

How do we translate correctly?

مستويات التحليل اللغوية: Levels of Language Analysis

By defining the translator's strategy, we have succeeded in defining a clear approach that the translator will follow through on, so that he can actually begin translating. Now suppose that we gave the translator a message to translate, and that translator had difficulty understanding the meaning of a word. What are the steps that he must take to reach the most accurate meaning of this word? For example, in the phrase:

This table is out of place.

What is the exact meaning of the word *table*?

هل تعني منضدة أو جدول أو مائدة المفاوضات ... الخ؟

There are four meanings that the translator must search for in sequence. These meanings are:

1- Lexical meaning: المعنى المعجمي

The translator must begin searching for the word in the linguistic dictionary, whether it is monolingual or bilingual, to help understand its meaning. Note that One single word always has two meanings: linguistic meaning: معنى لغوي, and technical meaning: معنى اصطلاحي. For example, the word interpretation means معلق لغويا أو مفسر, and the word commentator means التفسير لغويا أو التأويل دينيا ... and so on. The dictionary may not be the only reliable source as a last resort or a better one, as the translator has to guess several possible meanings. This includes the meaning intended by the author and his own interpretation of the word or phrase in addition to the dictionary's definition of the word. If the translator cannot determine the exact meaning of this word, he begins to search the following meaning:

2- Textual Meaning: المعنى النصي

This means that the translator should use the bilingual dictionaries that are specialized in various fields, such as medical, engineering or economic dictionaries ... etc. This is because the meaning of the word alone may differ from it if it is placed in a specific context, that is, if it is preceded or followed by a specific word. For example, the word pure means " نقي " أو " صافٍ ". But this word may have different meanings if followed by other words - as follows:

pure language	لغة فصحي
pure man	رجل سليم الطوية – رجل نقي السريرة
pure angels	ملائكة أبرار أو أطهار

pure mathematics	رياضيات بحتة
pure sciences	علوم تجريدية
pure water	ماء عذب
pure gold	ذهب خالص أو حر
pure Egyptian	مصري أبا عن جد

And also the word “contain” which means " يحتوي " أو " يتضمن ". But its meaning differs if it appears in certain texts - for example:

to contain a crisis	يحتوي أزمة
to contain an enemy	يتفادى عدو
to contain feelings	يكتم المشاعر
to contain involvement	يتجنب التورط
to contain acts	يتحاشى أفعال

As well as the word harsh means " خشن " أو " قاسٍ ". Its meaning differs in other texts as follows:

harsh language	لغة فظة
harsh words	كلمات نابية
harsh clothes	ملابس خشنة / رثة
harsh man	رجل غليظ القلب

And so on. In the opposite way, the meaning of the word واسع differs according to the context in which the speech is mentioned as follows:

far-reaching	واسع النطاق
broad-minded	واسع الأفق
wide-spread	واسع الانتشار
knowledgeable	واسع المعرفة
patient – forbearance	واسع الصدر
merciful	واسع الرحمة

The same goes with the word “ يخفض “

to lower pause / muffle	يخفض الصوت
to devalue currency	يخفض قيمة العملة
to moderate interest rate	يخفض سعر الفائدة
to curtail government spending	يخفض الإنفاق الحكومي
to curb inflation	يخفض التضخم

If the translator could not also determine the intended meaning of the word, he begins to look at:

3- Contextual Meaning: المعنى السياقي

It is the meaning that can be extracted from the context of speech, because sometimes there may be words that have a specific meaning, but this meaning

completely changes because these words exist within a specific context. For example:

تستضيف الولايات المتحدة بطولة كأس العالم لكرة القدم في جوان القادم.

We find that the word "تستضيف" has a different meaning in this context than الضيافة, but it means here that the tournament will be held on the territory of the United States. Therefore, the previous sentence is translated into:

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

This issue can be discussed more broadly by analyzing the following Arabic text, which is translated into English from Arabic Press:

زراعة عصرية

وذكر وزير الزراعة بأنه يضع النهضة بمستوى الزراعة في البلاد نصب عينيه. وأنه لن يدخر جهداً أن يجعل على قدر الإمكان في متناول المزارعين أحدث النتائج التي توصل إليها العلم الحديث باستخدام الوسائل الميكانيكية لغرض واحد هو تيسير وإنشاء زراعة عصرية حديثة ومنظمة.

الترجمة:

Modern Farming

The Minister of Agriculture stated that he would keep before him the raising of the standard of agriculture in the country, and that he would spare no effort to place, as far as possible, the most recent innovations achieved by modern science within reach of the farmers, through the employment of mechanical aids, with one aim in view and that was the facilitating and building up of an up-to-date well-organized agriculture.

When taking a closer look at the Arabic text, we find that the translator sometimes gives more than one synonym in his translation of one of the words in the Arabic text. By doing so, he also attempts to give an aesthetic touch to his translation by deleting some words or expressions, or adding specific expressions for the purpose of clarification. The following points can be drawn:

First: The dictionary (Arabic - English) gives more than one word that can be used in exchange for the word "زراعة", such as farming and agriculture. The translator used both words to translate it to refer to the same thing: in the title, he used the first, and then he used the second in the text. But when he wanted to translate the derived word (مزارعين), he preferred to derive it from the first word, as he used the word "farmers".

Second: In the Arabic text, the word ذكر may be translated with the equivalent in English, such as *mentioned* or *said*. But the translator prefers to use another word that is stronger semantically, which is *stated*. This gives a stronger indication in the English text, given that the speaker is the minister.

Third: In the Arabic text, the word “بلاد” means all the big and small cities and villages in the speaker's country. In translation, the translator used the word country in the singular form as a counterpart, and it gives the same meaning to some extent. The translator's goal is to achieve a kind of simplicity in communicating the meaning.

Fourth: In the Arabic text, the word نتائج means any of the results or outcomes. But the translator used a completely different word in his translation, the word *innovations*, which is the best word that fits with the contextual meaning of the Arabic word. It is clear that the translator, by his attempt to promote the Arabic text, by using his own interpretation of the meaning of words, and then choosing a better counterpart in the translated text.

Fifth: In translation, we find that the word *in view* has no equivalent in the Arabic text. But the translator adds this phrase to the translated text in order to clarify the intended meaning of the phrase used in the Arabic text (لغرض واحد). We also find it clear here that the translator tries to make the translated text sound coherent.

Sixth: In the translated text, the word *up-to-date* stands as a translation of two different words but they have the same meaning, which are "عصرية حديثة". It is clear that the translator preferred to combine the meaning of these two words in one word, with the aim of reducing redundancy.

5- Suggestive Meaning: المعنى الإيحائي

It is the meaning suggested by the words in the sentence. For example in the sentence: On seeing the ghost, they stood motionless.

The motionless word suggests no motion. The Arabic language uses several expressions for this position, such as وقفوا على رؤوسهم الطير، أو تسمروا في أماكنهم، أو تجمدت أوصالهم. Of course, the choice of one of these expressions depends on the literary sense. Thus, the previous sentence is translated into:

وقفوا بلا حراك لدى رؤيتهم للشبح

The same goes with the sentence: الفتاة كالقمر في جمالها:

It suggests that the girl is very beautiful. But when translating into English, we cannot convey this concept as it is, because the moon in the English environment does not have the same suggestion that it has in the Arabic language. Therefore, you must search for beauty in the English language, for example: *Snow White*. Thus, the sentence can be translated to:

The girl is as fair as Snow White

And also if we say:

The girl is as white as snow.

We cannot translate it by saying: *This girl is as white as snow*, for the concept of snow in the Arab environment is not the concept of snow in the western environment. It may be understood from the previous sentence that this comparison is made for defamation, not praise. So it is better to say: *this girl is very beautiful*. And cut it short.