

TRANSLATION

Translation is a highly complicated process. It is defined as a transfer of meaning from one language to another. But sometimes we hear people who do not speak or read a foreign language often have mistaken points of view on the nature of translation. The same thing applies to students; they know nothing about translation. Quirk (cited in Bassnet, 1980: 5) claims that it “one of the most difficult tasks that a writer can take upon himself.”

It is possible to start with Brislin (1976: 1) who notes that

The general term referring to the transfer of thoughts and ideas from one language (source) to another (target), whether the languages are in written or oral form; whether the languages have established orthographies or do not have such standardization or whether one or both languages is based on signs, as with sign languages of the deaf.

It can also be regarded as a bridge between different worlds, as well as being a vital means of communication among peoples who speak different languages, so they use translation to cope with the diversity of languages. In other words, it plays a vital role in building bridges connecting disconnected peoples.

Accordingly, on the first day, after asking the students what they know about translation, the process of translation is fully explained. Students are guided through different theories of translation, to put in mind that translating, in the words of Nida and Taber (1974),

consists of reproducing, in the target language, the nearest equivalent to the message in the source language, in the first place in the semantic aspect and, in the second place, in the stylistic aspect.

Students are told that they are supposed to do assignments in the classroom. Assignments are chosen in accordance with the students' experience, knowledge and interest. It is possible to know their preferences through a simple questionnaire distributed in the beginning of the academic year. This questionnaire is very important for two reasons; first, to detect the level of difficulty of the assignments. If students do not have any experience in translating, the first texts will concentrate on the translation of short texts; namely, sentences. Second, knowing students'

interest will be helpful in choosing the type of assignment. In addition, assignments are chosen from authentic newspapers and websites.

So, students should know that their job is to be concerned with the content of the text, not the form. They are reminded all the time that their concern is meaning not words in isolation. Accordingly, they are presented to different kinds of meaning, such as:

1. Lexical Meaning

It is the meaning which easily be found in any dictionary. For example, the word, 'book.

I found my lost book.

وجدتُ كتابي المفقود

2. Textual Meaning

It is the meaning derived from the specialized monolingual or bilingual dictionaries. For example, the word 'pure':

pure mathematics رياضيات بحتة

pure sciences علوم تجريدية

pure water ماء عذب

pure Iraqi عراقي أبا عن جد

3. Contextual Meaning

Here, meaning is derived not only from the specialized dictionaries but also from the context.

The football world cup will be held at USA in coming June.

تستضيف الولايات المتحدة بطولة كأس العالم لكرة القدم في حزيران القادم

The word 'تستضيف' has the contextual meaning.

4. Suggestive Meaning

It is the meaning suggested by the text as a whole. For example:

On seeing the ghost, they stood motionless.

عند رؤيتهم للشبح تجمدت أوصالهم

Types of Long Texts:

Translate the following texts into Arabic:

Aspirin can be a fatal poison. People are used to taking aspirin whenever they feel pain. It is true that aspirin is an effective pain-killer for example in headache cases. However, aspirin is like any other medicine can be dangerously harmful. Any use of it may result into the damage of the stomach, prolonged bleeding time, vomiting and liver damage. It is scientifically proven that excessive use of aspirin turns it into a toxin. Its toxic effects may cause death. Thus, the careful and regulated use of aspirin is most advisable so as not to turn into a deadly poison.

September 11, 2001, the day on which a series of major terrorist attacks took place in New York and other places in the US, is considered a sad day. The terrorists carried out the attacks using four planes that they hijacked on flights from the east coast of the US. At 8.46 a.m. the first plane crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York. At 9.03 a.m. the second plane crashed into the south tower. Less than 90 minutes later both towers fell down. The third plane crashed into the Pentagon and the fourth into a field in Pennsylvania. Nearly 3 000 people died in the attacks.

The Internet

If you send a letter and misspell the street name, a postman makes sure it reaches its address. But the internet doesn't work that way. It needs precise information, and a single mistake in the address means that a message won't get through. While western alphabets are mostly similar, many others, like Chinese, vary from country to country, making it even more difficult to provide the computer the right data.

China and overpopulation are two words that have become synonymous over the years. Overpopulation in China turned to a global issue as China is the most populous country in the world. The Chinese government has to quickly alter its old population controlling policies because it is disturbing the country's social and economic life, and if it continues, China could face a huge crisis in the future. China's population started to increase dramatically

after World War II. In 1949, Mao encouraged Chinese families to have as many children as possible. This is because the

government thought the population increase would bring money to the country and help China produce more food, build a better army, and establish communication systems. As late as 25 years ago, China was concerned it had too many children to support. Today, however, China faces the opposite problem: as a result of the success of its "one-child" policy, the country faces the prospect of having too few children to support a rapidly aging population.

Assignments chosen in classroom are designed to stimulate interaction. This is a very important condition to guarantee active class discussion. When students are accustomed to discussing translation problems in class, they will be able to assess their translation when they work as translator.

All assignments are discussed in the class. The first assignment is clarified by the teacher. Other assignments are done by the students. They can render them individually or in groups. Then a student should write her translation on the board after being thoroughly discussed by the teacher and students.

The process of translation is guided through the following steps:

1. Students are asked to read the whole text carefully at least twice in order to get the major theme (the message of the text). They are reminded that meaning is context-determined.
2. Students should analyze the text by paying attention to grammatical relations, discerning difficult words, deciphering the text by capturing the context.
3. They should present the first draft of the text which might lack naturalness, since students tend to imitate their SL structure, adopt ("one-to-one translation," Newmark, 1995a).
4. After the first draft, students are supposed to revise their translation by comparing it with the original text.
5. Each student, if possible, is supposed to write her translation on the board to be discussed by other students. Newmark's approach "translation is for discussion" (Newmark, 1995), is adopted here. Accordingly, students are encouraged to discuss the contributions of their colleagues.

The job of the teacher in the classroom is understood as a facilitator of the translation task.

The course is designed to enable students acquire an understanding of the skills of translation and an adequate proficiency in translating written materials of different kinds.

Students are taught two hours weekly, and take two exams at the end of the first semester.