

## TEACHING TRANSLATION FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

## تعليمية الترجمة لأغراض متخصصة

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## الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تسليط الضوء على جانب مهم من جوانب علم الترجمة، والذي يمثل بدوره الجانب التطبيقي لهذا العلم، و الذي يتم من خلاله الجمع بين ماهو نظري وماهو تطبيقي. فتعليمية الترجمة لا تقتصر فقط على تكوين مترجمين محترفين، فالوسائل التي يستعين بها المترجم التلميذ، بالاضافة الى نقد الترجمات، قد أخذت هي الأخرى نصيبها في هذا المجال التطبيقي. كما يبين هذا المقال مدى اسهام كل من لغة الاختصاص والمصطلحية في الترجمة المتخصصة. فالامام بالمصطلحات العلمية المتخصصة، هي الخطوة الأولى للقيام بترجمة علمية صحيحة أو ممكنة. فالتوصل الى ترجمة صحيحة للنصوص الطبية على سبيل المثال، يتطلب من المترجم الامام بالمصطلحات و المفاهيم الطبية بالدرجة الأولى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: علم الترجمة؛ تعليمية الترجمة؛ لغة الاختصاص؛ الترجمة المتخصصة

## ABSTRACT

This article aims to shed some light on one of the major fields of translation studies, which is translation teaching. It gives a clear idea about the background of this applied area of translation studies. Translator training is a key element through which we could put theories into practice. The

present paper focuses also on the contribution of both ESP and terminology in teaching specialized translation. It tackles the main differences between the scientific language and literary language. Finally, it shows the basic steps through which the translator can translate medical texts.

**Key words:** translation studies; translation teaching; terminology; translator training

## BACKGROUND OF TRANSLATION TEACHING

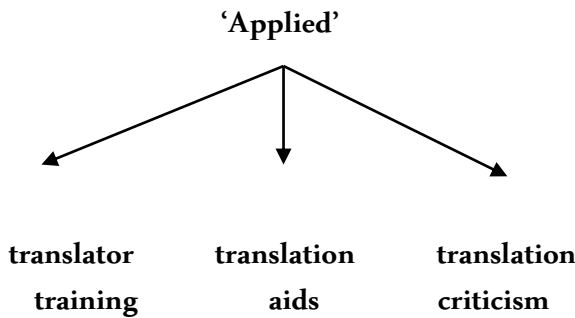
It is commonly accepted that translation is the transfer of meaning from one language (Source Language) into another (Target Language). Newmark (1991) regards the act of translating as “*transferring meaning of a stretch or a unit of language, the whole or a part, from one language to another.*”<sup>1</sup> The target text has to convey the same message of the source text. Many scholars make a special emphasize on the mechanisms of translation activity and the process through which learners could translate pieces of writings without further hindrance.

Although translation is not a newly born discipline, “translation studies” has relatively appeared to draw the major features of translation as a scientific discipline. In his most-read article “*The Name and Nature of Translation Studies*”, James S.Holmes (1972) has declared explicitly the name “translation studies” to the science of translation. Holmes hints at the various definitions of translation and the novice terminology that has been generated in the translation jargon. It is such an art or a craft that a hugely talented bilingual could turn it into a cross-cultural communication. As Holmes puts it:

*‘Through the years, diverse terms have been used in writings dealing with translating and translations, and one can find references in English to “the art” or “the*

*craft” of translation, but also to the “principles” of translation, the “fundamentals” or the “philosophy”.*<sup>2</sup>

Translation studies witnessed the emergence of new trends that seeks to put the common theories and approaches into practice. Focusing solely on the theoretical aspects of translation is no longer effective. Translation teaching or “translation didactics” is an offspring of translation studies. It aims at studying the different elements of the teaching operation and the learning process of translation. According to Holmes (1988b/2004), teaching translation represents an applied side of translation studies, next to translation aids and translation criticism as it is shown in the following figure 01:



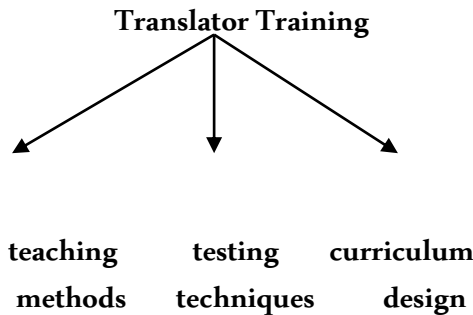
*Teaching Translation*<sup>3</sup>

Nowadays, translation is being taught not only as a subject-matter but as a major as well. Learners are supposed to possess a bilingual communicative competence in at least two different languages. Translator training is mainly based on pedagogical principles in which three main elements have been involved which are respectively: the tutor, learners, and the syllabus. The syllabus is a key element in the teaching operation. It is a set of lessons which are designed to reach specific teaching objectives. Those lessons differ in length and degree of complexity (Durieux 1988)<sup>4</sup>. They vary from the general

to the most specialized topics. They are supposed to go hand in hand with learners' level, needs and interest.

Translation aids are the main sources of information that a translator trainee refers to such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, grammar books, or any ICT tools. Translation criticism includes all types of review or assessment of any produced translation.

Toury (1991: 180, 1995: 9) has expanded the applied area of translation suggested in Holmes' map of translation studies. He divides training into three major areas which are respectively: teaching methods, testing techniques and curriculum design as it is illustrated in the following figure 02:



### *Translator Training*<sup>5</sup>

Translation trainers are applying teaching methods and approaches to bring about better learning achievements. They evaluate learners' translations and provide them with necessary feedback via specific didactic techniques. Curriculum designers tend to design a set of syllabi in order to achieve high quality of learning. The implementation of such curriculum allows teachers to accomplish their teaching mission.

## TRANSLATION FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Specialized translation is one of the most crucial areas of translation studies. The current era of science and technology and the emergence of many top-level domains gave the opportunity to translation practitioners to engage in theoretical and applied experiments. Specialized translation deals with the difficulties that face students during their learning process before becoming professional translators. Teaching specialized translation has become the cornerstone of translation studies. Instructors endeavor to find actual solutions to enable translator trainees to produce accurate translations. A good translator is required to shun errors of usage that may obscure the meaning.

Tytlar (1978:15) defines a 'good translation' as the transfer of the same communicative value of the source text to the target language receiver, with the same effect, as if the text is originally written in the target language.

*"I would, therefore, describe a good translation to be that in which the merit of the original work is so completely transfused into another language, as to be as distinctly apprehended, and as strongly felt, by the native of the country to which that language belongs, as it is by those who speak the language of the original work."*

Newmark (1988) hints at the professional skills that any translation trainee is supposed to acquire so as to perform competently in any given translation situation, regardless the linguistic jargon he would tackle. He claimed that in order to enter the labor market, translators have to master specialized translation in some top-required jargons such as science and technology, economy, politics, and institutions. According to him, the translation of literature and philosophy would not provide them with a well-earned wage.

*“I shall assume that you have degree-level 'reading and comprehension' ability in one foreign language and a particular interest in one of the three main areas of translation: (a) science and technology, (b) social, economic and/or political topics and institutions, and (c) literary and philosophical works. Normally, only (a) and (b) provide a salary; (c) is free-lance work”.*<sup>7</sup>

## TERMINOLOGY

According to Oxford dictionary, terminology is “*the set of technical words or expressions used in a particular subject*”<sup>8</sup>. Having a clear understanding about the terminology of the subject, we intend to translate, helps trainees produce more accurate translation rapidly. Timing is one of the most crucial criteria of a zealous professional translator. Terms are the common means of communication in any specialized domain.

They are the backbone of any scientific writing and a significant criterion that distinguishes scientific texts from the rest of writings. They are the mainstay of the transfer of scientific concepts without any ambiguity. Being clear, precise and concise are the main features that make specialized terms much more pertinent. For this reason, translation trainees are required to have a concrete idea about main concepts and terminology of their training field.

Nowadays, every domain has series of specialized dictionaries which are available either as printed or digital format. Online bilingual or multilingual dictionaries and encyclopedias; in addition to different glossaries that explains the theoretical and applied aspects of any given specialized field, are also available.

## THE CONTRIBUTION OF E.S.P. IN TEACHING SPECIALIZED TRANSLATION

Maria Teresa Cabré (1998) argues that understanding the source text is a key step in the translation process. This step can never be achieved without having a sound knowledge about the specialized topic we are tackling; in addition to the terminology related to that specific domain.

*“Multilingual terminological activity supports technical translation. Translation implies understanding the source text and this requires knowledge of the specific terms of the source and target languages. This means, in turn, that technical translators must have some familiarity with the subject matter they are translating.”<sup>9</sup>*

However, translating specialized works implies the mastery of the specific language they are written with. The language which is used to specifically function as a communicative mediator between the source text writer and the translator. This language is called “*Language for Specific purposes*”. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define English for specific purposes as an approach: ‘ESP...is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning.’<sup>10</sup>

Noone can deny that most innovations, in any field of investigation, appear first in English language, and then translated into different languages; among these Arabic and French. Hence, we would shed some light on the contribution of English for Specific Purposes (E.S.P.) in translating specialized texts.

## TRANSLATING A MEDICAL TEXT

Medicine is one of the most fertile disciplines in which new scientific experiments are taking place day after day. Discoveries have been endlessly made. New treatments and therapies are having significant effect on the survival of many patients who are suffering from serious diseases. New concepts and terms are regularly added to the medical jargon. In fact, translators face new challenges whenever they translate medical texts. In his article "A layman's view of medical translation", Peter Newmark (1979:1407), claims that *"this form of translation may be no less difficult and challenging than that of poetry."* The Syrian experience of teaching medicine in the Arabic language is a real example of **meeting the challenge of** medical translation.

Newmark (1979) suggested some procedures for translating medicine as follows:

- ✓ **Translate the title last:** the title is a key element in any piece of writing, because it hints at the main subject and the aim of the paper. Hence, the translator must translate the whole paper first then move on to the translation of the title, which is going to be an easy task to deal with, after understanding the entire paper.
- ✓ **Treat any translated abstract at the end of the paper:** the abstract is the mirror of the paper. It offers the main and the general ideas that are tackled by the author. The translator would save time and energy by dealing with the abstract by the end of his work.
- ✓ **Do never accept a bilingual or a multilingual dictionary as an authority:** Newmark argues that monolingual dictionaries are much more reliable. Unlike monolingual dictionaries, bilingual and multilingual dictionaries could offer a number of synonyms out of their context. The translated text has to be



accurate and coherent. Hence, seeking information from an expert is highly useful to avoid any doubt.<sup>11</sup>

The following extract is taken from *ASIP Pathways (2008)* which is a specialized journal published by the American Society for Investigative Pathology. It is about a serious disease that may affect the human body which is “*Pernicious Anemia*”:

*Clinical and autopsy studies subsequently established that pernicious anemia was more than a disorder of red blood cells. Besides reduced numbers of blood erythrocytes and low concentrations of hemoglobin, patients were found to have excessive iron deposits in the liver, gastric glandular atrophy and achlorhydria, megaloblastic bone marrow hyperplasia, and profound demyelination and atrophy of sensory axons in the spinal cord. Under the microscope some cells of the body that normally turn over rapidly were found to be increased in size. Large erythrocytic precursors in the bone marrow were recognized early, but with time it became clear that the blood of patients with pernicious anemia contained giant granulocytes and platelets.*<sup>12</sup>

Whenever they are asked to translate any specialized text, most students go directly to check dictionaries. Whether they are monolingual or bilingual dictionaries. However, having a bilingual list of the vocabulary mentioned in the text is not enough to understand the tackled disease.

pernicious anemia	فقر الدم الخبيث فقر الدم الويل الأنيميا الخبيثة الأنيميا الويلية
erythrocytes	كريات الدم الحمراء

iron deposits	رواسب الحديد
Glandular	غُدِّي
Gastric	المعدية خاصُّ بِالْمَعِدَّةِ معوي
Atrophy	ضمور
gastric atrophy	ضُمُورُ الْمَعِدَّةِ
megaloblastic	الضَّخْمُ الأَرُومَات
bone marrow	نخاع العظم نَقِيُّ الْعَظْمِ
hyperplasia	فَرْطُ التَّنَسُّجِ
achlorhydria	اللاهدروكلورية نقص حمض المعدة
demyelination	إزالة الميالين زوال الميالين تفكك أو انحلال الغمد المياليني الذي يُغطي الألياف العصبية تَحَلُّلُ الميالين
Sensory	حسي مورد ناقل بإتجاه مركز عصبي حسي
Axon	المحور العصبي المِحْوَار

	زائدة طويلة من العصبون تنقل الإشارة العصبية من الخلية
spinal cord	النخاع الشوكي الحبل الشوكي
erythrocytic	متعلق بالكُرَيَّاتِ الحمراء
precursors	سلائف مولدات طلائع
granulocytes	الخلايا المحببة
Platelets	الصفائح الدموية

Before translating this medical text, we need first to have a concrete idea about what is happening in our bodies, and then answer a set of questions which are respectively:

- ✓ How does this disease affect a human body?
- ✓ What are the symptoms that appear on the patient?
- ✓ How does his body react?
- ✓ How could a patient be cured of this disease?

Students have to be familiar with the language of medicine; they need also to have a clear idea about what is meant by anemia and the different types of anemia. After a set of lessons, students must end up with the following information in mind:

Pernicious anemia is a type of Vitamin B12 deficiency anemia. It is called 'pernicious' because it is considered as a very serious disease that may cause death if the patient is left untreated. The

human body needs a protein called IF (Intrinsic Factor). This protein is produced by the stomach. It helps the small intestine absorb vitamin B-12. The lack of IF results in low level of vitamin B-12. Hence, the patient's body is unable to make enough Erythrocytes.

The common symptoms of pernicious anemia are weakness, headache, chest pain, weight loss. It is frequently treated with either injections or pills of vitamin B-12.

Students have also to be aware of the main differences between the scientific language and literary language as shown in the table below<sup>13</sup>:

Literary Language	Scientific Language
Lack of argumentative progressive	Logicity
Vagueness	Precision
Emotion	Reason
Truth to the ideal	Truth to particular reality
Concretion	Generalization
Emotive meaning	Referential meaning
Connotation	Denotation
Grammatical affixation	Lexical affixation
Idiomatic expressions are frequent	Idiomatic expressions are rare
Very few abbreviations, acronyms and registers	Use of abbreviations, acronyms and registers
* **	Standard expressions
No use of scientific terminology, or formulas	Use of scientific specialized items and formulas
Expensive use of figurative language	No use of elements of figurative language

After the acquisition of the main concepts of the text, students may suggest the following translation:

و بالتالي أثبتت الدراسات السريرية والتشريحية أن فقر الدم الخبيث كان أكثر من مجرد اضطراب في خلايا الدم الحمراء. يعاني المرضى، الى جانب نقص عدد كريات الدم الحمراء وانخفاض تركيز الهيموغلوبين، من وجود فرط في رواسب الحديد في الكبد، و ضمور لخلايا جدار المعدة، و نقص حمض المعدة (اللاهيدروكلورية)، و فَرْطُ تَنْسُجٍ نخاع العظم الضخم الارومات، وزوال الميالين بشكل حاد، و ضمور المحاور العصبية الحسية للحبل الشوكي. أظهر الكشف المجهرى وجود زيادة في حجم بعض خلايا الجسم، التي تتحول عادة بسرعة. فتم التعرف على سلائف خلايا الدم الحمراء الكبيرة في نخاع العظام، في وقت مبكر. لكن مع مرور الوقت أصبح واضحا أن دم المرضى الذين يعانون من فقر الدم الخبيث يحتوي على خلايا محببة وصفائح دموية عملاقة.

### Conclusion

The translator has to adopt terminology and documentary researches whenever he meets a medical text. Instead, learning 'English for Medicine' would facilitate the translation task. Mastering the language of doctors could merely means understanding medical texts and reducing the endless number of researches undertaken by translator trainees. Therefore, ESP would considered as a tool in teaching specialized translation. The tool that paves the way to facilitate the key step of the translation process which is the understanding of the source text.

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- <sup>14</sup> The author left it blanc.