

Course Title: Theories of Translation

A Course for Undergraduate Students at the department of Translation,
University of Basrah, College of Arts

This course aims to familiarise fourth year students with theoretical concepts that are relevant to practical translation in a way to encourage them to assess and apply theoretical concepts to improve their own practical translation performance and raise their awareness of different types of texts and approaches and strategies for translating these texts. The course also aims to improve students' knowledge of the skills required to become professional translators in the future.

Text Books

1. Almann, Ali (2014). *Translation Theories Exemplified from Cicero to Pierre Bourdieu*. London: Sayyab Books.
2. Alyas, Asim (1985). *Translation Theories for Students of Translation*. Mousl: Mousl University Press.

Course Content:

Term1:

1. Historical Background:

Overview

It is not necessary for everyone to know translation theory in order to translate the text at hand. However, acquiring a solid foundation in translation theory will enable you to produce a text reflecting the author's intention, maintaining the text-type focus and living up to the target-reader's expectations.

In this chapter, we will introduce, in brief, the most important translation theories that have held sway on the development of translation studies. In his oft-cited book *After Babel*, George Steiner (1975/1998) divides the

literature on translation theories into four periods which extend from Cicero and Horace until currently prevailing views. These four periods, however, overlap to a certain degree and are not chronologically well-structured. These stages, therefore, with slight modification, will be divided in this chapter into five periods (Almanna, 2014:7):

1. Translation Theories in Antiquity
2. Translation Theories in the Middle Ages
3. Translation Theories in Renaissance
4. Translation Theories in Modern Times
5. Contemporary Translation Theories

2. Equivalence:

Overview

Equivalence is something that has the same value, importance, size, or meaning as something else. Here, one would not hesitate to conclude that the two things are not identical, but rather similar.

Bassnett is of a view that equivalence should not be approached as a search for sameness, since sameness cannot even exist between two TL versions of the same text, let alone between the SL and the TL versions. In a similar vein, **House** comments that equivalence should not be envisaged as virtually the same thing since it would be naïve to think of equivalence as a complete identity (Almanna, 2014:25)

1. Types of equivalence
2. Nida's formal equivalence Vs dynamic Equivalence
3. Catford's Formal Correspondent Vs Textual Equivalent

4. House's (1977) Overt Translation Vs Covert Translation
5. Newmark's (1981) Semantic Translation Vs Communicative Translation
6. Gutt's (1991) Direct Translation Vs Indirect Translation
7. Venuti's (1995) Domestication Vs. Foreignization

3. Translation Process

Overview

Literary translation theories conceive translation as an art, and view translation as an activity, which is essential for a comparative study of literature and lack the objectivity. Literary translation theories have tried to justify their own concept of the art of translation rather than trying, through studies and empirical data, to deduce general hypotheses and rules, hence their effort is unscientific.

Linguistic translation theories, however, see translation as a scientific activity, seeking more objective criteria for translation studies, by using various linguistic theories as well as empirical data to deduce general hypotheses and claims. According to Nida, linguistic translation theories are based on a comparison of linguistic structures of source and receptor texts rather than on comparison of literary genres and stylistic features (Almanna, 2014:42).

1. Translating as a linguistic activity a linguistic approach
2. Translating as a hermeneutic motion a hermeneutic approach
3. Translating as an interpretive act - an interpretive approach
4. Translating as a cross-cultural act - a cultural approach
5. Translating as a norm-governed activity- a normative approach
6. Translating as a socially regulated game: a sociological approach

4. Translation Strategies ---Global Vs Local

Overview

Strategies (also labelled methods, procedures and techniques) have been discussed by a great number of scholars, theorists, teachers and translators. Generally speaking, a strategy can be defined as "the potential conscious procedure adopted by translators to tackle problems they face in rendering the text or any segment of it from one language into another". So, the strategy is different from the process of translation, sometimes called translating. The former is conscious, while the latter is not. Translators' behaviour can be divided into two types: "strategic behaviour" and "non-strategic behaviour". The "**global strategy**" is the general strategy adopted by the translator to deal with the whole text, whether to domesticate or foreignize it, and "**local strategy**" which is a problem-motivated strategy adopted by the translators to solve the problem they face in dealing with segments of the text (Almanna, 2014: 74-75)

1. J. P. Vinay & J. Darbelnet

