
3. Thank you, thank you ladies and gentlemen. (هدوء أيها السادة و السيدات)
4. I am frightened. (أبق معنا)
5. Why are you making mouths? (انت وقح)
6. No bacon with my breakfast, please. (أنا مسلم)
7. Honesty is the best policy. (أنت خنت الأمانة)
8. Books are very expensive today. (لقد عزف الناس عن القراءة اليوم)
9. You should buy a lock for your car. (سرقة السيارات منتشرة كثيراً هذه الأيام/الأمان معدوم)
10. Have you classic records. (سحناً للموسيقى الحديثة / فن هذه الأيام منحط)

All these translations are conclusions reached at from the original. They are indirect, pragmatic translations, rendering the meaning intended by the speakers behind what they say. That is :

Example (1):

The speaker says “thank you” to a guest or a customer at the end of their meeting, as a sign of telling him/her to leave. So, instead of asking him/her directly to leave, he says “thank you”, which is understood as “will you leave, the interview is over” translated as (تفضل بالانصراف ، انتهت المقابلة).

Example (2):

The speaker her means to say that the time of a class, a meeting , etc., has expired, or the time of leaving, or doing something is due.

Example (3):

The speaker wanted to be so polite and respectful to people, so he uses “thank you” instead of “quiet” or “ silence, please” to tell them to stop talking and listen.

Example (4):

The speaker means to say that she/he cannot stay on his/her own because he/she is afraid of something. Therefore, he/she asks the listener to stay with him/her, however indirectly.

Example (5):

The speaker implies that making mouths is an expression of bad behavior. Therefore, the translation (انت وقح) expresses this implication.

Example (6):

It indicates that the speaker is a Muslim because pig's meat (pork) is forbidden in Islam, but not in Christianity. That is why Arabic translation jumps to religion.

Example (7):

It is taken in an indirect comment on a dishonest act by the hearer. Hence the translation (انت خنت الأمانة).

Example (8):

It is a general comment on the expensiveness of books, but understood as an attempt to give one reason for the people's lack of interest in reading.

Example (9):

It is understood as a conclusion about the widespread car theft and vandalism these days.

Example (10):

It indicates the speaker's interest in classical music, which is an expression of his contempt of modern music.

These are loose translations that have deserted their direct, home contexts completely. This free method of translation allows such looseness for the translator to translate the way he likes to understand, rather than the way he should understand according to certain contextual factors.

It does not matter whether these translations are convincing and justified or not; what matters is that they do not translate the language and context we have on the page, but the personal conclusions of the translator. Therefore, they seem completely different from the original to the extent that they can be seen as unrelated to.

These translations are indirect, sometimes far interpretations of the original. This is not the job of the translator. His job is to transmit the text on the page directly and contextually into an equivalent TL text, which is closely, clearly and directly related to it. The interpretations and implications beyond it are left to the readers to conclude, exactly as they are left to them in English. It is not the responsibility of the translator to reveal and interpret what the source texts hides, or says indirectly. Therefore, the possible advisable Arabic versions for those English sentences can be as follows:

١. شكراً يا سيد ويسلون (الأخ) الذي يليه لو سمحت .
٢. إنها الساعة التاسعة و النصف .
٣. شكراً أيها السادة و السيدات .
٤. إني خائفة / خائفة جداً .
٥. لماذا تقلب شديك ؟
٦. لا أريد شرائح الخنزير مع فطوري لو سمحت .
٧. الأمانة خير ضماناً / الصدق منجاة .
٨. الكتب باهظة الثمن اليوم .
٩. ينبغي عليك أن تشتري قفلاً لسيارتك .
١٠. هل عندك أشرطة تسجيل / تسجيلات قديمة .

For all previous reasons, students are advised not to use this type of free translation.

Adaptation and free translations are very useful in translating nursery rhymes. Consider the following English lullaby and its Arabic translations:

***Hush! The waves are rolling in,
White with foam, white with foam;
Father toils amid the din,
But baby sleeps at home.***

Since the function of lullabies is to hush babies when sung by mothers in a low melodious tone, a translator has to bear this in mind taking greater care for rhythm than for content, since infants enjoy music rather than words. The following colloquial Arabic translation is suggested as it preserves the rhythm scheme, general tone, and content.

ننيه يا أبني و الموج ساير
و البحر الليلة زايد هديره
و البابا يا عيني بمركبه حاير
أو حمودي بس غافي بسريره

However, the same English lullaby can be translated into standard Arabic provided with rhyme and rhythm that are necessary to hush babies. Consider the following:

شديد البياض يسير يسير	نم يا بني فموج البحار
و انت تنام بدفء في السرير	ابوك يعاني ضجيج البحور