**THE NAME & THE NATURE OF TRANSLATION**:

Translation is the replacement of an original text with another text. As such, translation is regarded as a kind of **inferior substitute** for the real thing. But it can also be seen as **providing access** to ideas and experiences that, although represented at second hand, would otherwise be closed off in an **unknown language**.

Translation **serves** a need human beings have to transcend the world to which their own languages confine them. It **mediates** between languages, societies and literatures, and it is through translation that linguistic and cultural barriers may be overcome

Translation had to do both for the activity and the study of it. In **1972 Brian Harris** coined **translatology** to fill the “**lexical gap**”. And at the same time, he in **Canada** and **Jean René Ladmiral** in **France** launched its French equivalent **Traductology.** The very name of **Translation Studies** was first proposed by **James Holmes** as late as **1972** as a better alternative to translatology and to translation science, or science of translating. Over time, just twenty years since the widespread dissemination of Holmes’s paper after his death, the name **Translation Studies** has become established within the English-speaking world even if there remain competing terms in other languages.

See, **Harris, B**. (1988). ***What I really meant by «Translatology»***. TTR : traduction, terminologie, rédaction, 1 (2), 91–96. <https://doi.org/10.7202/037022ar>

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***What I really meant by «Translatology»***.

**Brian Harris**

Early in **1972** the present author read a paper entitled **«La Traductologie, la traduction naturelle, la traduction automatique et la sémantique»** to a linguistics symposium at the Université du Québec à Montréal. It was published the following year (Harris, **1973**). That was the first use of die term «**traductologie**» in **Canada**…

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HARRIS, B. (1973). «La traductologie, la traduction naturelle, la traduction automatique et la sémantique». Cahier de linguistique 2, Montréal, Presses de l'Université du Québec, pp. 133-146.

For more see, **James Holmes,** **THE NAME AND NATURE OF TRANSLATION STUDIES**, in **Lawrence Venuti, The Translation Studies Reader, pp 172-185.**

**What is translation?**

The term translation has several meanings: it can refer to **the general subject field**, **the product** (produced text) or **the process** (the act of producing translations), otherwise known as translating). The process of translation between two languages involves the translator changing an original written text (the source text/ ST) in the original verbal language (SL) into a written text (the target text/ TT) in a different verbal language (TL).

In a general dictionary, we find the following definition: “**translation** n. 1- the act or an instance of translating. 2- a written or spoken expression of the meaning of a word, speech, book, etc. in other language.” (**The Concise Oxford English Dictionary**)

The first of these two senses relates to translation as a **process**, the second to the **product**. This immediately means that the term translation encompasses very distinct perspectives. The first sense focuses on the role of the translator in taking the original text (ST) and turning it into a text in another language (TL). The second sense centers on the concrete translation product produced by the translator.

This distinction is drawn out in a specialized dictionary ‘**Dictionary of Translation Studies’** (**Shuttleworth and Cowie** 1997: 181).

“**Translation** An incredibly broad notion which can be understood in many different ways. For example, one may talk of translation as a **process** or a **product**, and identify such sub-types as literary translation, technical translation, **subtitling** and **machine** **translation**; moreover, while more typically it just refers to the transfer of written texts, the term sometimes also includes **interpreting**.”

Shuttleworth and Cowie’s definition also illustrates the potential confusion of translation with **interpreting**, which is strictly speaking ‘’ **oral translation of the spoken message or text’’.**

In his seminal paper, **‘On Linguistic Aspect of Translation’** the Russo-American linguist Roman Jakobson makes a very important distinction between three types of written translation:

1. **Intralingual translation** (or **rewording**) is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language. (Translation within the same language, which can involve rewording or paraphrasing).
2. **Interlingual** translation (or **translation proper**): is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language. (Translation from one language into another).
3. **Intersemiotic** translation (or **transmutation**) is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non- verbal sign system. ( **translation of verbal sign by a non-verbal sign**, for instance, music or image

Only the second category, interlingual translation, is deemed ‘translation proper’ by Jakobson.

***Translation Unit/ Unit of Translation:***

*A term used to refer to* ***the linguistic level at which ST is recodified******in TL.******Barkhudarov*** *defines a unit of translation as “****the smallest unit of SL which has an equivalent in TL****”; he comments that a unit of translation can itself “have a complex structure”, although “****its parts taken individually are ‘untranslatable’****, in that no equivalents can be established for them in TT” (1969:3, translated). Thus for example not only the word* ***generally****, but also the expression* ***by and large****, although it is made up of three words, would be treated as* ***a single unit****. For Barkhudarov the possible units of translation are* ***phonemes (e.g. in transcription), morphemes (e.g. in calques), words, phrases, sentences and entire texts****. The wording at a given point in ST would determine* ***the most appropriate unit of translation****, which could be expected to vary in the course of a text or even a single sentence. Furthermore, it frequently happens that a* ***ST unit*** *is translated by a* ***TL unit of a different size****; for example, a word may be translated by a phrase or vice versa. If a translator uses* ***larger translation units than is necessary*** *to convey the basic meaning of ST this will lead to a* ***free******translation*** *being produced; similarly,* ***translating at a lower level than necessary*** *will result in a* ***literal translation****. However, as argued by* ***Koller****, it seems likely that a translation between unrelated languages will usually involve larger units than if SL and TL are closely related (1979/1992:100). Barkhudarov (1993) raises the problem of whether* ***units of translation*** *should be elements of* ***linguistic******form or content****;* ***Vinay & Darbelnet*** *(1958, 1958/1995), however, consider that* ***units of thought, lexicological units and units of translation are synonymous****.*

*Considered from a* ***process-oriented*** *point of view, the**unit of translation is the stretch of ST on which the translator focuses attention in order to represent it as a whole in the TL. It is possible to isolate such units using* ***self-report*** *while translating, so called* ***TAPs (Think-Aloud Protocols).*** *Using this method, Lorscher shows that the translation units used by untrained students tend to be the single word, while experienced translators tend to isolate and translate units of meaning, normally realized in phrases, clauses or sentences.*

*From a* ***product-oriented*** *perspective, the unit of translation is the TT unit that can be mapped onto a ST unit. An experiment in this regard revealed that TTs produced by students with no experience contained large number of small units at word or even morpheme level, while a TT produced by a student who has translational experience contained approximately half the number of units, which were obviously larger, and mostly at phrase or clause level. The typical finding is that TTs in which translation units are larger appear more acceptable than those in which translation units are smaller.*

***Mark Shuttleworth & Moira Cowie: Dictionary of Translation Studies, Taylor and Francis Group, Routledge, London and New York, 2014.***

*Theorists hold a variety of positions in regard to the translation unit, depending on what they consider a translation unit to be. For example,* ***Newmark*** *(1988, pp. 66–67) regards a ‘****sentence****’ as* ***the best unit of translation****. He justifies his view by stating that a sentence is a unit of thought and a means presenting objects. He adds, ‘****All lengths of language can, at different moments and also simultaneously, be used as units of translation in the course of the translation activity****’ (Newmark, 1988, pp. 66–67). However, Newmark mentions that in some texts such as* ***expressive texts****, a ‘****word****’ should be deemed as the unit of translation as it can better convey the finest nuances.* ***Bassnett*** *(2005), however, states that a* ***text*** *should be the unit of translation, especially in relation to* ***literary prose texts****. Strangely,* ***Snell-Hornby*** *considers the notion of* ***culture*** *as the unit of translation (Hatim and Munday 2004). Manfredi (2014), in line with* ***Halliday and Matthiessen*** *(2014), argues that a* ***clause*** *is the most proper unit of translation. However,* ***Manfredi*** *states that in written translations, especially literary ones, a sentence should be considered as the unit of translation. Sentence, in this context, refers to a graphological unit that begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. ‘****Word, in its context, can be the proper unit of translations, especially authoritative and sacred texts such as the Holy Quran because nuances between words give different meanings.****’ In addition, faithfulness to the ST requires carrying out the translation process at the word level, rather than at sentence level. In sum, different scholars revealed different understandings and perspectives of the unit of translation. Whatever the case may be, translating these units of translations (whether word, sentence, clause, or culture) poses many problems.*

***Noureldin Abdelaal, Translation between English and Arabic.*** *A Textbook for Translation Students and Educators, Palgrave Macmillan,* *Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2020.*