

## Types and Methods of Translation

Before we discuss types of translation, a distinction should be first made between translation methods and translation procedures or techniques. 'While translation methods relate to whole texts, translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language' (Newmark 1988a: 81).

The question whether a translation should be literal or free is as old as translation itself. The argument in favour of the spirit and sense as against the letter or the word has been going on at least from the beginning of the first century B.C. The view that translation was impossible gained popularity when the cultural anthropologists suggested that language was culture bound. Walter Benjamin and Valdimir Nabokov who were considered the 'literalists' concluded that a translation must be as literal as possible. But in their argument the purpose of translation, the nature of readership, the type of text were not discussed.

Though several methods have been suggested for translation it is quite evident that a substantially good translation cannot be produced by holding fast to any one of those methods. During the process of translation, depending on the type of the source language text, the translator resorts to the combination of these different methods.

Some of the methods mentioned by Peter Newmark, in his '*A Textbook of Translation*' and other scholars are: word-for-word translation, literal translation, faithful translation, communicative translation, semantic translation, adaptation and free translation. These will be explained below with examples illustrating each type.

### 1) Word-for-word translation

This type of translation keeps the SL 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 following lines are from *The Secret Sharer* by Joseph Conrad with their translation into Arabic following the word-for-word method.

- That child is intelligent.
- That child is intelligent.  
    ذَكَيًا يَكُونُ الطِّفْلُ ذَاكَ  
    ذَاكَ الطِّفْلُ يَكُونُ ذَكَيًا

This method or type of translation takes the meaning of each word in isolation regardless of differences between both Arabic and English in grammar, word order, context, and special usage. Moreover, this translation focuses on the source language and the target should follow it step by step. Hence, it seems a very easy way to translate and it is common between students. However, this method is very risky because it does not consider the target language and relies on the source language only. In addition, it does not take account of the grammars of both languages, namely when these two languages descend from two very different families such as English which is an Indo-European West Germanic language and Arabic which is a Semitic language. Furthermore, this method does not take both languages word order into account. This method also neglects the context which is very important to understand the meaning of a given sentence. Likewise, it ignores the metaphorical use of words which

represents the culture of language. Finally, this method cannot find equivalents which do not exist in the target language. So, example (a) above can be corrected as:

ذاك الطفل ذكي.

## 2) Literal translation

This type of translation preserves the grammatical structures of the SL where they are translated into their nearest TL equivalents. It takes place when the SL and TL share parallel structures. Words are translated out of context paying no attention to their connotative meanings. The following examples illustrate this point.

1) Let us shake hands.

دعنا نتصافح بالأيدي.

2) She decided to throw the baby with the bath water and close the shop forever because she lost few pounds.

قررت أن ترمي الطفل مع ماء الحمام وتغلق الدكان للأبد لأنها خسرت بعض الجنيهات.

3) I am afraid I lost all saved data. We are back to square one.

أخشى أنني فقدت كل البيانات المخزنة. عدنا للمربع الأول.

4) Hold your horses; we still have plenty of time.

أمسك خيولك، لدينا الكثير من الوقت.

This method of translation resembles the first one (word-for-word translation) in two main aspects:

(a) It considers the source language word order.

(b) It emphasizes on having the same kind and number of words.

However, it differentiates from it in two points:

(a) It does not neglect context.

(b) It finds metaphorical equivalents in the target language for metaphorical words in the source language.

So, this method of literal translation is much more acceptable than the first method which insists on having a word for word translation. As a result, example (1) above can be corrected into "نتصافح دعنا" or simply "فلنتصافح", because the verb "نتصافح" includes "hands" and this action cannot be done except through hands.

## 3) Faithful translation

This method maintains a balance between the literal meaning of the SL word and the TL syntactic structures. A faithful translation attempts to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the target language grammatical structures. It 'transfers' cultural words and preserves the degree of grammatical and lexical 'abnormality' (deviation from the source language norms) in the translation. It attempts to be completely faithful to the intentions and the text realization of the source language writer. It sounds more

reasonable as it takes the context into consideration, aiming at producing more precise meaning of the SL texts.

‘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؟ ولكنني أحلم بأشياء لم توجد أبدا وأقول لم لا؟

#### 4) Communicative translation

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. However, it is preferred by many translators because it resorts to concepts that are more familiar to the TL reader on cultural and social levels. It is usually used for culturally specific idioms, proverbs or clichés where the translator replaces a SL word or concept with one that already exists in the TL.

Communicative translation concentrates on the message and the main force of the text, tends to be simple, clear and brief, and is always written in a natural and resourceful style (Newmark (1988: 48). For some linguists, communicative translation ‘is produced, when, in a given situation, the ST uses a SL expression standard for that situation, and the TT uses a TL expression standard for an equivalent target culture situation’ (Dickins et al. 2005: 17). Study the following examples:

Charity begins at home.

الأقربون أولى بالمعروف.

Diamonds cut diamonds.

لا يفل الحديد إلا الحديد.

Therefore, Communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original.

#### 5) Semantic translation :

Semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original (Newmark 1982: 39). Semantic translation aims at replicating the original texts’ forms within the target language, reproducing the original context, and retaining the characters of the SL culture in the translation. A semantic translation is more source text focused. Although, not necessarily a literal translation, it follows the source text more closely.

In contrast, communicative translation centres on the specific language and culture and focuses on the TL readers. The translation under this method is clear, smooth and concise. A communicative translation is focused on the target text and aims to ensure that the reader will understand the message of the text.

Semantic translation, on the other hand, differs from 'faithful translation' only in as far as it must take more account of the aesthetic value of the source language text, compromising on the 'meaning' where appropriate so that no assonance, word-play or repetition jars in the finished version. Further, it may translate less important cultural words by culturally neutral third or functional terms but not by cultural equivalents. Thus, the distinction between 'faithful'

and 'semantic' translation is that the first is uncompromising and dogmatic, while the second is more flexible admits the creative exception to 100% fidelity and allows for the translator's intuitive empathy with the original text.

## 6) Adaptation

Adaptation means the modification of the idea in the source language (SL) so as to find an acceptable one in the target language (TL). It is necessary when something specific to one language culture is expressed in a totally different way that is familiar or appropriate to another language culture. It is a shift in cultural environment.

In other words, adaptation is a kind of rewriting of the ST to make it conforms to the rules of the language and especially the culture of the TL community. It is considered as the freest form of translation and is used mainly for plays (comedies) and poetry; the themes, characters and plots are usually preserved, the SL culture is converted to the TL culture and the text is rewritten.

For example, translating the title of Hemingway's masterpiece *The Old Man and the Sea* into Arabic like: (الشيخ والبحر) (The Sheikh and the Sea) rather than the literal conversion: (العجوز والبحر) while the former term (sheikh) in Arabic indicates to many dimensions of the protagonist Santiago, the old man, such as experience, faith, determination and backbone, the latter, (old) does not cover all these dimensions but refers only to old age. In addition, the translation of metaphors, proverbs, etc. also frequently involve this technique. For instance, "A camel" may be culturally a translation equivalent of "a horse" and vice versa.

In this way, the procedure of adaptation aims at achieving an 'equivalence' of situations by considering a similar context in the TL whenever a cultural gap between ST and TT defies comprehension. Thus adaptation can be considered an instance of equivalence at the level of context.

## 7) Free translation

This method 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 and idioms which do not exist in the SL. The following is a part of *Cinderella* and its translation into Arabic:

Cinderella had a wonderful time at the ball until she heard the first stroke of midnight! She remembered what the fairy had said, and without a word of goodbye she slipped from the Prince's arms and ran down the steps. As she ran she lost one of her slippers, but not for a moment did she dream of stopping to pick it up! If the last stroke of midnight were to sound ... oh ... what a disaster that would be! Out she fled and vanished into the night.

أمضت سندريلا وقتا في غاية المتعة في حفلة الرقص حتى سمعت دقائق الساعة تعلن حلول منتصف الليل فتذكرت ما قالته الجنية فانسلت من غير بخاطركم ولا مع السلامة بخلسة من بين يدي الأمير ونزلت الدرج بسرعة. وبينما كانت تركض سقطت منها إحدى فرديتي الحذاء لكنها لم تتوقف ولم تحدث نفسها حتى بالتوقف لأنها إن فعلت ذلك فيا ويلها ويا سواد ليلها فركضت مسرعة واختفت في الظلام.

Notice that we have longer expressions in the TL. For example, 'a wonderful time'

is translated into *المتعة غاية في* instead of *ممتعا* . Colloquial expressions are also used as illustrated in the following examples.

Without a word of goodbye:

من غير كلام ولا مع السلامة

What a disaster would that be!

يا ويلها ويا سواد ليلها

In other words, this type of translation focuses on translating freely because the translator is not limited to the text or context or the denotative meaning of a word or a phrase, but goes beyond words and phrases and out of texts and outside contexts. So, the only restriction depends on the translator's comprehension.

Free translation has subtypes mainly:

#### a) Bound Free Translation:

We derive this type of free translation from the context directly even if it exceeds it in some ways, merely the way of expressing, exaggeration and emphatic language. Consider the following examples (Ghazala, 1995: 14):

1- He got nothing at the end.

عاد خالي الوفاض.

2- East or west, home is best.

بلادي و إن جارت علي عزيزة و قومي و إن ضنوا علي كرام.

3- She had a new baby

رزقها الله بمولود جديد.

#### b) Loose Free Translation

This type of translation is not directly related to the original, yet it is a conclusion which the translator can infer for different personal reasons, as these examples show:

- "Thank you Mr. Wilson. Next please".

تفضل بالانصراف يا سيد ويلسون، عندنا غيرك.

- "It is half past nine".

انتهى الوقت / انتهت الحصة.

- "Thank you, thank you ladies and gentlemen"

هدوء أيها السادة.

Consider the different translations for the following sentence. They range from literal to free translations.

مثل هذه الأشياء عليها اقبال كثير الآن.

Literal: The likes of these things have much demand now.

Faithful: Things like these are in great demand now.

Semantic: This kind of thing's in great demand at the moment.

Free: This one's dead trendy.

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