

# University of M'sila

## English language and Literature Department

Module: Translation / Level: 2<sup>nd</sup> year / Lecturer: C. Bounaas

### Lesson one: Translation strategies

Translation procedures and methods seem to be countless, but they can be condensed to just seven, each corresponding to a higher degree of complexity. In practice they may be used either own or combined with one or more of the others. Generally speaking, translators can choose from two methods of translation, namely direct translation based on structural parallelisms and oblique (indirect) translation based on conceptual parallelism which is the result of metalinguistic parallelisms and lacunae (gaps) in the TL language.

#### **Direct strategies:**

**1- Borrowing:** to overcome a lacuna, usually a metalinguistic one ( a new technical process, an unknown concept...) or to create a stylistic effect ( introduce the flavor of the SL culture...) translators borrow foreign words . Notice that these borrowed words are written and pronounced according to the TL language rules. Examples of English borrowings: déjà vu, chic, hangar, menu, acajou, rendez-vous...etc.

**2- Calque:** It is a special case of borrowing whereby a language borrows an expression form of another, but then translates literally each of its elements. Examples of calque: compliments of the season/ compliments de la saison, science fiction, volt face...etc.

**3- Literal translation:** Literal or word for word translation is the direct transfer of a SL text into a grammatically and idiomatically appropriate TL text in which the translators' have to respect the wording rules. Examples of literal translation:

I left my spectacles on the table      تركت نظارتي فوق الطاولة

Where are you      أين أنت/ أنتم؟

\* **Notice** that the literal translation is most common when translating between two languages of the same family (French/ Italian...), and even more so when they also share the same culture due to a metalinguistic physical coexistence.

If after trying the three first procedures, translators regard a literal translation unacceptable, they must turn to the methods of oblique translation. By unacceptable we mean the message, when translated literally:

- Gives another meaning;
- Has no meaning;
- Is structurally impossible;

### **Oblique strategies:**

**4- Transposition:** it involves replacing one word (base expression) class with another (transposed expression) without changing the meaning of the message. Notice that Sometimes transposition is obligatory as in the following example:

منذ استيقاظه As soon as he gets/ got up

Inversely when we translate back into Arabic, we have the choice:

منذ أن يستيقظ / منذ استيقاظه As soon as he gets up

**5- Modulation:** it is type of transposition, obtained by a change in the point of view as in the following:

نصف مملوء Half empty

ليس من الصعب انجاز هذه المهمة It is easy to accomplish this mission.

**6- Equivalence:** Sometimes a word and a situation can be rendered by other ones using different stylistic and structural methods. In such cases we are dealing with the method that produces equivalences. Notice that most equivalences are fixed and belong to a repertoire of idioms, proverbs, etc.

لا يلدغ المرء من الجحر مرتين Once beaten twice shy

إنها تمطر وابلا it is raining cats and dogs

السفينة إذا كثرت ربابينها غرقت Too many cooks spoil the broth

**7- Adaptation:** It is used in those cases where the type of situation being referred to by the SL message is unknown or unacceptable in the TL culture. In such cases translators have to create a new situation that can be considered as being equivalent. Adaptation can, therefore, be described as a special kind equivalence. Take the example of an English father who would think nothing of kissing his daughter on the mouth which is normal in that culture but which would not be acceptable in a literal rendering into Arabic.

قبل جبين ابنته He kissed his daughter on the mouth

**Reference:** J.P Vinay, J Darbelnet, COMPARATIVE STYLISTICS OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH: A methodology for translation, translated and edited by Juan C. SAGER- M.J. Hamel, JOHN BENJAMINS' PUBLISHING COMPANY, Amsterdam/ Philadelphia, 1995.