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Module Translation
Level 3rd year
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Chapter One: The Concept of Translation

1. What is Translation?

"*Translation*" is, etymologically, a "carrying across" or "bringing across": the Latin *translatio* derives from *transferre* (trans, "across" + ferre, "to carry" or "to bring"). The modern European languages, Romance, Germanic and Slavic, have generally formed their own equivalent terms for this concept after the Latin model: after *transferre* or after the kindred *traducere* ("to lead across" or "to bring across"). Additionally, the Greek term for "*translation*," metaphrasis (a "speaking across"), has supplied English with "metaphrase," meaning a literal, or word-for-word, translation, as contrasted with "paraphrase" (a "saying in other words," from the Greek paraphrasis). [1]

Translation is the transformation of a message from one language to another. It is a special case of linguistic convergence that transmits information between speakers of different languages.

In translating, the language from which a text is translated is known as **the source language (SL)** and the language of the translated product is **the target language (TL).** What is also referred to as the original text is generally known as the source text (ST) and the translatedtext is the target text (TT).

Source text (ST)   Target text (TT)
in source language (SL) ————————→ in target language (TL)
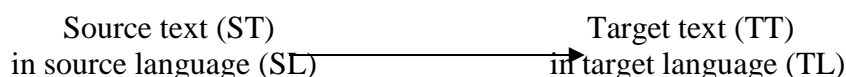
The term translation can refer to the process of, or the product resulting from, mediating written text(s) of different lengths (ranging from words and sentences to entire books) from one human language to another. It can also refer to the scholarly field that studies both the activity and the product(s).

In the field of languages, translation has several meanings:

(1) **The general subject field** or phenomenon ('I studied translation at university')

(2) **The product** – that is, the text that has been translated ('they published theArabic translation of the report')

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[1]   Dictionnaire   de   l'Académie   française,   huitième   édition,   1932-1935
https://www.translationdirectory.com/articles/article1667.php

(3) The process of producing the translation, otherwise known as translating (Translation service).[2]

According to Catford (1995), 'translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)'. [3]

This definition shows that translation is a process in the sense that is an activity performed by people through time, when expressions are translated in to simpler ones in the same language (Rewording and para-phrasing). It can be done also from one language into another language. Translation is, on the other hand, a product since it provides us with other different cultures, and civilization.

2. Categories of Translation:

The Russo-American structuralist Roman Jakobson (1896–1982) described the three categories of translation in his seminal paper *'On linguistic aspects of translation'*:

A verbal sign may be translated into other signs of the same language (intralingual translation), into another language (interlingual translation), or into another, nonverbal system of symbols (intersemiotic translation).[4]

Jacobson's categories are as follows:

- **Intralingual** translation, or 'rewording' – 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language' one can either use "another, more or less synonymous, word or resort to a circumlocution"
- **Interlingual** translation, or 'translation proper' – 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language'.
  "There is ordinarily no full equivalence between code-units, while messages may serve as adequate interpretations of alien code-units or messages"
- **Intersemiotic** translation, or 'transmutation' – 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems'. This definition draws on **semiotics,** the general science of communication through signs and sign systems. Its use is significant because translation is not always limited to verbal languages.

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[2] Jeremy Mundy, *Introducing Translation Studies, Theories and Applications*, Second Edition, (London and NewYork: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group,2008)
[3] John Catford, *A linguistic Theory of Translation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1995), 20.
[4] Roman Jakobson, *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1959), 139-233.

Intersemiotic translation, for example, occurs when a written text is translated into a different mode, such as music, film or painting. **Intralingual translation** would occur when we produce a summary or otherwise rewrite a text in the same language, say a children's version of an encyclopaedia. It also occurs when we rephrase an expression in the same language.[5]

It is **interlingual translation,** between two different verbal sign systems, that has been the traditional focus of translation studies.

3. The Process of Translation

Translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL). According to Catford[6], it is an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another. Newmark also stated that translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended text. Translation is the super ordinate term for converting the meaning of any utterance of any source language to the target language.[7] In other words, translation is a way to find the equivalent meaning from source language into target language.

Larson emphasized more on meaning of text. He observed that translation consists of transferring the meaning of the source language into the receptor language. This is done by going from the form of the first language to the form of the second language by way of semantic structure. It is the meaning which is being transferred and must be held constant, as meaning is a variable of greatest importance in a translation process. The source form carries the meanings ---- meanings which are encoded and recorded in the source wordings which

should be re-expressed and maintained in the target form. These meanings should then be transferred, encoded, and recorded into the new target wordings.

> Translation is concerned with a study of the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the SL text, which is analyzed in order to determine its meaning. The discovered meaning is then re-expressed orreconstructed using the lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the receptor language and its cultural context.[8]
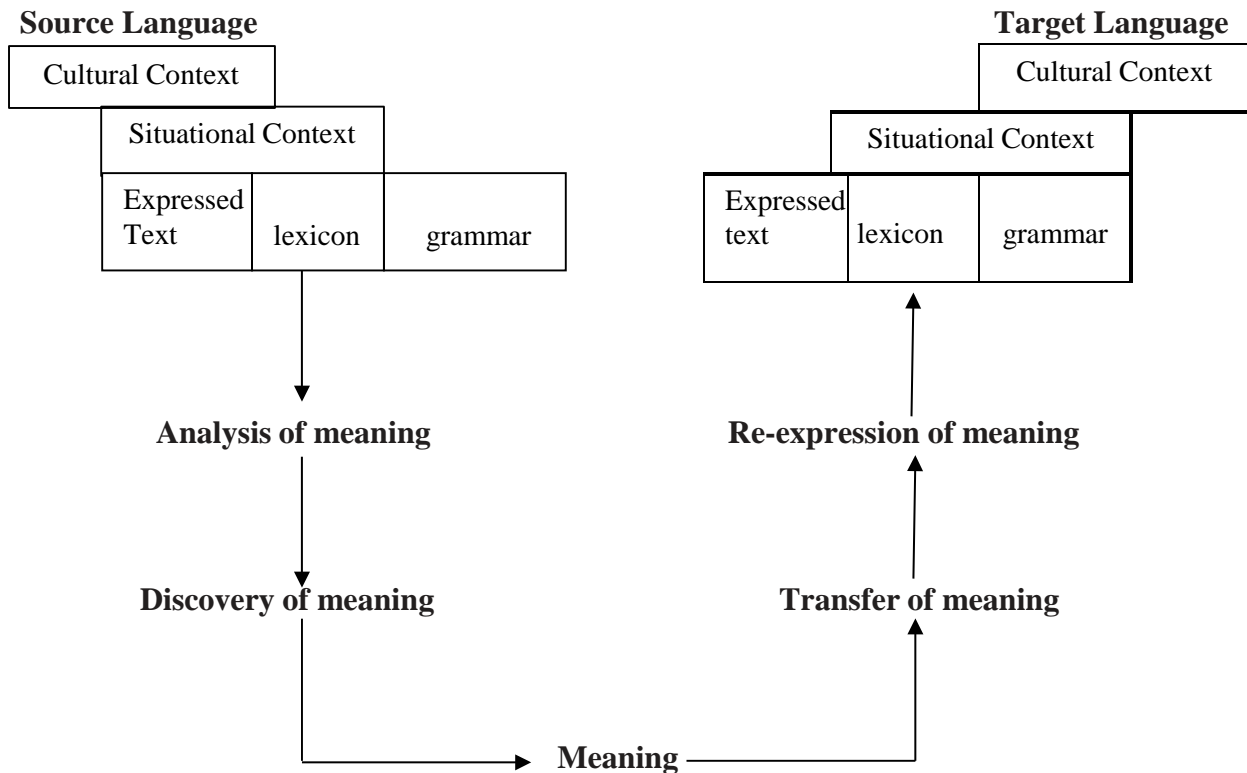
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[5] Mundy, *Translation Studies*.
[6] Catford, *A Linguistic Theory,* 20
[7] Peter Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation (* London: Prentice Hall International, 1988) 32.
[8] Mildred L. Larson, *Meaning-Based Translation: A Guide to Cross-Language Equivalence* (Lanham Md: University Press of America, 1984), 3

He presents the diagram as follows (figure 1.1.):

Source Language   **Target Language**

Cultural Context				
Situational Context				
Expressed Text	lexicon	grammar

| Cultural Context |
| Situational Context |
| Expressed text | lexicon | grammar |

Analysis of meaning   **Re-expression of meaning**

Discovery of meaning   **Transfer of meaning**

Meaning

Figure 1.1. : Larson's Translation Process[9]

Larson (1984) suggested that the process of translation consists of three steps:

- First, study the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the source language.
- Second, analyze the source text to determine the meaning.
- The last, reconstructing the same meaning using the lexicon and grammatical structure which might be suitable within the receptor language and its cultural context.

According to Nida and Taber, the process of translation comprises three steps; analysis, transfer and restructuration.

- Analyzing the grammatical relationship, the meaning of words and the combination of words into target language.
- Transferring the meaning from source language into target language.
- Restructuring the grammatical structure from source language into the appropriate grammatical structure of the target language.

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[9] ibid., 4. Mildred L . Larson , Meaning based translation, 4

Their translation process explanation is described in figure 1.2.[10]:
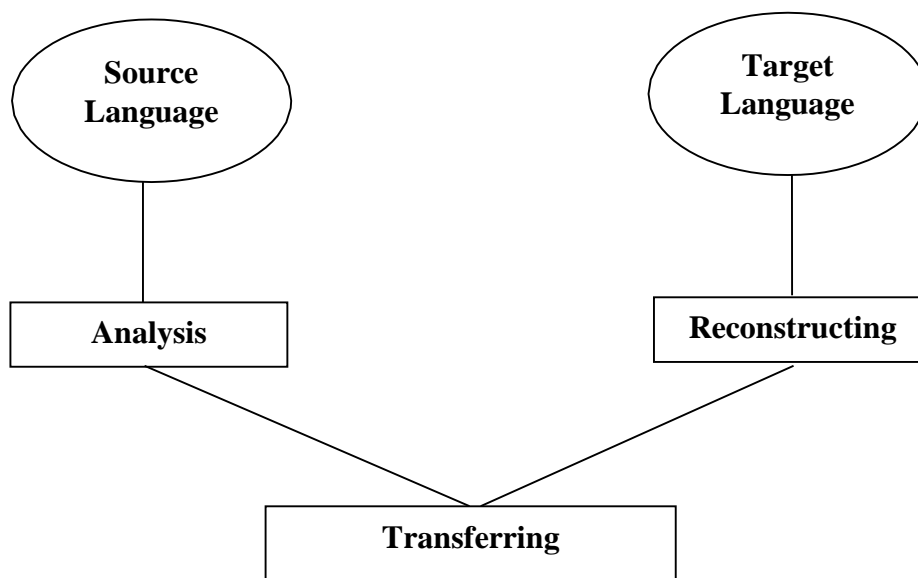
Figure 1.2.: Translation process by Nida and Taber

3.1. Analysis Stage

In this stage, the translator conducts an analysis in term of linguistic aspects (either grammatical or semantic analysis). This analysis involves referential and connotative meaning of word, phrases, clauses, or whole texts. The translator should master the socio cultural aspect of both languages. In this step, the translator has to read the whole source text, then, analyzes it in order to understand the message in terms of structure, language style, semantic and idiom, etc, which are used in the source language text.

3.2.Transfer stage:

Transfer happens in the mind of the translator from the SL into TL. In transferring, the translator finds the appropriate equivalence of SL words, phrases, clauses, sentences, or the whole text into TL, so that the translator would be able to convey the content exactly without any changes in meaning. He must create the right equivalent for words, phrases, clauses, and sentences of the source language into the target language.

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[10] Eugene Nida and Charles Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E.J Brill, 1974), 79.

3.3. Restructuring stage

Restructuring aims to make the final message fully acceptable in the target language in term of the lexicon, grammatical structure, and its cultural context. In this step, the translator will determine the equivalent words, grammar, language style, etc. to the target language. Restructuring aims to make the text of TL better, accurate, and acceptable.[11]

4. Principles of Translation

Frederick Fuller[12] proposed some general principles which are supposed to be relevant to all translations.

– **Meaning: the translation should reflect accurately the meaning of the original text**. Nothing should be arbitrarily added or removed, though occasionally part of the meaning can be transposed. The following questions will be very helpful:

   a. Is the meaning of the original text clear?

   b. If not, where does the uncertainty lie?

   c. Are any words loaded, that is, are there any underlying implications?

   d. Is the dictionary meaning of a particular word the most suitable one?

   e. Does anything in the translation sound unnatural or forced?

– **Form: the ordering of words and ideas in the translation should match the original as closely as possible.** (This is particularly essential in translating legal documents, guarantees, contracts, etc). But differences in language structure often require changes in the form and order of words.

– **Register: languages often differ greatly in their level of formality in a specific context**. To resolve these differences, the translator must distinguish between formal or fixed expressions and personal expressions in which the writer or speaker sets the tone.

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[11] Sarah Nur Azizah, *the use of larson's strategies in Translating Metaphors in Riggs* "*Miss peregrine's home for peculiar Children*" *and their accuracy* (Universitas Negeri Semarang, 2019), 25.
[12] Frederick Fuller, *The Translator's Handbook* (Colin Smythe,1984).

Consider also: - would any expression in the original sound too formal/ informal, cold/warm, personal/impersonal . . . if translated literally? - what is the intention of the speaker or writer? (to persuade/ dissuade, apologize/criticize?) Does this come through in the translation?

– **Source language influence: many translations do not sound natural**. This is because the translator's thoughts and choices of words are too strongly influenced by the original text. A good way to avoid this is to set the text aside and translate a few sentences from memory in order to get the natural patterns of thought in the target language.

– **Style and clarity: the translator should not change the style of the original as much as possible**. Changes are likely to happen if the text is sloppily written or full oftedious repetitions.

– **Idiomatic expressions** including similes, metaphors, proverbs, sayings, jargon, slang, colloquialisms, and phrasal verbs are commonly hard to translate. To solve this problem, try any of the following:

a. Keep the original word between inverted commas.

b. Keep the original expression, with a literal explanation in brackets.

c. Use a close equivalent.

d. Use a non-idiomatic or plain prose translation.

But what is the most essential is that if the idiom does not work in the target language; do not force it into the translation.

Nida , as quoted by Hatim and Mason[13], also proposes four basic requirements of translation, namely,

- Making sense;
- Conveying the spirit and manner of the original;
- Having a natural and easy form of expression; and
- Reproducing a similar response.

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[13] Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, *The Translator as Communicator* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990/2007)