L'ARABE COMME LANGUE INTERNATIONALE*

Mohammed DIDAOUI
ONUDI

1. La trajectoire de l'arabe : une influence réciproque

Les Langues, comme tout autre être vivant, subissent une influence réciproque ; elles empruntent, évoluent, s'adaptent et se métamorphosent, ou du moins elles sont supposées être ainsi, sinon elle sont condamnées à disparaître totalement ou à se ramifier en d'autres langues où dialectes. La langue arabe ne fait nullement exception à cette règle. «L'influence de l'arabe sur sur la quasi totalité des langues européennes est dûe aux conquêtes arabes»[1] et «la grandeur de la culture arabe a accentué l'impact de ces conquêtes»[2]. C'est ainsi qu'il y eu un apport en matière de chimie, de mathématiques, d'astronomie, d'astrologie, etc. l'Arabe a affecté; à différents degrés, une centaine de langues et dialectes environ de par le monde , y compris les langues européennes, et a été influencé par l'araméen, le grec, l'hébreu, le persan, le turc et d'autres. Trente-Sept langues, dans l'ensemble, ont emprunté les caractères d'écriture arabe[3], sans compter le mérite et le prestige que cette langue connait dans le monde Islamique.

Par ailleurs, le terme et la structure peuvent faire l'objet de cette influence et ce phénomene a été à la fois consenti par certains et désapprouvé par d'autres au fil des années, d'une manière générale. Alors que «most English speekers seem to believe in a species of linguistic free trade and argue that if a term of foreign-origin is useful it should be put to work forthwith regardless of its parentage»[4], d'aucuns pensent que «les langues étrangères et les traductions à partir de ces langues ont, à notre avis, un aspect négatif qui se manifeste par l'emploi de plusieurs structures stylistiques de la phrase. Nous ne considérons guère ce développement comme étant acceptable car c'est une procédure non usuelle en langue arabe classique, du point de vue grammatical, morphologique et étymologique. Il s'avère à l'étude que les termes utilisés sont arabes, mais le sens est exprimé par une phrase ou tournure inconnue en arabe et littéralement traduite de langues étrangères»[5]Cependant, ceci va à l'encontre de l'idée d'évolution inéluctable, surtout si l'on sait que l'anglais, ou plus exactement l'américain, a énormement bénéficié de l'allemand, où «l'influence

* Les opinions exprimées dans ce papier sont strictement personnelles.

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12- It is interesting that Edmund Burke, on his discourse on «Delight & pleasure» two hundred years ago stressed that «English language is designed for business rather than philosophy». Burke, Edmund. **A philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime & Beautiful**. ed. James T. Boulton, University of Notre Dame Press, London (1968), 36.

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4 - In English, which is the expression of a highly-sophisticated technological culture, both horizontal and vertical dimensions of the human experience are dynamic and expanding. Whereas in Arabic, which is the expression of parochial and poetic culture, only the vertical dimension is unevenly expanding. Thus, translating English technical texts into Arabic will inescapably involve a process of transferring dynamic and multi-dimensional human experience to static and monodimensional human experience whose verbal symbols can hardly provide for such a transfer.

5 - As the Arab culture is being profoundly modified and modern technology is being increasingly introduced, new technical terms are being introduced as well. But these terms are mostly a mixture of transliteration and borrowing e.g. «'benzinkhāna' = 'petrol station' is compounded from the English word 'benzine' and the Turkish word 'khāna' = station». However, these terms, regardless of their power to catch up with Arabic paradigmatic moulds e.g. «'benzinkhāna' 'benzinkhānāt' = 'petrol stations'», can be no means encompass the whole body of English technical and scientific literature. This is because it requires an exceptionally high energy for the Arabs to assimilate and span what England has already spanned since the Renaisance.

* * *

English	Arabic
— apart from «ling» & «ette» there is no paradigmatic demunitive. — no diglossia. — above twenty vowel sounds — no pharyngeal or glottal sounds except in the aspirated «H» and the colloquial glottal stop.	— paradigmatic demunitive exist — diglossia exists. — few vowel sounds used mainly on vocalization. — pharyngeal and glottal sound are among the standard distinctive features.

Since scientific and technical texts do not contain idiomatic or culture-bound expressions, the type of equivalence most common in their translating is formal equivalence which focuses attention on the message itself in form and content - Prof. Nida highlights this aspect of technical translating :

> «This level of language, experientially is lifeless, is linguistically very manipulatable. For to the extent that language can be separated from the unique qualities of experience and can be made a kind of linguistic mathematics, its units can easily be arranged and rearranged with little interference from the cultural context.»[13]

We infer from the comparison between English & Arabic above while keeping in mind Nida's note that Arabic does drastically lack scientific and technical terminology, suffers an irreversible process of disintegration through diglossia, and harbours scanty abbreviations, acronyms, formulae and registers. But since science and technology create situational features which involve new concepts and terminology as we have mentioned above, it is binding for Arab translators to coin equivalent terminology and develop corresponding programmes of expression which Arabic morphology and flexible word order can effectively provide. However, theoretical possibilities may in many cases fall short of practical application and this is very much the case with Modern Standard Arabic today.

Conclusion :

We conclude from the discussion we briefed so for that :

1 - The act of technical translating is sometimes guided by several sets of strategies. One of these strategies accounts for the systemic differences between languages. Another depends on the type of language used in any individual text i.e. basic or applied science. And a third that is a systhesis of the first two strategies which accounts for both language differences and the type of language used in any individual text.

2 - These three types of strategies are applicable in the translating of English technical texts into Arabic.

3 - Arabic harbours gaps and missing links in the Frame-of-reference concerning science & technology literature. These gaps and missing links cannot be made for by the present translated works from English or by science dictionaries. They are also likely to multiply. Their objective coefficient is under-development, and their continuation will inevitably render Arabicization, which was itself an area of much exploitation and chaos, useless.

Technical texts	Poetic texts
— repeated occurence of passive voice & by-structure. — semanticizing of grammatical features. — does not use elements of figurative language.	— repeated occurence of active voice and by-structure is not so frequent. — no semanticized grammatical features. — uses elements of figurative language.

Close examination of the items included in the «poetic texts» column will suggest that these items are very much descriptive of Arabic language while the items contained in the opposite column testify to the characteristics very much relevant to English language.

Setting off this comparison altogether against another class of selected linguistic differences that exist between English and Arabic will confirm the poetic nature of Arabic language and provide guidelines in the translating of English technical texts into Arabic :

English	Arabic
— words are composite — only few grammatical items are compound. — rigid word order. — very few inflections. — uses abbreviations, acronyms, formulae and registers. — narrow range of gender distinction. — a clear-cut tense-aspect distinction. — no dative or dual. — scientific & technical terminology covers all relevant fields including English for special purposes. — archaic expressions are obsolete — uses very many compound lexical strucures. — metaphor and other forms of figurative language are reserved for poetic use of language and certain related texts. — «adverbs» is a grammatical category. — uses capitalization. — no vocalization. — punctuation has a bearing on the interpretation of texts.	— words are paradigmatic. — the majority of grammatical items are compound. — flexible word order. — highly inflectional. — does not use abbreviation acronyms, formulae and registers. — wide range of gender distinction. — no clear-cut tense-aspect distinction. — contains dative & dual — lack of scientific & technical terminology. — archaic expressions are still used. — uses few compound lexical structures. — metaphor and other forms of figurative language are incorporated in Modern Standard Arabic. — few adverbs and English preposition like before, after, above / over, below / under, behind, between — no capitalization. — uses vocalization. — punctuation has no bearing on the interpretation of texts.

Thus, with the verticality, we have the relation between height and depth while with the horizontality, on the other hand, we have the relation between width and breadth*. The first relation testifies to the relative merits of artists and poets, while the second signifies the merits of scientists and thechnologists. The product of poets like Rilke, Keats and Hölderlin is essentially a product of height (depth) which has either been brought down or (lifted up) so as to fit into the width abd breadth of life itself, that is acquiring a horizontal dimension. Whereas the product of scientists lacks the intuitive complexity and wealth of experience characteristic of poets. This product is, therefore, essentially conceived as a forward - directness[11].

Scientists speak within the familiar and concrete realities of everyday life. IF they are to move, their movement is almost always towards the accomplishment of a new horizon or new perspectives that always remain within the horizontal structure of the concrete, logical and objective reality.

Another point intrudes itself here, it is important to stress that these dimensions to which poetic constructs and scientific constructs are being related respectively, both rest on the preceiving man, that is both self-relationship and world-relationship are unified through the symbolic system of identification generally known as language. However, this is not the same as saying that these dimensions can be spanned during a given culture's or individual's life time.

The relation of these dimensions seems a relation of opponents while their unity seems as a harmony of opposites. To span them therefore seems an impossibility which even a highly - sophisticated computer technology cannot bring off.

These demarcation lines between vertical and horizontal dimensions suggest onther area of investigation and comparisons. We can now expand the previous columns of the differences between science & poetry so as to include some important language details :

Technical texts	poetic texts
— logicality	— lack of orgumentative progression
— precision	— vagueness
— reason	— emotion
— truth to particular reality	— truth to the ideal and universal
— generalization	— concretion
— referential meaning	— emotive meaning (Nida, 1964)
— denotation	— connotation
— lexical affixation	— grammatical affixation
— idiomatic expressions are rare	— idiomatic expressions are recurrent
— use of abbreviation, acronymy and registers	— very few abbreviations, acronyms, and registers
— standard English	— I most all varieties of English
— use of scientific terminology, specialised items, and formaiae[12]	— ordinary discourse : no scientific terminology, no formulae.

* HEIGHT & WIDTH signify two dimensional planes, whereas DEPTH & BREADTH signify three - dimensional entities that can be re - presented on two - dimensional surfaces.

The procedures used in this model aims at breaking the code of English technical texts. The process of decoding depends mainly on the successful handling of certain problem-solving strategies and language experience such as developing a comparative base for both Arabic & English grammar, lexicon, and programmes of expression. Also translating competence which includes reading and writing competence in both Arabic & English as well as knowledge of the alternative standards of equivalence.

Grammatical elements must be identified and assigned function in the sorting process within compensatory strategies which enable technical translator to process the text automatically.

Since these texts are technical, there will be no motive on the traslators side to create additional effets beyond that of simple information transmission. There are no emotional impressionistic, or aesthetic effects in technical texts.

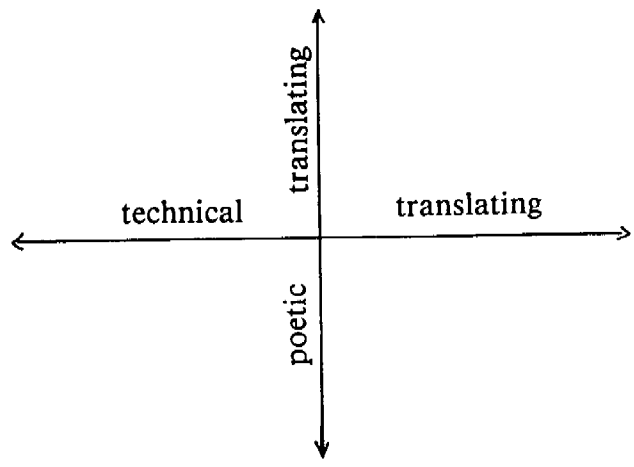
Technical use of language manifests itself in several ways. The most obvious one is non-deviation from ordinary grammar, logicality and argumentative progression. This may entail the adherence to items that are conventionally used. There is no insertion, or addition or substitution or permutation[7]. There is no blocking or stopping to the automatic processing. In contrast to literary texts, technical texts stress mainly on the information content without bothering to tackle features that are characteristic of poetic texts such as the contrastive features of sound, forms, and meaning. Let alone other aesthetic features which Schmidt[8] has defined as «polyfunctionality».

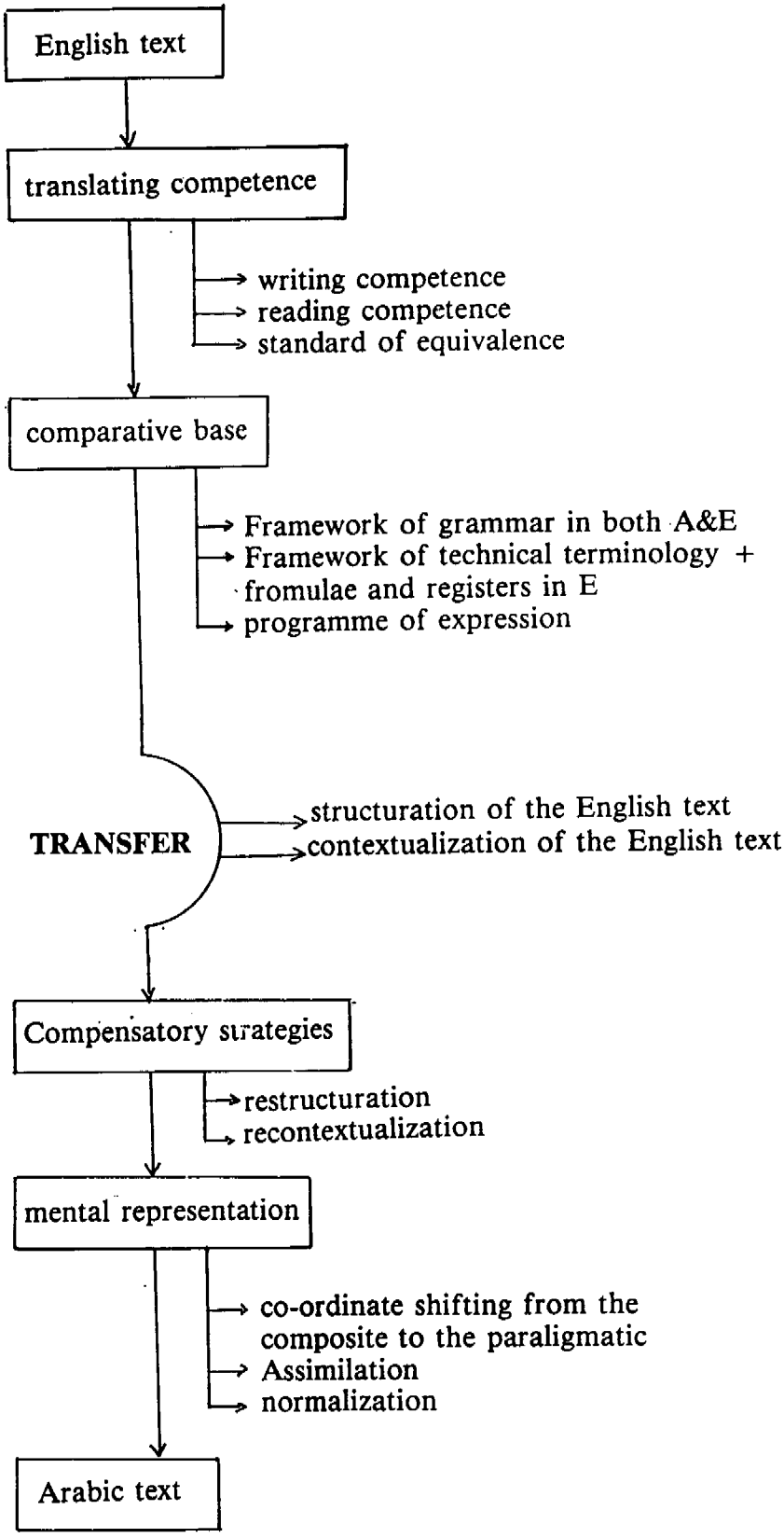
We also notice that most of the elements in technical texts are not nonexpected. One might even define the meaning of technical texts according to the actual use of items to refer to things in the real world or to the «extension» as contrasted to the potential meaning of these things as they are preceived, conceived or represented - in terms other than their actual appearance - by the perceiving man or to the «intension»[9].

In technical translating the process which takes place is that of narrowing down potential meaning into actual meaning by way of reconstructuration and recontextualization. Thus, establishing the macro-context out of the word raw material of the micro-context[10].

By setting off technical translating against poetic translating, their characteristics and the problems that are likely to be encountered in reach, become most salient.

In technical texts we have an end in view and the means necessarily remains within the general conceptual framework within which the end is defined. That is, technical context has a content which is concerned with the horizontal structure of the world while poetic context has a content which is concerned with the vertical structure of the world and hence : the preceiving man. Thus, the relationship between these two diametrically opposing systems can be represented as follows :





- Model for English - Arabic technical translating

Science	poetry
denotative adequacy logicality precision intellect reason truth to particular truth	unbridled connotation lack of argumentative progression vagueness imagination or intuition emotion truth to the ideal and universal.»[5]

This distinction is useful in so far as it is conducive to certain leading Factors in a theory of technical translating. For most of the literature on translation has given extensive consideration to literary texts ending up with specific rules and theories, and establishing relevant terminology. The word «deviation», for example, expresses one of the frequent concepts in the description of poetic texts while it only serves a denotative meaning in the description of technical texts where deviation rarely occurs.

Howerver, certain rules which are applicable in theories of poetic translating can be safely applied in technical translating in general and English - Arabic technical translating in particular.

In this respect we have to mention that Arabic language, despite its resistance to the importation of foreign words, can provide for English Arabic word equivalence by different ways such as coining, borrowing and transliterating by fitting into its paradigmatic moulds English words such as the substantive. So words like «faylasūf», «jiyulūjiyā», «asfalt», «mator», dimoqratiyā»...etc. found their way uninterrupted into Arabic. Beeston says to this effect :

> «The need for a large new vocabulary dealing with technological and scientific matters is, however, the least interesting features of new lexical development, more fascinating, though more elusive, is the evolution of new words for intellectual concepts»[6].

However, apart from the cultural gap, the problem of technical translating from English into Arabic remains mostly a matter of understanding, contextualizing, and representing the techniques, the processes and the detaills which science technology involve, more than it is a matter of terminology. This, the above - mentioned requirements for competence in technical translating can be further explained by the following model of the technical translating process as far as Arabic is concerned :

As science and technology develop, new words to express new concepts, techniques and inventions come into existence. These words have developed more rapidly during the last decades that dictionaries can by no means keep pace with. This development has confronted the Arab World with the serious linguistic problem of expressing this ever-expanding wave of newly - founded concepts and techniques for which no equivalence in Arabic exist. But while coining, borrowing, transliterating and other forms of transfer made for a huge bulk of English scientific terminology, translating of full technical texts from English into Arab still pose a major intellectual challenge.

It is interesting that Prof. Nida has, in his discourse on technical translating, pointed out to this challenge. He said :

> «If, however, the translation of scientific texts from one language to another participating in modern cultural development is not too difficult, it is not surprising that the converse is true - that translating scientific material from a modern Indo - European language into a language largely outside the reach of Western science is extremely difficult. This is one of the really pressing problems confronting linguists in Asia today»[1].

Why Technical Translating into Arabic :

It is all - too - evident that not all ideas or information are in Arabic. In pure science for example 70 % of the research indexed in 1970 in the Science Abstracts were in English & 30 % were in Russian and other languages[2]. This statistics stresses the paramount importance of technical translating into Arabic.

The need for technical translating into Arabic is getting increasingly felt because Arab countries are undergoing a large - Scale modernization process. Technical translating, thus, becomes a prerequisite not only for the acquisition of technology but also for its introduction.

What does it take to be technical tranlator ?

According to the London Institute of linguistics it takes :

«1 - A knowledge of the subject matter of the article to be translated.

2 - A well-developed imagination that enables the translator to visualize the equipment or process being described.

3 - The intelligence to be able to fill in the missing links in the original text.

4 - The sense of discrimination to be able to choose the most suitable equivalent term from the literature of the field or from dictionaries.

5 - The ability to use one's own language with clarity, conciseness, and precision.

6 - Practical experience in translating from related fields. In short, to be technical translator one must be a scientist, or engineer, a linguist and a writer.»[3]

Out of the six requirements listed above, the first deserves special consideration because it bears on the early attempts to found a theory of translating advocating texts whether literary or technical should be dealt with according to the way language is used in them[4]. A theory which goes back to the old epistemological controversy over the objective and the subjective sides to reality and which may imply, when extended to language varieties, a dichotomy between science and poetry.

To Hazard Adams «it took more than a century to reorganise these two terms into the appropriate columns. This :