Science of Translation

Dr. Romano Allati

2 Open Learning

1 Translation Department

2

2024/2025

》A《

Good morning!

So, we have this book *The Science of Translation Toward a Theory of Translating Genre* by Dr. Salma Haddad.

Today, we are going to cover chapter one. Next, we are going to cover a pdf that I am going to send you. It is called *Translation Studies* by Susan Bassnett. We are going to cover the first chapter which is **"Central Issues."**

Introduction

It has some key ideas about this book.

Let me ask you first: When I am translating, what steps do I need to think about? What factors do you take into consideration while translating?

Student: The topic of the text

Lecturer: The purpose of the text. Let's agree that first, we have a source text and we have a target language.

1. I need to know the purpose of the text.

2. I need to know the type of the text, and according to the text type, I need to change the style of my translation. As I told you, we mainly have two types of translation.

a. **Literal Translation**

b. **Free Approach** (Free Translation)

For example, if I have a legal text, I choose **literal translation.** However, if I am talking about a fashion trends text or a philosophical text, I choose **free translation. I need to read the**

text and understand the idea very clearly, and then I try to put it into a different formula in English, so my reader would feel really comfortable reading it.

عند القيام بالترجمة، ما هي الخطوات التي ينبغي التفكير فيها؟ ما هي العوامل التي يجب أخذها في الاعتبار أثناء عملية الترجمة؟

الطالب: موضوع النص

الأستاذ: النص المستهدف. حسنًا، لنبدأ بالاتفاق على أن لدينا نصًا مصدرًا ولغة مستهدفة

أولًا، ينبغي تحديد الغاية من النص

ثانيًا، يجب تحديد نوع النص، إذ إن نوع النص يقتضي تعديل أسلوب الترجمة بما يتلاءم معه. وكما أوضحت، هناك نوعان رئيسيان من الترجمة

a. الترجمة الحرفية

b. الترجمة الحرة

على سبيل المثال، إذا كان النص قانونيًا، تكون الترجمة الحرفية هي الخيار الأمثل لضمان الدقة والالتزام بالنص الأصلي. أما في حالة النصوص المتعلقة بالموضة أو النصوص الفلسفية، فإن الترجمة الحرة تكون أكثر ملائمة لأنها تتيح إعادة صياغة الأفكار بأسلوب يتناسب مع اللغة المستهدفة وثقافة جمهورها. ينبغي قراءة النص بعناية، واستيعاب الفكرة الأساسية بوضوح تام، ثم إعادة صياغتها بتركيبة مختلفة في اللغة المستهدفة، بحيث يشعر القارئ بالسلاسة والراحة عند القراءة.

Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Translation & Translator

According to Dr. Salma Haddad in a previous study of translation, she defined **translation** as the following.

"عملية نقل من لغة إلى لغة أخرى تتطلب استيعاب المترجم لرسالة اللغة المنقول منها، ومن ثم إعادة إنتاجها في اللغة المنقول إليها." (p. 1)

So, what is translation about?

Student: Transfer

Lecturer: Thank you so much. It is about transfer. It is like I am sending a file from one mobile to another. So, on the surface, it feels like a bluetooth or a wifi connection, but do we know what is happening in the data or the software of the mobile to send this from this? No. It is like I have the source text and I have to dig deep in order to break it down until I reach the bottom rock.

Let's say I have a naked text; I have the structure of this text. Then, I need to transfer it. I need to make something equal between Arabic and English. Then, I dress this text in order to have it, again, new.

Do you know what we call this process?

Student: Maintenance

Another student: Describe.

Lecturer: No.

Student: Bilingual

Lecturer: The process is bilingual because it has to do with two languages.

I am talking linguistically, as if I am talking about the theory of language.

Student: Analysis.

Lecturer: It is analysis, but we have something for language. **If we want to define language, how do we define it?**

Student: It is a way of communication.

Lecturer: What about when we go to **the nature of language?**

Another student: Group of words.

Lecturer: Go deeper.

Another student: Group of letters.

Lecturer: Go deeper.

Another student: Part of culture.

Lecturer: This is what we call **Meta language**. Meta language is when I go outside the language. **Definitely, language is a way of communication; it is a group of letters, words, sentences, etc.**

Student: Maybe it is codes.

Lecturer: Thank you so much. **It is codes.** If we are talking about letters, they are codes or symbols. How can I know that this is A if no one told me that this is A? It is a vowel, and it is the first letter of the alphabet. Did I know that? No, they taught us that. So, in our mind, we link this (A) to something; we make a code of it.

So, **language is encoded symbols under a lock and a key.** It is a locked box and we need to get into the treasures in it. This is what

a translator does. When you take this language, you need to break it down until you reach that treasure. And the treasure is the bare structure of a language.

The bilingual communication act includes, according to Mohammed,

"مرحلة هامة هي مرحلة تبديل شفرة لغة الأصل بشفرة لغة الترجمة وفق تقنيات محددة".

What are the specific technicalities that we have? What does Mohammed mean?

Student: the rules of the new language.

Lecturer: Thank you. It is the science, the grammar. These are the technicalities I have.

"وإذا كانت عملية الاتصال اللغوي بين أبناء اللغة تقتضي بوجود طرفين (المرسل والمتلقي) لإتمام عملية الاتصال، فإن الترجمة كعملية اتصال ثنائية اللغة تتطلب وجود حلقة وصل بين هذين الطرفين."

The mediator between **the source text producer** and **the target text receiver** is **the translator.** The job of the translator is to guarantee mutual communication.

What is your name?

Student: Rania.

Lecturer: Rania said that a language is an act of communication. The first criterion of communication is to be effective. How can I have an effective communication?

Student: to have a clear language

Lecturer: I can have a clear language when I **produce proper and correct grammar and meaning**. So, we are going to see that translation is not only about grammar, and this is a mistake we make.

We think of translation as the need to have really good grammar. **We sometimes forget about meaning and what we are translating.** This is a common mistake that we need to pay attention to.

"The Translator is a privileged receiver of the source text. Unlike the ordinary source text receiver, s/he decodes the source text in order to re-encode it in the target language." (p. 2)

"المترجم يُعدّ متلقيًا مميزًا للنص المصدر، حيث يتميز عن المتلقي العادي بكونه لا يقتصر على فهم النص وتحليله، بل يقوم بتفكيك بنيته اللغوية والدلالية بهدف إعادة صياغته وتشفيره في اللغة المستهدفة بما يتناسب مع معاييرها اللغوية والثقافية."

So, we are engineers of language. We need to decode and then recreate that system again in order to get that text and deliver it to the target receiver.

During the process of translation, the translator normally goes through two stages.

1. Understanding the source text by analyzing it.

2. Reproducing it in a way that makes the target text receiver able to understand the source text. (p. 2)

تمر عملية الترجمة بمرحلتين أساسيتين:
أولًا، فهم النص المصدر، ويتم ذلك من خلال تحليله بعمق لاستيعاب معانيه وأبعاده.
ثانيًا، إعادة إنتاج النص بشكل يتيح لمتلقي النص المستهدف فهم مضمون النص المصدر بوضوح، مع مراعاة السياق اللغوي والثقافي للغة الهدف.

This would involve three kinds of understanding. **Can you give me the three stages of understanding I have to go through?**

Student: The structure

Lecturer: When I am talking about the structure, what is this?

Student: The materials

Lecturer: What is this? The materials and the structure, what do we call these?

Student: Linguistics.

Lecturer: Thank you so much.

1. Linguistics understanding (what is said and how)

The linguistic understanding comes from my linguistic competence. So basically, I have a text without the context and without the meaning. I understand the grammar itself. Then, we go to understand what the purpose of the text is.

2. Understanding the text producer's intentions.

Why did the author write it? So, we get introduced a bit to the style of the author.

Student: Background?

Lecturer: Before the background

I need to get introduced to the style of the author. This is the only thing I am concerned about when I am talking about the producer of the text. Unless it is a biographical text, I need to go to the biography of the author.

So, I need to start thinking about the text type a bit from the style of the producer, the choice of words, the sentence structure, the style, the language, the formality or informality, and all of these things. We need also to understand the connection between the purpose of the text and why s/he chose this text type in specific.

Let's say a writer wrote political news in a cooking recipe. What would we do?

Student: Do the same

Another student: No. Here, I must change it a little bit.

Student: I would keep it the way the writer wrote it because if I changed it, I would affect the purpose of the writer.

Lecturer: Yes, thank you. Let's get into the details. If I have a piece of political news in a cooking recipe, how many genres (text kind) do I have here?   **Student:** Two.

Lecturer: We have the genre of the cooking recipe and the political one. What are the **text types** of these genres? In the cooking one, we have for example bullet points: A process and instructions. However, in a political text, what is the text type? It is argumentative and sometimes, it can be indirectly informative, but usually, we have two parties and they are fighting and arguing.

3. Background understanding (from whom, to whom, and why something is produced in this particular way).

Here, I need to justify his style. I need to defend him in my act of translation. I accept what s/he does, and now, I have to go through it and translate it. Here, I also need to put it in context and also add the cultural flavor.

1. الفهم اللغوي (ما يُقال وكيف يُقال):

يُشتق الفهم اللغوي من الكفاءة اللغوية للفرد، والتي تُعنى بالقدرة على تحليل النصوص دون الحاجة إلى سياقها أو معناها الدلالي. في هذا الإطار، يتم التركيز على القواعد والبنية النحوية للنص ذاته. بعد ذلك، ينتقل التحليل إلى تحديد الغرض الأساسي للنص أو وظيفته.

2. فهم نوايا كاتب النص:

يمثّل تحليل نوايا كاتب النص جزءًا جوهريًا من عملية تحليل النصوص. يتطلب ذلك طرح أسئلة مثل: لماذا كُتب النص؟ وكيف يمكن أن تعكس خصائصه أسلوب المؤلف؟ من خلال ذلك، يتم التعرف على بعض ملامح أسلوب الكاتب، بما في ذلك اختيار الكلمات وبنية الجمل والأسلوب العام والطابع اللغوي للنص (رسمي أم غير رسمي). من المهم أيضًا أن نفهم العلاقة بين الهدف من النص والسبب الذي دفع المؤلف لاختيار هذا النوع المحدد من النصوص لتحقيق هذا الغرض.

ينبغي البدء بالتعرف على أسلوب الكاتب قبل الخوض في الخلفية. هذا الجانب هو النقطة الأساسية التي تُهم عند الحديث عن كاتب النص، باستثناء النصوص ذات الطابع السيري (البيوغرافي) التي تتطلب الرجوع إلى سيرة المؤلف.

3. فهم الخلفية (من الكاتب؟ ولمن؟ ولماذا أُنتج النص بهذا الشكل؟):

في هذه المرحلة، يجب أن أبرر أسلوب المؤلف وأدافع عنه في عملية الترجمة. أقبل ما اختاره من أساليب لغوية وتعبيرية، ثم أتعامل معها بعناية أثناء الترجمة لنقلها. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، أضع النص في سياقه المناسب وأضيف البُعد الثقافي الذي يعكس البيئة التي نشأ فيها النص.

The study of semantics is the science of studying meaning for its sake. It is just like linguistics. What relations do we have in grammar, between words, between sentences? It is just on the level of language. However, when I go to pragmatics, I study the meaning in use. It is like I am taking this meaning and putting it in context.

We do the same in translation. I should start with linguistics. Then, I go to understand the author, his style and why the language is formed like that. Then, I start to understand the context, the culture. That would make a full meaning for me.

يُعد علم الدلالة (Semantics) علمًا يركز على دراسة المعنى لذاته، وهو مشابه في منهجيته لعلم اللغة. فهو يتناول العلاقات في النحو، سواء بين الكلمات أو بين الجمل، على مستوى اللغة فقط. ولكن عندما ننتقل إلى علم التداولية (Pragmatics)، فإننا ندرس هذا المعنى في سياق الاستخدام. أي أننا نأخذ هذا المعنى ونضعه في سياقه.

التطبيق في الترجمة:

في الترجمة، نتبع نهجًا مشابهًا. يجب أن أبدأ بتحليل الجوانب اللغوية لفهم النص. بعد ذلك، أركز على فهم المؤلف وأسلوبه، وأسباب تشكيل اللغة بهذا النمط. ثم أنتقل إلى فهم السياق والثقافة المحيطة بالنص. عندها فقط أتمكن من الوصول إلى فهم كامل وشامل للمعنى.

"In every translation process, the translator is caught between two texts: the source text and the target text. In the first place, s/he is analyzing the source text that is produced by the source text producer, addressed to the source text receiver, created according to regulations of the source language and to the expectations of the source language community." (p. 3)

This last idea is what the whole book is about because we are talking about genres. Usually, when I have a genre, it is a very old convention that I put together. It is like: why do I call this piece of writing a poem? It started ages ago in the past. Once we understand and see the theme in which someone is expressing his feelings and ideas and using a decorated language, we know that this is the genre of poetry.

I need to go into a lot of research, and the more the genre is conventionalized in society, the more I need to search about it because there are some rules that I need to stick to.

"Needless to say, these expectations generally include linguistic specifications, structural arrangements, cultural considerations, etc. On the other hand, the translator reproduces the source text in another language. The translated text is the target text that is produced by the target text producer, i.e. the translator, addressed to the target text receiver, created according to the regulations of the target language and to the expectations of the target language community."

(pp. 3-4)

If I am speaking, communicating, what is the most important thing in my speaking?

Student: Coherent and cohesive sentences and ideas

Lecturer: In speaking, we do not say sentences; we say **utterances**. So, if the utterance is the most important element in speaking, **what is the most important element or unit in translating?**

Student: the text

Lecturer:

"Text is the most important unit in a social theory of language. It is a socially and contextually complete unit of language" (p. 4)

So, because I am an Arab and I know the whole culture I am in, when I look at something in the street, I am going to understand it better than a foreigner, but that does not mean that his meaning is not valid.

"Any explanation of language should begin with text, not words or sentences" (p. 4)

By 'text' here, we mean a full idea. It is a very big idea that clarifies everything in front of me.

"Anything significant about the text can be explained by raising the following questions: who produces the text? For whom was it produced? In what context was it produced? What are the constraints that governed its production?" (p. 4)

"النص هو الوحدة الأساسية والأكثر أهمية في النظرية الاجتماعية للغة. إنه "وحدة لغوية مكتملة اجتماعيًا وسياقيًا." يجب أن يتعامل أي تفسير للغة مع النص بشكل أساسي، وليس مع الكلمات أو الجمل. يمكن تفسير أي شيء ذي دلالة حول النص من خلال طرح الأسئلة التالية: من هو منتج النص؟ لمن تم إنتاجه؟ في أي سياق تم إنتاجه؟ ما هي القيود التي حددت عملية إنتاجه؟"

"Beaugrande & Dressler argue that "the ability to communicate in a language is equated with the ability to form grammatical paradigms and syntactic patterns with the help of an unsystematically compiled vocabulary list. The learners are given no thorough exposure to the actualization strategies without which these virtual systems of grammar/syntax and lexicon are of little practical value"'

(pp. 4-5)

If I am translating and understanding the text only on the linguistic level, am I getting anywhere with this? No. What is the benefit of these grammars and grouping them in my mind without having the meaning to them? It is like food without flavors!

"How to relate texts to situations or to plans and goals. Learners are forced to act as if grammatical perfection were the highest priority for saying anything (such is at least the usual standard for evaluation and testing), so they easily become tongue-tied and helpless."

(p. 5)

"يتم مساواة القدرة على التواصل بلغة ما بالقدرة على تشكيل النماذج النحوية والأنماط التركيبية بمساعدة قائمة مفردات تم تجميعها بشكل غير منهجي. لا يتم تزويد المتعلمين بتعرض كامل لاستراتيجيات التفعيل التي بدونها تكون هذه الأنظمة الافتراضية للنحو/التركيب والمفردات ذات قيمة عملية ضئيلة: كيفية ربط النصوص بالمواقف أو الخطط والأهداف. يُجبر المتعلمون على التصرف كما لو أن الكمال النحوي هو الأولوية العليا في قول أي شيء (وهذا هو المعيار المعتاد للتقييم والاختبار)، بحيث يصبحون بسهولة متلعثمين وعاجزين."

منكب المعنى   So, we only focus on having grammatical perfection.

وكل شي بيجي معه

We need to put them together. In translation, I need both, just like how water is a mix of Oxygen and Hydrogen, translation is a mix of proper grammar and meaning.

"Unfortunately, this equation extends to cover translation areas where, more often than not, translators focus on lexical, grammatical and syntactic individual items, and fail to deal with translation "... as a communicative process which takes place within a social context."" (p. 5)

"للأسف، تمتد هذه المعادلة لتشمل مجالات الترجمة حيث يركز المترجمون غالبًا على العناصر المعجمية والنحوية والتركيبية بشكل منفصل، ويفشلون في التعامل مع الترجمة باعتبارها "عملية تواصلية تتم ضمن سياق اجتماعي."

***

1. Model of translation

Model means system. So, this is one of the systems or models of translation.

"The model of translation suggested in this book is based on five important premises:

1) ...genre membership influences the translator's decisions" (p. 6)

1. تأثر قرارات المترجم بانتماء النص إلى نوعه الأدبي أو الوظيفي.

When I read a text that I want to translate, I try to identify it; for example, a news report. How did I know that? There are some conventions such as the choice of vocabulary, the headlines, the background information, the news itself, etc.

When I know that this is the genre I am working on, I need to be aware that I am becoming a member of this genre because I am translating it.

2) **"DIFFERENT TEXT TYPES PLACE DIFFERENT SETS OF DEMANDS ON THE TRANSLATOR, WITH CERTAIN TYPES BEING OBVIOUSLY MORE DEMANDING THAN OTHERS"** (p. 6)

2. تفرض الأنواع النصية المختلفة متطلبات متباينة على المترجم، حيث تتميز بعض الأنواع بكونها أكثر تعقيدًا وتطلبًا بشكل واضح مقارنة بغيرها.

For example, if I am having a legal text or a political one, I need to go with literal translation.

3) **"...literal translation works admirably well with legal language..., slightly less well with exposition... and not always well with the more involved types of argumentation... which necessitate a freer approach"** (p. 6)

3. تُظهر الترجمة الحرفية كفاءة ملحوظة عند التعامل مع النصوص القانونية، لكنها تقل فاعلية مع النصوص التفسيرية، ولا تكون دائمًا مناسبة عند التعامل مع الأنواع الأكثر تعقيدًا من الجدل والنقاشات التي تتطلب نهجاً أكثر تحررًا.

For example, with news, legal, or law language, in the first place, I do care about the structure of the sentences. However, in argumentation, the most important thing is to show the argument. Also, I need to pay attention: does the author keep the argument simple and direct? I need just to copy-paste all of these things.

4) **"The more conventional the genre, the more demanding it proves to be in translation. This means that the translator can sometimes face extreme cases (the cases of the most conventionalized genres) where the slightly modified literal translation, suggested throughout this book, does not work. In such cases, considerable changes should be considered by the translator"** (pp. 6-7)