

# Science of Translation

Dr. Romano Allati

2

Open Learning

1

Translation Department

AK

Let's study!  
English

1

2024/2025

## Good morning!

You need to get this subject's book, which is written by Dr. Salma Haddad: "**Science of Translation.**" You can find it in the store in our university.

So, if you come between Sunday and Thursday, you can find the book there.

نظرية او علم الترجمة للدكتورة سلمى حداد .

If you can't buy it, I can send you the pdf if you want, but I would really like and appreciate it if you buy it because it's going to be easier to read.

So, this is our book that we are going to study from, and also, there will be a couple of articles which I am going to provide you. One of them is titled "**The Genre**" from a book called "**Thinking Arabic Translation.**"

There is another book which is called "**Translation Studies.**" It has a very beautiful introductory article called "**Central Issues.**"

So, basically, as far as I see the plan, we are going to start from the introduction here, which is next time, and then we will move to "**Central Issues**" by a translator who is so famous in literary <sup>أدبية</sup> translation. Her name is Susan Bassnett. We are not going to go into literary translation. We are just going to talk about the theory.

This subject is a bit theoretical. So, towards the end of the course, you will be dealing a bit with practical things, but basically, it is about theory. We need to understand what is a text, what do we have

inside the text, how about the author, what does the author do, etc. Also, I am, as a translator, what do I do? I need to put a target on my mind. As you can see, the subtitle of the book is "The Science of Translation-Toward a Theory of Translating Genre."

Do you know what we mean by "genre"? Do you know the meaning of the word "genre"?

If you want to find synonyms in English, it is like a text type. So basically, we are going to learn how to translate based on text types or text kinds.

And look, when you are reading a text, what is the first step to understand it?

Student: To know the main idea

Student: The target text

Student: The kind of language

Lecturer: Pay attention; I am not talking about translating; I am talking about reading.

Student: The whole text?

Lecturer: Okay, before knowing the main idea?

Student: Vocabulary

Lecturer: Okay, I'll give you an example.

Student: The culture.

Lecturer: This is the background; this is by default and for granted. While I am reading, how can I know what the main idea is talking about? Let's say the main idea is Israeli attacks, while I am reading a recipe for cooking. Can this be a main idea for a recipe? Of course not.

So, basically, the first thing the mind, using culture, would get is the text type. Once I know the text type, my mind, like a computer, would by default be like, oh okay, this is the main idea and it is logical to connect these together.

So, if I need to have a text about Israeli attacks, I'll be reading news or a political record.

All of these kinds are called the "Genre" or text types.

This is towards the middle of the course; we will be talking about them. We have a lot of text types or kinds, and we need to take that into consideration because the first thing when you're translating is



to look at these things. We need to know what the text type is because every text type has some rules.

**It is different to talk about a political text in comparison with an economic text in comparison with a literary text. So, in every one of them, I need to look at the rules. Every one of them has a specific structure that I need to know, right?**

**Student:** Are they different from each other?

**Lecturer:** Thank you so much. They are way much different from each other. When I say a literary text, I have for example a title, which is so poetic. Also, for literary texts, we don't have a structure; it depends on the author. However, when I am talking about an economic text, it has the title. For example, I have the main idea, and then I go to some statistics. So, it is direct and talks about numbers. When I am talking about a political text, it also has the title, maybe the main idea in long sentences, and then I need to translate a language which is argumentative.

عندما أقول نصًا أدبيًا، على سبيل المثال، يكون له عنوان شاعري. مثلًا النصوص الأدبية لا توجد لها هيكلية ثابتة، فهي تعتمد على الكاتب. ولكن عندما أتحدث عن نص اقتصادي، يكون له عنوان، ثم فكرة رئيسية، وبعدها إحصائيات. إذن، هو مباشر ويتحدث بالأرقام. وعندما أتحدث عن نص سياسي، يكون له عنوان وربما فكرة رئيسية في جملة طويلة، ثم أحتاج إلى ترجمة لغة جدلية.

**We have two parties who are fighting, for example. This would be different from translating a recipe. So, when you read a recipe, what do you find first?**

**Student:** The ingredients

**Lecturer:** Before the ingredients, we have the dish. And then, you go to the ingredients and then the process of how to mix all of these ingredients. If I am talking about a news report, how do you know how it is organized? What do we start with?

**Student:** Title.

**Lecturer:** In the news we call it the headline. It is the first thing that catches the eye. And then, we go to the sub-headline, which is just narrating down the news. After that, we have the news itself. Then, we go to the background. This is in our book; we are going to look at it later on.



So, when translating, I need to understand the **genre** first, then I can think of the **writer**, the **text itself as a language**, and then the **target** whether reader, or sometimes it's just a **community**, a **cultural society**. I need to talk to them in **their language** because this is our job as translators.

**Let's get back to the question of science or art. You said art. Why do you think translation is an art?**

**Student:** Because we should give the reader or the receiver a good picture of our culture, for example

**Another Student:** and I show my skills.

**Student:** I think it is a science.

**Lecturer:** Can you elaborate and explain why?

**Student:** Because it has rules and examples

**Lecturer:** You mean that you go with it systematically.

**Student:** I think it is both art and science because there is something mixed in science and you also need skills to be a good translator.

**Lecturer:** Thank you so much. Are there any other ideas?

**Student:** There are a variety of idioms to talk about translation or translators. Maybe it is both. As a translator, I must know the grammar, syntax and things like this, and I must know everything about translation.

**Lecturer:** I respect all ideas and I kind of share something with your opinions. I think it is art and science at the same time because if you are to consider, as you said, grammar, syntax and all of these technicalities in language, this is basically proved as science.

You know the types of Translation. First, we have the **literal translation**. Second, you have to change a bit in the text. Third is just like an edited translation where you can move and change everything. So, this last one is using science in a very artistic way. It is just like a piece of puzzle and you are disentangling it and putting it together as a new picture. So, yes I agree with you that it is science and art.

حسنًا. أنا أحترم جميع الأفكار وأشارككم شيئًا منها. أعتقد أنها فن وعلم في الوقت نفسه. لأنه إذا نظرنا، كما قلتم، إلى القواعد النحوية وبناء الجمل وكل هذه الجوانب التقنية في اللغة، فهذا يُثبت أنها علم. ولكن في الوقت نفسه، الطريقة التي أستخدم بها هذه الجوانب وكيف أرتبها وأعيد تشكيلها داخل النص تُعتبر فنًا



وبعض أنواع الترجمة، على سبيل المثال، لدينا الترجمة الحرفية، وبعدها نوع من التغيير الطفيف، والنوع الثالث هو الترجمة المعدلة التي يمكنك من خلالها التغيير وإعادة الترتيب بالكامل. وهذا الأخير يُظهر استخدام العلم بطريقة فنية جدًا. الأمر يشبه قطعة من الأحجية تقوم بفكها وإعادة تجميعها لتُظهر صورة جديدة. حسنًا؟  
لذا، نعم، أنا أتفق معكم أنها علم وفن

\*\*\*

**When you first read the title of this subject, what expectations did you have in mind?**

**Student:** A background about the subject

**Another Student:** The techniques of transition

**Lecturer:** Somehow, it's about that. This is one way through knowing the genre and then going to that, but it definitely is not going to be direct because you need to find your way.

**Student:** I think the method of translation in a scientific way.

**Lecturer:** It is kind of scientific because it is really systematic. Towards the middle of the course and towards the end, we are going to be introduced to how to break down the text if it is like a specific genre. Definitely, there is research there because I need to know what conventions are there when translating a genre or a text. Do you know what conventions mean? It is the traditional way of writing a text. So, there are some rules. For example, when writing a report in a magazine, you need to stick to some rules. This is the headline, the sub-headline, the new information, and the background information. You have to go through all of that.

هو نوعًا ما علمي لأنه منظم جدًا. في منتصف المادة ونحو نهايتها، سنتعرف على كيفية تحليل النص إذا كان من نوع معين. بالتأكيد هناك بحث في هذا الأمر لأنني بحاجة لمعرفة ما هي القوانين الموجودة عند ترجمة نوع معين أو نص معين. هل تعرفون ما معنى القوانين؟ هي الطريقة التقليدية لكتابة النصوص. لذا، هناك بعض القواعد. فمثلًا عند كتابة تقرير أو مقال مجلة، يجب الالتزام ببعض القواعد. مثل العنوان الرئيسي والعنوان الفرعي والمعلومات الجديدة والمعلومات الأساسية. يجب أن نمر بكل هذا

**When you first read the title of the subject, what did you expect to learn?**

**Student:** The background of the author?

**Another student:** The opinion of the author



**Lecturer:** Do you think we care much about the author when we are translating?

**Student:** I think sometimes we need to.

**Lecturer:** If the text is, let's say, "**autobiography**." Do you know what an "**autobiography**" is? It is someone writing something about themselves. This is a kind of literature but not literature at the same time. So, it is a سيرة ذاتية but sometimes, in a story way; it is like a short story. Here, I definitely need to know something about the history or the life of the author, but in general, do I need to?

لنقل، "**autobiography**". هل تعرفون ما معنى "**autobiography**"؟ هي عندما يكتب الشخص عن نفسه. هذا نوع من الأدب ولكنه ليس أدبًا بحثًا في الوقت نفسه. لذا، سيرة ذاتية. ولكن أحيانًا تُروى بأسلوب قصصي. إذن، نعم، هنا بالتأكيد أحتاج إلى معرفة شيء عن تاريخ أو حياة المؤلف. ولكن بشكل عام، هل أحتاج لذلك؟

**Students:** No.

**Lecturer:** We do sometimes or occasionally but not all the time because what I care about is this text. I don't need to fall into prejudice or biases. As a translator, I am just a tool changing one text into another. We rarely intervene in the text.

فقط أحيانًا أو بشكل نادر، حسنًا، ليس طوال الوقت. لأن ما يهمني هو النص نفسه. لا أريد الوقوع في التحيزات أو الأحكام المسبقة. أنا كمترجم مجرد أداة. فقط أقوم بنقل النص من لغة إلى أخرى. نادرًا ما نتدخل في النص

**Student:** Maybe we should think about the target audience, the people we are translating to.

**Lecturer:** Definitely. Thank you so much. If it's like a personal task and I am translating this because I want to give it to only one person, I need to tailor it with that. But when translating books, in this case, I need to focus more on culture, the community which is going to read that text. Sometimes, I need to delete something. Sometimes, I need to add something. Sometimes, there is a joke that is special to this culture; let's say the English culture, but we cannot have it in Arabic. So what can I do? I need to keep the joke because it is really funny. So, sometimes, we have these challenges.

إذا كانت المهمة شخصية، كأنني أترجم نصًا لشخص واحد فقط، فيجب أن أصمم الترجمة لتناسبه. ولكن عند ترجمة الكتب، في هذه الحالة أحتاج إلى التركيز أكثر على الثقافة، حسنًا؟ المجتمع الذي سيقراً هذا النص. أحيانًا أحتاج إلى حذف شيء، وأحيانًا أحتاج إلى إضافة شيء وأحيانًا تكون هناك نكتة خاصة بهذه الثقافة، لنقل الثقافة الإنجليزية، ولكن لا يمكننا نقلها إلى



العربية. فما الذي يمكنني فعله؟ يجب أن أحافظ على النكتة لأنها مضحكة جدًا. لذا، أحيانًا نواجه مثل هذه التحديات

**Do you need me to teach you anything rather than the things I talked about? Do you have any things that you need to get in this subject rather than the things I talked about?**

**Student:** The right way to translate and the mistakes

**Lecturer:** There is no right way. It is just your way. You have to find it in considering the language codes and the culture. So, there is no right or wrong way to translate.

This is the way I translate the sentence and you might have another way. For example, I tell you that I translated this word like this. You say no, I translated it like this because this is the idea I have in mind. So, there is no right way to translate. Here, it is an art; it is you putting yourself and using the science of the language.

**Student:** We might search for other subjects to understand more.

**Lecturer:** As an advice from me, this is a must in all the subjects. University level is about searching and researching. So basically, it is not us doing the job. It is you studying at home, and here we just like to converse and discuss the ideas.

البحث أمر ضروري في جميع المواد. المستوى الجامعي يدور حول البحث. خاصة هنا لأنه تعليم مفتوح. لذا، نحن لا نقوم بالعمل بدلاً عنكم. أنتم تدرسون في المنزل، وهنا نتبادل الأفكار ونتناقش.

**Do you want me to add anything to what I said?**

**Student:** Convert the main idea to the target meaning

**Lecturer:** This is something that we are trying to talk about theoretically. This is basically the source and the target.

We have a very interesting diagram which I'm going to show you maybe not next time, the time after. It is just like a plan where I can move from the source text to the target text and what levels we go to. It's like you are on the top of the mountain; this is the source text. You have to dive deep into the roots of the language and then change them. في حدود بين الإنجليزي والعربي

And go to the target all the other way down.

So, if you think of it like pictures or like a journey, it is really fun.



When you buy the book, you are going to look at the table of constants. We are going to talk about some scientific notions in the language itself: on the sentence level and then we are going to move broader until we reach the text. Then, we are going to go into something called "**discourse**" which is something similar to "**genre**". From "**discourse**", we are going to "**genre**," and then we are going to have two examples which are "**Translating English News Report into Arabic**" and vice versa.

Sometimes, I am going to be giving you some extra advice from me to help you as it actually helped me. I am not specialized in translation, but sometimes, I think about translation as something really interesting.

**Do you have any other questions or anything that you would like to inquire?**

**Student:** What is the best way to translate easily?

**Lecturer:** I'm sorry to tell you that there is nothing easy in life. I can tell you to search really well before you translate. Also, it depends on the nature of the text. So, if you are translating something which has to do with the theory of language, it is not going to be easy because it is really philosophical and theoretical. You have to read the text; try to understand it as much as possible, and then you research. Try to guess the genre of this text from the things that we are going to learn together. Then, you can search about it. What are the rules of this text? Do we have like this text in English? Can I reach it? Then, there is this way of changing Arabic into English which you have to go through. I think this is the smoothest way to really educate yourself about the texts, and then you can go into the journey of translating.

البحث الجيد قبل البدء في الترجمة، كما يعتمد الأمر على طبيعة النص. إذا كنت تترجم شيئاً يتعلق بنظرية اللغة، فلن يكون الأمر سهلاً لأنه فلسفي ونظري جداً. ولكن عليك قراءة النص ومحاولة فهمه قدر الإمكان، ثم تبدأ في البحث، وتحاول تخمين نوع هذا النص من الأشياء التي سنتعلمها معاً. بعد ذلك يمكنك البحث عنه: ما هي قواعد هذا النص؟ هل لدينا نص مشابه لهذا النص باللغة الإنجليزية؟ هل يمكنني الوصول إليه؟ ثم هناك مرحلة تحويل النص العربي إلى الإنجليزي عليك أن تمر بها. أعتقد أن هذه هي الطريقة الأكثر سلاسة؛ تثقيف نفسك حول النصوص، ومن ثم يمكنك الانطلاق في رحلة الترجمة.



**Student:** Thank you.

**Lecturer:** Once you get a full background, you can get it smoothly.

**Student:** Is our subject about translating from English to Arabic or both?

**Lecturer:** We have news reports from English to Arabic then from Arabic to English. We have a small practical part, not a very big one. It's going to be like interchanging.

**Student:** But we focus on English.

**Lecturer:** Both. In news reports, we focus on both because as an example of "genre," this book offers you news reports. So, we are focusing on written news reports actually, not spoken. مثل مقال بصحيفة

**Student:** I just want to learn some common mistakes in translation.

**Lecturer:** You need to define common mistakes because I can talk about common mistakes in both languages.

**Student:** In translation.

**Lecturer:** Do you have an example in mind?

**Student:** No.

**Lecturer:** Okay, we will try to but I don't think we might have common mistakes here. It just depends on your search. When we talk about "genre," it is actually something really interesting, yet you need to be careful because you are just, somehow, transforming one culture to another. Sometimes, in two cultures, you might find the same text but it has a different use.

لا أعتقد أننا قد نواجه أخطاء شائعة هنا. الأمر يعتمد فقط على بحثك عندما نتحدث عن "genre" فهو شيء ممتع جدًا ولكنه يتطلب الحذر أيضًا، لأنك تقوم، بطريقة ما، بنقل ثقافة إلى أخرى. أحيانًا في ثقافتين قد تجد نفس النص ولكنه يُستخدم بطريقة مختلفة

I'll try to pay attention to that, but I don't think you will make common mistakes because Dr. Salma is really putting it in an interesting way. How to look out a text and how to see the other text? Hopefully, it is going to be smooth.

**Student:** How can I train my listening?

**Lecturer:** Listening is about listening! Choose the accent that you want.



**Student:** Focusing on one.

**Lecturer:** It's better. You can listen to both, but if you want to get an accent, you need to keep yourself in touch with one accent, and then you can develop it. But, it is good to know both because you'll be exposed to a lot of texts.

**Student:** What is the first step to learn English? Is it listening or reading?

**Lecturer:** Both.

**Student:** Listening is easier.

**Lecturer:** We moved the subject to English learning. When you want to learn English, it is easier for the mind to give the input, which is listening and reading, through the eye and through the ear. The mind is like a sponge; the more you give it, the more it produces.

**Student:** The most difficult issue is writing.

**Lecturer:** Writing is the most challenging output. Before it, we have speaking because in speaking, we commit mistakes, and it's fine. But in writing, every word counts.

**Student:** English has four skills.

**Lecturer:** Yes.

**Student:** Reading is the easiest.

**Lecturer:** Yes. So, we can say reading, listening, speaking and writing. Listening is good if you want to make your accent flexible, but you want to be really active when listening because the most challenging point is when you are listening to someone and you are kind of engaging.

**Student:** What is the best way for the beginners to learn English?

**Another Student:** listening to music.

**Lecturer:** I started by listening to music, but that was not a plan to learn English.

**Student:** I am talking about the skills.

**Lecturer:** It is a very good idea if you can get a self learning book. You need to give some time to yourself. Try reading and listening. If you find listening difficult, try to listen to the same thing more than one time.



There is another method but you need to be patient with it; it takes a lot of time. Just grab a movie that you like, but let it be in Arabic. Watch it two to three times. Then, download an English subtitle and watch it for another three times in English. Now, you know the story. You can read it in English. After this, watch it for two to three times without subtitles. When you get bored, you start to think analytically about language: I know the story, so let's just listen to the language. We can sometimes use this technique that we call "**shadowing**" where you just repeat after them. Look at yourself in the mirror and look at your mouth and how it is moving. When babies are learning English or any language, what do they look at in us big people? The mouth: They try to look at our lips and they want to imitate that and then they speak. This is the same with us.

**Student:** Thank you.

**Another Student:** Watching the same film makes you familiar with it.

**Lecturer:** Thank you. When you get familiar with it, you start to think scientifically or analytically and start analyzing the sounds, how they are linked together in a quick way, the words, the sentences, etc. and you might get some idioms from them. Sometimes, it is spoken English but it helps.

**Student:** What about fast reading?

**Lecturer:** That is a different technique that we call "**active reading.**"

If it is for an English proficiency test, I really advise you, whatever skill it is, and specifically reading, to use this method: you first go to the questions, take some notes, like key words in every question, and then you go to the text. You don't need to care for any extra details at all. Just focus on the details which have to do with your question. It saves time and energy, but this is for a proficiency test. If you want to, like in general, to improve yourself in fast reading, you just need to practice reading. Your mind, step by step, starts to drop some weak structures.

إذا كان الأمر يتعلق باختبار كفاءة اللغة الإنجليزية، أنصحك بشدة، مهما كانت المهارة، وخاصة القراءة، أن تستخدم هذه الطريقة التي تبدأ فيها بالاطلاع على الأسئلة أولاً. دون بعض الملاحظات، مثل الكلمات المفتاحية في كل سؤال، ثم انتقل إلى النص. ليس عليك أبداً



أن تعطي اهتمامًا للتفاصيل الزائدة. فقط ركز على التفاصيل المرتبطة بأسئلتك. هذه الطريقة توفر الوقت والجهد. ولكن هذا بالنسبة لاختبارات الكفاءة. إذا كنت تريد تحسين نفسك بشكل عام في القراءة السريعة، عليك فقط ممارسة القراءة. عقلك تدريجيًا سيبدأ بتجاوز التراكيب الضعيفة.

### Did you study phonology or phonetics?

**Students:** no

**Lecturer:** maybe you will in this year's second semester.

In phonology, which is phonetics in quick speech or in spontaneous speech, the mind drops words like "is, am, are, do" because they are weak words; they are not the big structure. For example, if I am saying "where are you from?" We know what this question means. However, if I say "Where're you from?" this is phonology. Your mind needs to catch "Where" and "from"; I don't need "are you". And you will immediately be like, okay he or she is asking about my country. So, this is what happens also in reading. It is just about practice.

الكلمات مثل "is, am, are, do" يعتاد العقل على تجاوزها لأنها كلمات ضعيفة وليست الهيكل الأساسي. على سبيل المثال، إذا قلت "Where are you from?" نعلم جميعًا ما تعنيه هذه الجملة. ومع ذلك، إذا قلت "Where're you from?" بطريقة سريعة تخفي بعض أصوات الكلمات الضعيفة تفهمها أيضًا. هذا علم الأصوات. عقلك يحتاج فقط لالتقاط "Where" و "from". لا تحتاج إلى "are you"، فقط "Where" و "from". وستفهم فورًا أنني أسأل عن البلد. هذا هو ما يحدث أيضًا في القراءة. الأمر يتعلق بالممارسة فقط.

**It is like in Arabic:** Try to use some methods that we use to learn Arabic on English. Somehow, it is a bit difficult because Arabic is our mother language. You learned it blindly.

\*\*\*

That is it for today. I hope you enjoy this course with me.

Please, get the book. Next time, I am going to give you the articles and you can copy them and keep them with you.

**Student:** Thank you.

**Lecturer:** Stay well and enjoy your week.

\*\*\*\*\*

**See you next week!**

