Module:Theories and techniques of translation

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Objectives of the lesson

-Students should be able to master the different linguistics theories of translation.

-To know the relationship between linguistics and translation Theories of translation.

1-Language Studies:

With developments in linguistics early this century, following Ferdinand de Saussure's dichotomies: langue! parole, signified ,signifier, syntagmatic/ paradigmatic and synchronic, diachronic, extensive research was undertaken with the aim of describing language empirically. The prevailing view was in favour of establishing an autonomous discipline, where language phenomena could be investigated and studied by means of rigorous procedures and methods, similar to those used in science.

1.1Language Studies and Translation Studies

It is axiomatic to say that language studies are closely interrelated with translation studies. L. G. Kelly (1979: 34) puts forward the claim that 'to each stream of language theory, there corresponds a theory of translation.' This is crystal clear given that every development in linguistic theory is usually followed by developments in translation studies, though this process is not

commensurate. Moreover, all linguistic schools or trends have devoted part oftheir work to translation problems, attempting to devisetranslating procedures from different perspectives. Later trendsin linguistics have laid emphasis on the need to set up a theory oftranslating armed with rigorous methods that the translatorcould employ to arrive at precise and more systematic results.

The mutual influence between language and translation has been
highlighted by linguists and translation theorists. J. Catford, forexample, in the preface to his A Linguistic Theory of Translationarticulates the proposition that:

Since translation has to do with language, the analysis and description of translation processes must make considerable use of categories set up for the description of language. It must, in other words, draw upon a theory of language.

Nida, de Beaugrande, and Hartmann have applied current linguistic theories to the activity of translation, thus producing new translation theories based on linguistic theories.

J. Catford (1965) was influenced by Halliday's grammatical rank scale Improving Halliday's distinction of language levels by introducing the distinction of the language substance (e.g. the phonic and the graphic), Catford presented a 'rank-bound'translation, i.e. a translation confined to a single rank,such as morpheme, word, or phrase. On the basis of the four levels of language, Catford proposed four types of translation: the phonological, the graphological, the grammatical, and the lexical.

Indeed, he devoted three chapters of his book to the definitions and applications of these types.

It might be useful to add that Catford was also influenced, to a great extent, by the famous anthropologist J. R. Firth in as far as 'situation substance' and 'contextual meaning' are concerned.

Eugene Nida, on the other hand, used Chomsky's transformationalgenerative grammar in translating. He claimed that generativegrammar was the most effective way to deal with translationproblems.

One major issue in text linguistics is the role of context in translating. By understanding context, text linguists can work out the strategies by means of which the translator analyses and reconstructs the SLT systematically.

Another equally important issue is text type. Text linguists set up text types each of which requires a different method of translating. They also highlight
the importance of 'cohesive ties', 'structure', 'texture', 'intertextuality', etc. which can be considered useful and necessary.

2-Theories of translation

Though there have been many serious attempts to arrive at a unified theory of translating, linguists and translation theorists are still in doubt about such a possibility. The idea of formulating a reliable theory is of a great significance, since it would systematize the methods and procedures of translating.

2.1 Linguistic Theories of Translating:
According to Nida:

Linguistic theories of translation are based on a comparison of linguistic structures of source and receptor texts rather than on a comparison of literary genres and stylistic features. (1976: 69)

These theories developed as a result of the great development in modern linguistic theories, and the tendency to study language. scientifically. The findings of these linguistic theories were applied to other related areas such as language teaching and translating. However, little benefit came out of these theories, since they were confined to the study of idealized constructions,

with meaning left out of account.

Later, when meaning was reinstated by linguists and anthropologists such as Bloomfield, Malinowski, and Firth, all aspects of meaning were investigated, and new insights about the nature of meaning were provided. Thus, linguists and translation theorists were motivated to propose that translation theory 'is

mainly an aspect of semantics; all questions of semantics relate to translation theory'. (Newmark: 1 981: 5)

One major difference between linguistic theories of translating and philological theories of translating is that linguistic theories are descriptive rather than prescriptive. They demonstrate how people translate rather than how they should translate. This does not imply that all linguistic theories are the same, or there would be one standard theory only. They differ in terms of focus orperspective. According to Nida:

The principal differences between various linguistic theories (or semi-theories) of translation lie in the extent to which the focus is on surface structures or corresponding deep structures. Theories based on surface-structure comparisons involve the use of more-or-less elaborate sets of rules for matching roughly corresponding structures. (1976) Nida's list includes contributions from linguists such as Pottier (1970), Hjelmeslev (1953), Greimas (1966), Coseriu (1970a, b),Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), Nida (1952, 1964, 1969), Walmsley (1970), Scharlau (1970), Raabe (1972), Beekman and Callow (1974), Petofi (1971a, b, and 1972), and most of the articles

published in Meta as representative of linguistic theories of translating.

2.2 Sociolinguistic Theories of Translating:

Sociolinguistic theories of translating emerged out of the dissatisfaction with linguistic theories of translating, and the growing interest in communication. Such interest resulted from the work of anthropologists who recognized the role of text recipients in the process of translating. Those changes are demonstrated in Nida (1964).

Generally speaking, some linguistic theories of translating have demonstrated sociolinguistic influences by referring to the context of communication. For example, though Catford's theory of translating (1965) is primarily linguistic and related to surface structure equivalence, it moves in the direction of the

context of situation in its emphasis on the differences between dialects and registers. Sociolinguistic theories of translating relate linguisticstructures to a higher level where they can be viewed in terms of their function in communication. When discussing a text, the sociolinguist is concerned particularly with its author, its historical background, the circumstances involved in its production, and the history of its interpretation, for such

elements figure in the social setting of communication.

Nida and Taber (1969), for example, have pointed out that the old focus on the form of the message in translating has shifted to the receptors, i.e. the readers. Therefore, it is the reader's response to the translated message that determines the correctness of that message. They set the average reader as the only criterion for measuring correctness in translating. Correctness, in their

view, is not only the possibility of understanding the message by readers but rather the impossibility of misunderstanding it.

 One difference between sociolinguistic theories of translating and linguistic ones is that in sociolinguistic theories langue, the language system, is as important as parole the actual use of language. Like linguistic theories of

translating, sociolinguistic theories are descriptive. 'The response of the receptors must be in terms of the actual response to similar types of texts, and in terms of what might be regarded as judicial or legal norms.' (Nida 1976: 77).

Nida concludes that such classification of theories of translatingdoes not exist in actual practice. The translator selects thetheory and method of translating that he regards mostappropriate to the kind and type of text he is dealing with.

2.3The Grammatical Model of Translating:

This approach to translating and translation teaching is based on translation theories which regard translating as solely a linguistic operation. The instinctive feature of this model is its association of translating with grammatical transfer. Within such a perspective, language is viewed as grammar, and translating is no more than substituting the grammar and vocabulary of one language for the grammar and vocabulary of another.

Along these lines, translating has been defined as 'the replacement of SL grammar and lexis by equivalent TL grammar and lexis' (Catford 1965: 22). Underlying this attitude is the assumption that language is an objective code with a fixed structure.

According to Chau, this approach to translating is antimentalistic infocusing on grammatical structure, while leaving meaning out of account. The task of translating is considered a symbol-to-symbol transformation. Linguistic signs, therefore, are supposed to be essentially objective, allowing for a one-tone

One-dimensional matching of codes. When translating, one is operating at the level of langue rather than parole. The unit of translating is either the word or the sentence. The Grammatical Model, therefore, yields a literal translation with cultural differences between the two languages ignored. In terms of translation teaching, contrastive grammar is the sole method adopted in this model.

Translation and translation techniques

Objectives of the lesson

-By the end of this lesson, students should be able to know what translation is.

-To know the different types and techniques of translation.

-To master how to translate using the different techniques of translation.

Part One: Translation

What is translation

Terminology

The word 'translation' has been used to refer to one of these categories:

a. Translation as the actual process of decoding the SLT and encoding the TLT.

-SLT:the source language text.

-TLT:the target language text.

-SL:the source language.

-TL:the target language.

b. Translation as the end-product, texts resulting from the process of decoding the SLT and encoding the TLT.

c. Translation as a useful technique in foreign language teaching. It is often referred to as 'the Grammar Translation Approach'.

d. Translation as an academic field, an interdisciplinary field which spans other disciplines such as linguistics, semiotics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, logic, psycholinguistics, and communication theory.

1.1. Definition of Translation

Defining translation has always been a problematic issue in the sense that one findsmore than one definition, each one reflects a different perspective and a theoretical basis in which scholars seek the same goal namely, equivalence. In

common practice, one can usually identify two different senses of translation. One aims at transferring ideas and messages via rewording or paraphrasing, as an in everyday life when a layman tries to explain or express ideas in a different way by using different words only even if within the same language. The other sees translation as an act of transferring messages from a source language into a target language, be it oral or written, for the sake of establishing equivalence to get the appropriate meaning (Yowell&Lataiwish, 2000).Some scholars' definitions of translation focus on the approach of preserving theoriginal or source text effect; to others (Nida and Taber, 1969/1982) translation consists of reformulating the message of the source text into the closest equivalent of the target language. They gave priority to meaning preservation as much as possible then focusing on the style.

For others (Catford, 1965), translation is to substitute a piece of writing in one language by its corresponding piece of writing in another language. As for Ghazzala (1995), translation is any process that results in transferring the meaning from one language intoanother. For him the main goal is to deliver meaning of the source language by using the equivalents available in the target language.

Translation was defined from two different perspectives. First as a process, translation is an act of taking a text from one language and transforming it into another. In this sense, Hatim and Munday focus on the part of the translator. Second as a product, translation focuses on the results achieved by the translator, the concrete product oftranslation.

1.2. <u>Types of Translation</u>

At this level, translation will be looked at from the viewpoint of classification of typesand methods. According to Hatim and Munday (2004), Jacobson in his

seminal paper(1959/2000) distinguishes between three main types of written translation: Intra-ingual translation, inter-lingual translation, and inter-semiotic translation.

1-**Intra-lingual translation:** is the translation of textual materials within the same language and may include rewording or paraphrasing.

2-**Inter-lingual translation:** is to translate textual materials from one language into another. It is also referred to as the proper translation.

3-**inter-semiotic translation:** is the translation or the interpretation of the verbal signs by non verbal signs as translating ideas or emotions into a painting or in symphony of music.

In addition, each theorist looks at these types of translation differently and classifiesthem in different ways. For Ghazzala (1995), for example, literal versus free translation is a sufficient classification. According to him, all the available typologies can be squeezed into these two types. All in all, the available typologies may include the following (Ghazzala1995: 5)

1. Semantic versus communicative translation.

2. Formal versus dynamic translation.

3. Non-pragmatic versus pragmatic translation.

4. Non-creative versus creative translation.

Even though, Ghazzala (1995) discussed only the literal and free translation, he started by literal translation which, according to him, is of two types:

1.*Word-for-word translation*

2. *Direct translation*.

T he first type aims at translating individual words only taking no consideration of thegrammatical or other linguistic differences. Hence word-for-word translation involvesextreme fidelity to the wording of the source text and forces the translator to set the exact equivalents. On the other hand, the second type, direct translation, considers the grammar and the linguistic differences.

Many theoreticians, including Ghazzala (1995), claimed that this type could be a verydangerous method because it may destroy the meaning. In this sense, Chukovsky said that "its adoption frequently leads to a complete distortion of the meaning of the original" (1984:6).Lefevere (1975) argued that this method has severe limitations.

On the other hand, free translation is to translate under no limitation, translate freely; it is also referred to as sense-for-sense translation. In free translation, the translator focuses on producing a natural readable target text. It is more target text oriented than literal translation; free translation does not take much consideration to preserve the source text wording. Catford (1965:25) suggested that free translations should be *unbounded.*

Lecture two

Objective of the lesson

-The students should be able to know the different procedures and strategies and use them to translate

1. Translation procedures and strategies

The translating procedures, as stated by Nida (1964 pp.241-45) are as follow:

1.1-Technical procedures:

A. analysis of the source and target languages;

B. a thorough study of the source language text before making attempts to translate it;

C. Making judgments of the semantic and syntactic approximations.

1.2-<u>Organizational procedures</u>:

constant reevaluation of the attempt made; contrasting it with the existing available translations of the same text done by other translators, and checking the text's communicative effectiveness by asking the target language readers to evaluate its accuracy and effectiveness and studying their reactions (pp. 246-47).

Krings (1986:18) defines translation strategy as "translator's potentially conscious plans for solving concrete translation problems in the framework of a concrete translation task," and Seguinot (1989) believes that there are at least three global strategies employed by the translators: (i) translating without interruption for as long as possible; (ii) correcting surface errors immediately; (iii) leaving the monitoring for qualitative or stylistic errors in the text to the revision stage.

Moreover, Loescher (1991:8) defines translation strategy as "a potentially conscious procedure for solving a problem faced in translating a text, or any segment of it." As it is stated in this definition, the notion of consciousness is significant in distinguishing strategies which are used by the learners or translators. In this regard, Cohen (1998:4) asserts that "the element of consciousness is what distinguishes strategies from these processes that are not strategic."

Furthermore, Bell (1998:188) differentiates between global (those dealing with whole texts) and local (those dealing with text segments) strategies and confirms that this distinction results from various kinds of translation problems.

Venuti (1998:240) indicates that translation strategies "involve the basic tasks of choosing the foreign text to be translated and developing a method to translate

it." He employs the concepts of domesticating and foreignizing to refer to translation strategies.

Jaaskelainen (1999:71) considers strategy as, "a series of competencies, a set of steps or processes that favor the acquisition, storage, and/or utilization of information." He maintains that strategies are "heuristic and flexible in nature, and their adoption implies a decision influenced by amendments in the translator's objectives."

Taking into account the process and product of translation, Jaaskelainen (2005) divides strategies into two major categories: some strategies relate to what happens to texts, while other strategies relate to what happens in the process.

Product-related strategies, as Jaaskelainen (2005:15) writes, involves the basic tasks of choosing the SL text and developing a method to translate it. However, she maintains that process-related strategies "are a set of (loosely formulated) rules or principles which a translator uses to reach the goals determined by the translating situation" (p.16). Moreover, Jaaskelainen (2005:16) divides this into two types, namely global strategies and local strategies: "global strategies refer to general principles and modes of action and local strategies refer to specific activities in relation to the translator's problem-solving and decision-making."

Newmark (1988b p.81) mentions the difference between translation methods and translation procedures. He writes that, "*While translation methods relate to whole texts, translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language*". He goes on to refer to the following methods of translation:

> a-_Word-for-word translation_: in which the SL word order is preserved and the words translated singly by their most common meanings, out of context.

b-Literal translation: in which the SL grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest TL equivalents, but the lexical words are again translated singly, out of context.

c-Faithful translation: it attempts to produce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the TL grammatical structures.

d-Semantic translation: which differs from 'faithful translation' only in as far as it must take more account of the aesthetic value of the SL text.

e-Adaptation: which is the freest form of translation, and is used mainly for plays (comedies) and poetry; the themes, characters, plots are usually preserved, the SL culture is converted to the TL culture and the text is rewritten.

f-Free translation: it produces the TL text without the style, form, or content of the original.

g-Idiomatic translation: it reproduces the 'message' of the original but tends to distort nuances of meaning by preferring colloquialisms and idioms where these do not exist in the original.

h-Communicative translation: it attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership (1988b: 45-47).

Newmark (1991:10-12) writes of a continuum existing between "semantic" and "communicative" translation. Any translation can be "more, or less semantic— more, or less, communicative—even a particular section or sentence can be treated more communicatively or less semantically." Both seek an "equivalent effect." Zhongying (1994: 97), who prefers literal translation to free translation,

writes that, "[i]n China, it is agreed by many that one should translate literally, if possible, or appeal to free translation."

In order to clarify the distinction between procedure and strategy, the forthcoming section is allotted to discussing the procedures of translating culture-specific terms, and strategies for rendering allusions will be explained in detail.