Between English and Arabic

Between English and Arabic:
A Practical Course in Translation

By

Bahaa-eddin Abulhassan Hassan

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**
P U B L I S H I N G

To my family

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Nature of Translation
    1.1 Knowledge
    1.2 Decision Makers
    1.3 Translation as Rewriting
    1.4 Criteria for a Good Translation
    1.5 Three Steps for Novice Translators
    1.6 Translation Problems
    1.7 Translation Shifts
    1.8 Possible Strategies in Translation
    1.9 Contrastive Linguistics in Translation

Meaning-based Issues in Translation
    2.1 Changes in Meaning
    2.2 Types of Lexical Meanings
    2.3 Problems Related to Lexical Items
    2.4 Translating Metaphors
    2.5 Translating Proverbs
    2.6 Case Grammar in Translation
    2.7 Culture

Grammatical Issues in Translation
    3.1 Morphological Level
    3.2 Syntactic Level
    3.3 Cohesion and Coherence
    3.4 Register and Style
    3.5 Sentential Issues in Translation

PREFACE

This book does not attempt a new theory of translation, but rather an introductory course for students of translation. It is designed to improve understanding of translation between Arabic and English. The book draws upon contrastive linguistics. Contrastive linguistics is a linguistic study of two languages, aiming to identify differences between them. Contrastive linguistics is a relatively modern discipline which began to develop in the 1930s, and the American linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf (1941: 240) foresaw its place as a successor to the comparative study of languages.

There is still an interest in contrastive linguistics because it is theoretical and descriptive. Translators transfer meaning between two different languages. One could therefore avoid problems of translation through a prior contrastive analysis in the two languages. It is probably most useful in pointing out areas where direct translation of a term or phrase will not convey accurately in the target language the intended meaning of the first. At the macro-level, it leads the translator to look at broader issues such as whether the structure of the discourse for a given text-type is the same in both languages. Furthermore, although contrastive linguistics is commonly used, there are some theoretical and practical problems in its application. The solution lies in identifying a common ground for comparison, comparing features of different languages, taking account of socio-cultural factors, and taking account of extra-textual and inter-textual factors. We have to take into consideration that the two languages must have some common measure or ground by which they can be compared; otherwise the contrastive task is not possible, a constant that underlies and makes possible the variables that are identified; this is known as the *tertium comparationis* (TC). Firstly, a particular grammatical structure in one language may be a requirement while in another it may be one choice amongst several; secondly, the choice which is represented by a grammatical structure in one language may have a different significance in that language from the choice represented by an apparently equivalent structure in another language; thirdly, a particular structure in one language may be unmarked while in another it may be marked. A pair of sentences might be semantically and/or pragmatically equivalent but have widely varying likelihoods of occurrence in the languages from which they are drawn.

Contrastive linguistics deals with systems rather than their users. Consequently it seems to be relevant to translations as products rather than to the process of translating - which many current translation specialists (e.g. Hatim and Mason 1990; Bell 1991) see as central to an adequate theory of translation. With regard to the conflict between product-oriented approach or process-orientated approach, we can consider that while contrastive linguistics focuses on the finished text - *the* product, it does not, cannot, ignore the process of translating. Contrastive analysis can shed light on translation strategies in different languages. Hatim and Mason (ibid.), for example, analyze co-reference strategies in French and English and text-signaling strategies in Arabic and English in order to account for translators' decisions.

This book is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is a short introduction to translation. It is a summary of possible strategies in translation. Chapter two tackles meaning-based issues in translation. Chapter three describes grammatical issues in translation. Chapter four touches upon phonological issues in translation. Chapter five deals with the process of editing and proofreading a translation. Chapter six gives suggested questions about the course.

Finally, I am aware that such a book has its limitations, and I hope that the selection of topics will prove an interesting introduction to students of translation studies. I also hope that this book may whet the reader's appetite and encourage him/her to read further.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SL   source language

TL   target language

SLT   source language text

TLT   target language text

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

NATURE OF TRANSLATION

Translation is the interpretation of a source text meaning and the production of an equivalent text meaning in another language. Translation is a process that deals with meaning across language barriers. Throughout its long history, translation has never enjoyed the kind of recognition and respect that other professions enjoy. Translators have constantly complained that translation is underestimated as a profession (Baker 1992:2).

In its nature, translation is a science, an art, and a skill. It is a science in the sense that it necessitates complete knowledge of the structure of the two languages concerned. It is an art since it requires artistic talent to reconstruct the original text. It is also a skill because it entails the ability to smooth over any difficulty in the process of translation.

1.1 Knowledge

The most important task for translation "lies in the preservation of 'meaning' across two different languages" (House, 1977: 25). Scholars like Nida have been trying to deal with translation as a principled science, due to the nature of human languages and linguistics. Newmark (1981: 19) believes that "translation theory is neither a theory nor a science, but the body of knowledge that we have, and have still to have about the process of translating". As Newmark argues, with more knowledge about the process of translation and more research about meaning across cultures, we enrich our knowledge about the process of translation to make it more adequate in transferring texts across languages. The translator should have:

1) Target language (TL) knowledge
2) Source language (SL) knowledge
3) Text type knowledge
4) Subject area (real world) knowledge.
5) Contrastive knowledge.

Moreover, a fully competent translator isn't only bilingual, but also bicultural.

1.2 Decision Makers

The work of the translator is nothing but taking decisions. Decision making can be seen as the cognitive process which results in the selection of a translation strategy among several alternative strategies. A final choice is produced within every decision making process. A translator has to deal with:

1) The purpose of the original (how to express it through the available content),
2) The thematic structure,
3) And the style of the original.

1.3 Translation as Rewriting

Some scholars view a translator as a writer who writes the author's original message in another language. The only difference between her/him and the original writer is that these ideas are the latter's. Another difference is that the job of the translator is even more difficult than that of the original writer. The writer is supposed to produce directly his/her ideas and emotions in his/her own language however intricate and complicated his/her thoughts are. The translator's responsibility is more difficult, for s/he has to reproduce the experiences of a different person. Chabban (1984) believes that, however accurately the translator may search into the inner depths of the writer's mind, the two texts cannot be fully equivalent.

1.4 Criteria for a Good Translation

A good translation is one that carries all the ideas of the original as well as its structural and cultural features. A good translation is easily understood as fluent and smooth and idiomatic. A good translation conveys, to some extent, the literary subtleties of the original. It reconstructs the cultural/historical context of the original. It should capture the style or atmosphere of the original text. The best translations are produced by persons who are translating into their native language.

1.5 Three Steps for Novice Translators

The present book shows three main steps for any translator who begins his/her work in the field of translation: **analysis of the syntactic and semantic structures of the SL text**; **transfer from the SL to the TL**; and **restructuring the underlying form of the transferred text**. Nida (1984: 99) maintains that the translator is working at all three levels at the same time so that s/he would be able to get both the underlying and the surface meanings of the text. This is especially important when there are rhetorical functions involved. McGuire (1980: 80) emphasizes a similar method to Nida's suggesting that "the translator ... first reads/translates in the SL and then, through a further process of decoding, translates the text into the TL language." Mental processing in the phase of decoding is of a semantic nature when the translator identifies the relevant areas within the semantic field of any single word or sentence; and it is of a pragmatic nature when he or she deals with the logical match of the possible meanings with the general context and the co-text. In contrast, mental processing is of a syntactic nature when he or she tries to reconstruct the possible structure of the sentence, i.e. the relations within its elements.
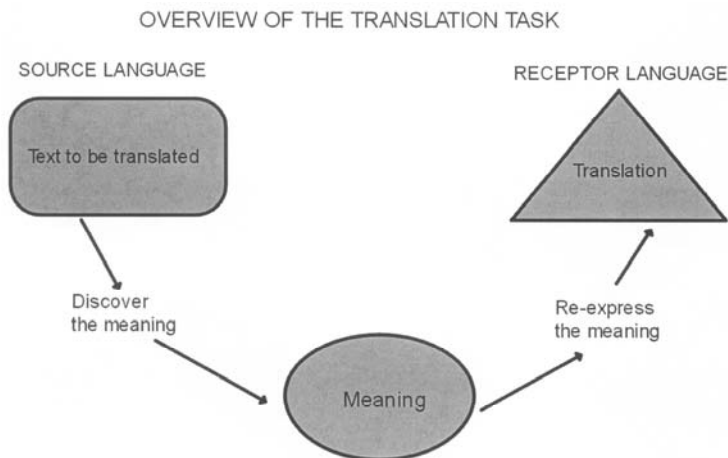
1.5.1 Analysis

The first phase of the translation process consists of reading the text. The reading act, first, falls under the competence of psychology, because it concerns our perception. When a person reads, his brain deals with many functions in such rapid sequences that everything seems to be happening simultaneously. Simply reading a text is, in itself, an act of translation. Novice translators as well as student translators are advised to master the basic reading comprehension skills. They should read for gist and main ideas, read for details and identify the meaning of new words and expressions using one or more components of the structural analysis clause; prefixes, suffixes, roots, word order, punctuation, sentence pattern, etc. They should identify the writer's style: literary, scientific, technical, informative, persuasive, argumentative, etc. They should also identify the language level used in the text: standard, slang, etc.

A. Depth of the Analysis

The translator should be concerned with how deep he should go in the analysis of the SL structure. From a theoretical standpoint, the translator is advised to go to the deepest abstract meanings of structures to be able to obtain the propositions. He should go into the deep structures of texts.

Larson (1984: 4) presents the following diagram to explain the translation task.

Fig. 1-1 Overview of the Translation Task

Nida (1984: 99) shows that a procedure in which surface and deeper structures are considered is only adequate at "individual clauses and even complex sentences", but if the depth of the analysis of structures is extended to cover the text at paragraph level or more, it will be "simply inadequate and misleading". To avoid such problems, the translator has to start with the surface meaning then go deeper until all its components are found and adequately identified. Any level in language has its own significance because it plays a role in the total meaning.

B. The Basic Unit for Analysis

Translators are advised to have a comprehensive idea about the work they are dealing with. Therefore, they should acquaint themselves with the whole text prior to analysis (de Waard & Nida, 1986: 53) and, basically, consider it all when they start the process of translation. Much debate among translation scholars is on the unit of translation. Should it be defined structurally, for instance a word, a phrase, or a clause; or semantically, for instance a proposition, an idea-unit, or a sense-unit? In general, the clause is the most acceptable form to be selected by linguists as translation unit, because events are mostly represented at clause level, and because the differences between languages appear at the lower levels

(Catford 1965, Toury 1986 cited in Malmkjær 2001: 286). Moreover, it is the smallest linguistic structure containing propositions (Isham and Lane 1993 cited in Malmkjær 2001: 286). Bell (1991) presents psychological and linguistic evidence to prove that the clause is the smallest segment which can be translated. However, other units can be more suitable in other situations (Enkvist 1991: 7; Newmark 1982: 30). The unit of translation is different from the translation equivalent. Equivalence can be established between the source and target texts at one level or a number of levels (of sound, structure, meaning, genre, text, discourse, function…) (Malmkjær 2001: 287).

In fact, translation units in the SLT may differ from those in the TLT. An SL word should not necessarily be translated by one word in the TL (Newmark 1982: 30; Enkvist 1991: 7). According to Malmkjær, the "target texts in which the units are larger appear more acceptable than those in which the units are smaller" (2001: 286). El-Ezabi (1990) considers the communicative message to be the unit of translation. Thus, any stretch of the text that carries a communicative message should be a unit for translating. The study agrees with this choice since it clearly goes in accordance with the shifts that may occur in the process of translation.

Since main ideas are expressed in paragraphs, Nida (1984:100) makes it even more specific suggesting that the best unit for analysis is the paragraph. The trend in translation known as text linguistics has made a shift from the domain of individual sentences for semantic as well as syntactic analysis to the domain of the text. Wilss (1982:112) says that "Translation, therefore, is text-oriented". Enkvist (1978:170) emphasizes the significance of this shift:

> The common creed of all these sects of embedded in the text linguistics is that even though the syntactic units of a language function within the clause and the sentence, the unit of communication is the discourse or the text. We do not normally communicate with single sentences out of context. A one-sentence text is a special case, a minimum. Rather we communicate with the aid of strings of sentences. And these strings reveal certain structural, linguistically describable patterns which go beyond the confines of the clause and the sentence. This can be readily tested, because our linguistic intuitions can distinguish a well-formed, coherent text from an incoherent, random string of sentences.

1.5.2 Transfer of Meaning into the TL

Languages utilize their components in different manners to compose texts. The situation is even made more difficult when cultural factors are

involved in the transfer process. It is noted earlier that cultural elements are more resistant to translation than linguistic ones. The strenuous task of the translator, then, starts at this stage. The translator has to sense the cultural elements embedded in the text and consider them in the transfer. Nida (1984:119) comes to a definition of translation after discussing the transfer stage as:

> Translation consists in the reproduction in the receptors language of the message of the source language in such a way that the receptors in the receptors language may be able to understand adequately how the original receptors in the source language understood the original message.

Nida realizes the importance of this stage. He emphasizes avoiding formal correspondences from one language to another and focusing instead on the function. One may wonder at what level the translator should transfer the meaning of the SL into the TL. Nida (1984, 1969) suggests that the transfer occurs at the underlying level (i.e., the kernel level of structure). To Nida & Taber (1982: 39) the idea is that "languages agree far more on the level of the kernels than on the level of the more elaborate structures".

Many approaches in translation have been proposed. Most of these approaches are used to improve the quality of translation, both as a process and as a product. One of these approaches is called the sociosemiotic approach to translation. It provides a systematic procedure to determine the meaning of the message. The theoretical basis for the sociosemiotic approach is based on Halliday's sociosemiotic theory of language. He emphasizes the unity of the text (language), context (linguistic or non-linguistic), and social structure and advocates that language is a unique system of signs with a social function, capable of expressing the meaning of all the other sign systems. However, Peter Newmark's classification of the functions of language into expressive function, informative function, vocative function, aesthetic function, phatic function and metalingual function is much superior to Halliday's classification into ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function. The core of this approach is Charles Morris's semiotic approach to meaning. He treats a sign as a tripartite entity and classifies meaning in three dimensions of semantics, syntax and pragmatics, namely designative/referential meaning, linguistic meaning and pragmatic/associative meaning. The most significant part of this approach is that social semiotics does not just concern itself with what people say and do and how they do it; it also focuses on when (in what context) and why, i.e. the large-scale social consequences of such words and actions. Lexical items carry designative (unmarked) and associative (marked) meanings. The distinctive features of

each of any involved lexical items must be defined with regard to its context. The advocates of the sociosemiotic approach also assume that syntactic structures have designative as well as associative meanings. The setting is an important concept because it might be the only factor to clear out an ambiguity in a certain message. The setting in this sense is parallel to the cultural factors in revealing important information about a certain message or part of it. It helps to show under what circumstances the translated text was composed and when.

Nida (1984: 3) says that the verbal message is accompanied by a non-verbal message which is of two types:

1. Paralinguistic: intonation, quality of voice.
2. Extra-linguistic: gestures, hand movements.

The paralinguistic features may change the normal designative and associative meanings of the oral message. So these non-verbal messages are sometimes more important than the verbal message. Printed material also has similar significant features such as orthography (certain type of spelling (American/ British), form of type, page format, kind of paper, binding).

Elements of the SL message include rhetorical features. The rhetorical meaning is achieved by certain patterns of selection (at the level of contrasting similar sounds or major themes) and arrangement (words in simple clauses or large units). The author may make changes in the natural syntactic order to call the attention of the receptors, or for emphasis. Rhetorical structures are higher than the syntactic ones because the former are more inclusive than the latter, rhetorical structures start when syntactic ones stop. Repetition, rhythmic features, and novelty are also rhetorical features. The major functions of rhetoric are:

1. **Wholeness**: Wholeness involves two elements.
a. **Completeness** in the sense that the text has everything related to its purpose. De Waard and Nida (1986) suggest that shared backgrounds do not need to be included in the translation.
b. **Unity** which is the manner in which the parts of the text are arranged together.
2. **The aesthetic appeal**
This feature depends, to a certain extent, on the use of rhetorical devices such as repetition, shifts in order, figurative language, irony, rhythm and so on. The translator has to determine the function of the repetition and find the functional equivalence in the TL. Because in natural

languages sound and meaning correspondences are arbitrary, repeated sound effects are almost always lost in translation. Notice the repetition in the following Arabic saying:

<div dir="rtl" align="center">

رضا الناس غاية لا تدرك ورضا الله غاية لاتترك فاترك ما لايدرك وأدرك مالا يترك

</div>

3. **Appropriateness**

It is the choice of language form for a certain theme, e.g., a soft poetic language for love, and naturalness or a slang for down-to-earth life.

4. **Coherence**

The harmony between the text and the world of the receptors; the translation should not look odd to them to have a successful communication.

5. **Progression and Cohesion**

Progression is how a text progresses from stage to stage. Cohesion is how the parts of a text are connected to each other.

6. **Focus**, which involves these relationships:

a. Foregrounding and back-grounding,
b. New and old information,
c. Theme and rheme

1.5.3 Recomposition

The role of the translator at this level is to change the level of the text from the kernel to a normal text in the TL. S/he transforms the text from its underlying level (transfer stage) to text composition. At this stage the translator uses his/her skill and theoretical knowledge. The translator should know how the TL employs its vocabulary to form natural appropriate sentences. A natural structure in the TL does not mean that it should be grammatical only, but also it should not look strange to the receptors (even if it is grammatical). Nida (1984: 104) discusses the translator's ability to render natural translation:

> A person, for example, may speak a foreign language without grammatical error, but the combinations of words, though intelligible, may still seem unnatural or at least the range of attribution may be highly irregular.

In addition, the translator should be aware of the cultural factors in both languages. Rhetorical as well as stylistic features must be considered in the reconstruction process according to the rules and style of the TL. But there are instances where there are no functional equivalences of certain linguistic and/or cultural elements of the SL in the TL. At this point, the

role of the translator is to do his best to compensate for the losses according to the structure of the TL. If that is not possible, then he should point that out in a footnote to the reader.

Receptors play a crucial role in any communication. "No analysis of communication can be complete without a thorough study of the role of receptors of a message" (Nida & Reyburn, 1981: 9). In the case of translation, one basic criterion to decide the correctness of a translated text is to know who the receptors are. The translator should make sure to whom he is translating in terms of social class, education, interests, attitudes, economical status, background, etc. Nida rejects the idea that receptors play only a passive role in the process of any communication. The interaction between the translator, by means of the translated text, and the receptors determines to what extent the transfer of the message is successful. If the translator transmits his message at a "wave length" that the receptors cannot receive, there will be a bad or no communication. De Waard & Nida (1986: 70) argue that individuals have quite different interpretations of verbal signs on the higher levels of mental operation because these signs must pass through so many neural grids, both personal and cultural. The receptors are the most reliable and effective means to test the translation. The kind of response to the translated message is an indicator to how successful it is. The feedback is important to the translator for any corrections to the translation.

The receptors of the message should be psychologically aware of both meanings. The impact of the figurative language depends on the novelty of the figurative meaning. The figurative meaning depends on the actual settings in the SL. Therefore, if these settings cannot be created in the TL, the translator has to explain that to its speakers. Notice how the word 'أبيض' is translated in the following sentences in the short story النار والماء by the Syrian writerزكريا تامر (Dickins et al 2002: 27).

فرفعت الهام الحجاب عن وجه أبيض وعينين سوداوين. فهتف باعجاب ونشوة: "آه"
Ibrahim lifted the veil away from her *beautiful shiny* face and dark eyes. Fawaz gasped with amazement and delight.

If the word 'أبيض' is translated literally, it will mean 'pale' or 'scared'. 'White' is not the right word to use in this context. One rarely refers to skin as being a certain color. In modern spoken English the idiom "old ball and chain" refers to a man's wife or girlfriend. It doesn't sound very nice, but it's kind of true and funny at the same time. If a woman controls her husband or boyfriend and doesn't give him much freedom, the guy's male friends will laugh at him and call her an old "**ball and chain**". This

figurative meaning can be rendered in Egyptian Arabic as "الحكومة" because it gives the same meaning in similar situations.

1.6 Translation Problems

Translation problems can be divided into linguistic problems and culture problems: the linguistic problems include lexicon, morphology, syntax, textual differences, rhetorical differences, and pragmatic factors. Much work has been done on the problems of translation between individual languages. The most intensive work has been conducted by Nida (1983), (1984), Nida & Taber (1969), de Waard & Nida (1986), Newmark (1981), and others. All these works concentrate on building up a theoretical frame work for translation. R. Jakobson stresses that "translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes". Dangers in the process of translation involve:

1) Staying too close to the original, at the cost of taste and the target language.
2) Adhering too closely to the characteristics peculiar to the target culture, at the cost of the original.

1.7 Translation Shifts

Shifts in expectancy play a great role in the amount of impact of the message on the audience. Nida and others (1983: 36) maintain:

> ... shifts involve an increase in markedness. The tension which is introduced in such shifts between the normal and the non-normal, between the usual and the unusual, between the expected and the unexpected, accounts for the significantly greater impact involved in such shifts.

Types of shifts include shifts from syntactic norms or word order: Words, sentences, phrases are put in an unusual order for highlighting and impact. Irony is considered shift in meaning caused by the use of words to express an idea that is opposite to the literal meaning of the employed words. That is to say that there is a contradiction between the designative meaning and the associative meaning of a given expression. Figurative language is an important kind of shift; it is important for impact, aesthetic appeal, and new insights. For example the word '*fox*' is an animal as its actual meaning. But if a person is referred to by saying this word, then it has a different, figurative, meaning which is 'cunning'.

Equivalence is the relationship between the ST and the TT. Its main goal is to produce a text in the TL that will have the same effect as the original text had on the receivers belonging to the SL culture. Formal equivalence is the rigid adherence to the form of the original language. On the contrary, dynamic equivalence is the complete disregard for the form (not the message) of the original language. In fact, there are no complete or full equivalent texts. The concept of equivalence is relative because of linguistic and cultural differences.

Catford explores translation shifts which can be noticed in the process of translating:

1) **Structure shifts**: grammatical change between the structure of the ST and that of the TT (e.g. clause structure-questions, articles).
2) **Class shifts**: when a SL item is translated with a TL item which belongs to a different grammatical class (verb ➔ noun) e.g.,

<div dir="rtl">

softly <u>foaming</u> facial wash **رغوة لطيفة منظفة للوجه**
<u>grazing</u> grounds **المناطق الغنية بالكلأ**
Elham let out a <u>joyous, shy</u> laugh **وضحكت الهام فى غبطة وحياء**

</div>

Some words belong to different classes 'go' as a verb is different from go as a noun:

<div dir="rtl">

a go of brandy **جرعة**
full of go **حيوية**
it is a go**صفقة رابحة**
no go **غير مجد – عقيم**
on the go **ناشط في غير كلل**

</div>

The word 'feel' is sometimes used as a noun:

<div dir="rtl">

I know that feel **أعرف ذلك الاحساس**
Very turning feel **شعور رائع**

</div>

3) **Unit shifts**: Changes in rank (phrase ➔ word/clause).
4) **Intra-system** shifts: when translation involves selection of a non-corresponding term in the TL system (SL plural ➔ TL singular) e.g.,

<div dir="rtl">

وصرح وزير الداخلية أن <u>بلاده</u> آمنة
The minister states that his <u>country</u> is safe

</div>

The notion of translation shifts is based on the distinction between formal correspondence and textual equivalence. Textual equivalence means that

the ultimate aim of the translator is equivalence at text level. Text is a
meaning unit, not a form unit (Baker 1992: 6). It communicates the overall
meaning. A student of translation (a novice translator) cannot understand
translation strategies at text level without getting familiar with the lower
levels: (word, phrases and grammatical structure). At lower levels
translation problems can be classified into:

1) phonological
2) morphological
3) syntactic
4) semantic (lexical)
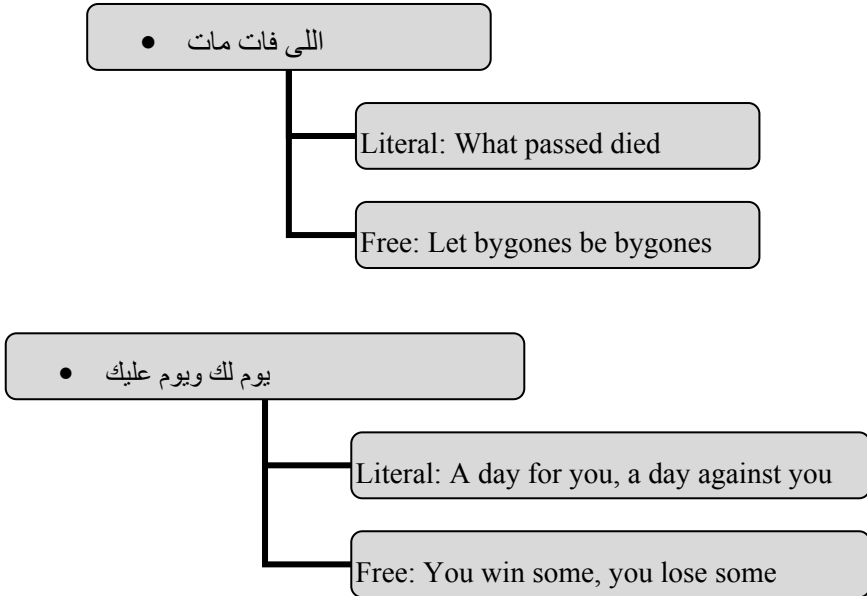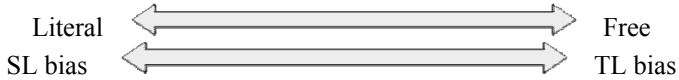
1.8 Possible Strategies in Translation

Literal and free translation can be considered as two basic skills in
practice. Literal translation is designed to translate the original text
adequately, keeping the original message form, structure, including the
word order, image used in metaphor and so on, unchanged. Free
translation aims at an accurate representation of the original texts, paying
little attention to the form and structure, also it must result in a version
fluent and natural. But free translation does not mean to delete or add
anything unnecessary to the original. Translations are measured according
to degrees of freedom between the two extremes of *literal* and *free*
translation. The degrees of freedom are infinitely variable. Literal
translation is said to have bias to the source language and free translation
is said to have bias to the target language.

An example of free translation is **communicative Translation**. A
communicative translation is "produced, when, in a given situation, the ST
uses an SL expression standard for the situation, and the TT uses a TL
expression standard for an equivalent target culture situation. This is true
of very many culturally conventional formulae that do not invite literal
meaning" (Dickins et al 2002: 17)

No smoking ممنوع التدخين
Don't mention it. لا شكر على واجب

A good example of communicative translation is provided by the fact
that the Standard English equivalent of 'شرطة مكافحة الشغب' is '**riot police**',
(rather than 'anti-riot police', or 'riot combat police', etc.). Examples of
communicative translation can be seen in religious formulae such as '**نعيما**'
which can be translated as 'nice hair cut'. The translation of the expression

'**ان شاء الله**' depends on its meaning in the situation. It can mean 'I hope' or 'I promise' or 'I am not sure'.

Literal   ⟵⟶   Free
SL bias   ⟵⟶   TL bias

● اللى فات مات

Literal: What passed died

Free: Let bygones be bygones

● يوم لك ويوم عليك

Literal: A day for you, a day against you

Free: You win some, you lose some

On the scale between free translation and idiomatic translation is **idiomatic translation**. It uses "a fixed figurative expression whose meaning cannot be deduced from the denotative meanings of the words that make it up" (Dickins et al 2002:18).

<div align="center">

ليس أمرا أحبه أو أميل اليه
It is not my cup of tea

</div>

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.

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

Idiomatic   This type is all the rage.

Free   This one's dead trendy.

Nida's theory of translation is characterized by the distinction between two types of equivalence: **formal equivalence** and **dynamic equivalence**. For formal equivalence, the translator focuses on the message itself, that is, its form and content, and there should be a close similarity between the ST and the TT message (Nida, 1964).

ممنوع الدخول Forbidden is the entrance
مع السلامة with the well-being

Concerning dynamic equivalence, Nida mentions that this type is based on "the principle of equivalent effect", in which "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptor and the message" (Nida 1964: 159).

no entry ممنوع الدخول
goodbye مع السلامة

According to Nida (1964:159), "the relation between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message". Communicative translation may be said to be an example of dynamic equivalence. However, in all cases translation loss is inevitable.

> Incomplete replication of the ST in the TT – that is, the inevitable loss of textually and culturally relevant features… There is translation loss even at the most elementary level… For instance, in most contexts 'بقرة' and 'cow' will be synonyms… But 'بقرة' and 'cow' clearly sound different: there is significant translation loss on the phonic and prosodic levels… But if the ST word is part of an alliterative pattern in a literary text, or, worse, if it rhymes, the loss could be crucial. (Dickins et al 2002: 21)

Professional translators use a list of translation strategies in order to cope with the lexical and syntactical differences between Source Language and Target Language.

1.8.1 Addition

It is translation strategy in which something is added to the TT which is not present in the ST. Notice how the following underlined words in the translation of Naguib Mahfouz's Trilogy are enriched in the TT.

<div dir="rtl">

اعتزمت أن أكمل نصف ديني

</div>

I've decided to <u>perfect my religious observance by marrying</u>.

<div dir="rtl">

وددت بعدها لو تهتف مستنجدا: "زملوني .. دثروني"

</div>

Immediately afterwards you would have liked to <u>echo the Prophet's words when he would feel a revelation coming and cry out for help: 'Wrap me up! Cover me with my cloak!'</u>

<div dir="rtl">

و لو سمعها سامع في الدكان وهي تشكوني في هذه الظروف العسيرة لحسبني ريا أو سكينة!

</div>

Anyone hearing her complain about me in the store under such adverse conditions would have thought I was <u>a cold-blooded killer like those dreadful women in Alexandria: Rayya and Sakina</u>.

<div dir="rtl">

وخمسة في عين من لم يصل على النبي

</div>

<u>plus five-like the five fingers of the prophet's granddaughter Fatima held up to ward off the evil of infidels</u>

Addition is used in explanatory translation of poetry.

<div dir="rtl">

إِذا المَرءُ لَم يُدنَس مِنَ اللُؤمِ عِرضُهُ   فَكُلُّ رِداءٍ يَرتَديهِ جَميلُ

</div>

When a man's honor is not defiled
By base deeds and villainy, then
Whatever dress he wears is beautiful
(For, the most important thing in man
I his honor and not his appearance)

<div dir="rtl">

إِذا أنت *أكرمت الكريم ملكته* ***** و إن أنت أكرمت اللئيم تمردا

</div>

If you do a favor for a good man,
He will always be grateful
(to you and never forget your kindness)
But if you do a favor to a villain
(he will think that you are weak and will not
Respect you)

1.8.2 Omission

This strategy may sound rather drastic, but it does no harm to omit translating a word or expression in some contexts, if the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text. Omission can occur for many legitimate reasons:

A- Background information is sometimes not translated: Arabic for example uses different patterns of cohesion. Arabic radio broadcasts usually use of the phrase "وجدير بالذكر" or "هذا و...." as a signal in Arabic that what comes next is background information to the main argument (Cf. Hatim 1997: 67-74). Thus, such phrases are not expected to be translated in an English TT.

B- "Another occasion for omission is when the information conveyed is not particularly important" (Dickins et al 2002: 23).

<div dir="rtl">

وكان الرئيس الامريكى بيل كلينتون قد اكد <u>مساء</u> اول من امس

</div>
"Two days ago, the American President, Bill Clinton confirmed…."

Unlike Arabic, English does not afford the concept 'two days ago in the evening'.

C- Cultural differences provide another area in which simple omission may be a reasonable strategy. The ST word 'الفاتيكان' in the following example is better omitted because Western readers would be unaware of any Popes other than the Catholic one.

<div dir="rtl">

بابا الفاتيكان يوحنا بولس الثانى

</div>
Pope John-Paul II

1.8.3 Using General Words

This is one of the most common strategies for dealing with many types of non-equivalence. It depends on the semantic notion 'superordinate', e.g.

<u>Shampoo</u> the hair with a mild WELLA-SHAMPOO

<div dir="rtl">

<u>يغسل الشعر بشامبو من "ويللا"</u>

يمطر ثلجا   Snow

</div>