



# Introduction to Translation

# بيانات أساسية

الكلية: الآداب

قسم: اللغة الإنجليزية

الفرقة: الأولى

أستاذ المقرر: د.إسراء محمد سعيد

العام الجامعي: 2025/2024

# Contents

---

1. Introduction.....	1
2. What is Translation?.....	2
3. The History of Translation.....	4
4. What Do We Translate?.....	6
5. Responsibilities of a Good Translator.....	9
6. Translation and Interpretation.....	12
7. Different Types of Translation.....	14
8. How Do We Translate?.....	16
• Methods of Translation.....	16
• The Process of Translating.....	33
9. Exercises.....	36
10. Translation Problems (Grammatical Problems).....	40
A. Translation of Verbs ‘Be’, ‘Do’ and ‘Have’.....	43
B. Translation of Word Order.....	56
C. Translation of Personal Pronouns.....	62

D. Translation of adjectives.....	65
E. Translation and the Change of Word Class.....	70
F. Translation of Articles.....	75
G. Translation of Sentence Connectors.....	79
11. Exercises.....	90
References.....	95

## Preface

---

This book is an introductory textbook for students of translation to develop their understanding of translation. It aims at defining translation and providing a brief history of how the concept of Translation has developed. It also aims at investigating how translators played a key role in translating knowledge and the qualities that should be found in a translator that qualifies him/her to be a good and faithful translator. The book also explains the different methods that the translator could use while translating process. The main point of the book lies in adopting a bottom-up approach to translation issues that address translation topics as problems and solutions. It features practical exercises following each topic to test students' understanding of the presented topics. This enables students to apply their understanding of the topics discussed earlier and to translate lexical units between Arabic and English.

# 1. Introduction

---

Translation is as old as human civilization. Since the dawn of civilization, we, human beings, have been using language to translate our thoughts and ideas. We use a set of symbols to communicate or transfer an idea or thought or a feeling to the person whom we address during an act of communication. Here too we have translation. In this sense, we translate every day. With the evolution of human society, we became more eager to know about the thoughts and feelings of people in distant places. Hence we used two sets of symbols and codes to transfer the thoughts and ideas of people speaking a different language to our own language. This gave rise to translation as we see and use it today.

Translation has always been a means of communication and interaction between languages and cultures. Had there been no translation, numerous cultures could not have flourished as they have. Indeed, some cultures have gained momentum through translation. Western Europe, for example, owes its civilization to translators. Likewise, the Arabs owe their civilization to the voluminous works of Greeks they had translated. Thus, translation is an act of communication between different cultures. It is also ultimately a human activity which enables human beings to exchange ideas and thoughts regardless of the different tongues used. Translation is quite vital for cross-cultural communication because it helps create a better understanding between different communities through the transmission of ideas and beliefs. It has played a key role in the development of world culture and has been always the bridge between civilizations.

## 2. What is Translation?

---

Translation is the process of converting text or speech from one language into another. It is a procedure where an original text, often called ‘the source text’, is replaced by another text in a different language, often called the ‘the target text’. It also involves understanding the meaning of the original content and accurately conveying that meaning in the target language while considering cultural aspects, idiomatic expressions, and context. Translation can be applied to various forms of communication, including written documents, spoken dialogue, and multimedia content. It plays a crucial role in facilitating communication across different languages and cultures.

As a subject, translation generally refers to all the processes and methods used to render and / or transfer the meaning of the source language text (SL) into the target language (TL) as closely, completely and accurately as possible, using: (1) words/phrases which already have a direct equivalent in Arabic language; (2) new words or terms for which no ready-made equivalents are available in Arabic; (3) foreign words or terms written in Arabic letters as pronounced in their native origin; and (4) foreign words or terms made to fit Arabic pronunciation, spelling and grammar. Here are examples to illustrate these four types respectively:

1. ‘Speak’ (يتكلم)
2. ‘Satellite’ (قمر اصطناعي)
3. ‘Aspirin’ (أسبيرين)

#### 4. 'Democracy' (ديمقراطية)

Some scholars define translation as an art or craft and some others call it a science. It is called an art as all good translations are expressions of the creative urge of the translators. Likewise, it is a science because of the technical formalities and complexities involved in its process.

Consequently, translation is often considered both an art and a science. While some aspects of translation can be systematic and mechanical (aligning words and grammar), effective translation is largely an artistic process that involves creativity, interpretation, and understanding of context. Different translators may approach a text in unique ways, reflecting the artful side of the profession



### 3. The History of Translation

---

Translation activity is as old as time. There is no doubting the fact that every intellectual or scientific awakening has always been preceded by or begun with active translation. In the ancient times, strenuous translations from Greek language to Latin had been carried out following the decline of the Greek civilization and emergence of the Roman.

Europe remained under the darkness of the middle ages till the fall of Constantine and transfer of its treasures through the relics of the Greek and the Roman to the then great western nations. Extensive translation exercise thus became active, rendering these antiques into such nascent European languages as English, French and Spanish, most of which developed out of Latin, and from elements of regional dialects or languages of varying impacts and power depending on region. The annal of renaissance period began with those translation works stabilizing, digesting and assimilating the translated, and then impressing it on the shaping of European mentality.

Arab civilization likewise, had in history experienced many great translations. Between the 7th and the 8th centuries and beyond, the heritages of such early nations as Persia and Rome, that preceded the Arab nation, had been translated into Arabic via Sanskrit, Syriac and later directly through the Greek translation. The Arabs, therefore, started learning foreign languages following stability of Islam in conquered regions, hence, they were able to render many alien heritages into Arabic.

The Abbasid period particularly witnessed a widespread of vivacious translation activities as Iraq was populated by a sizeable number of medical

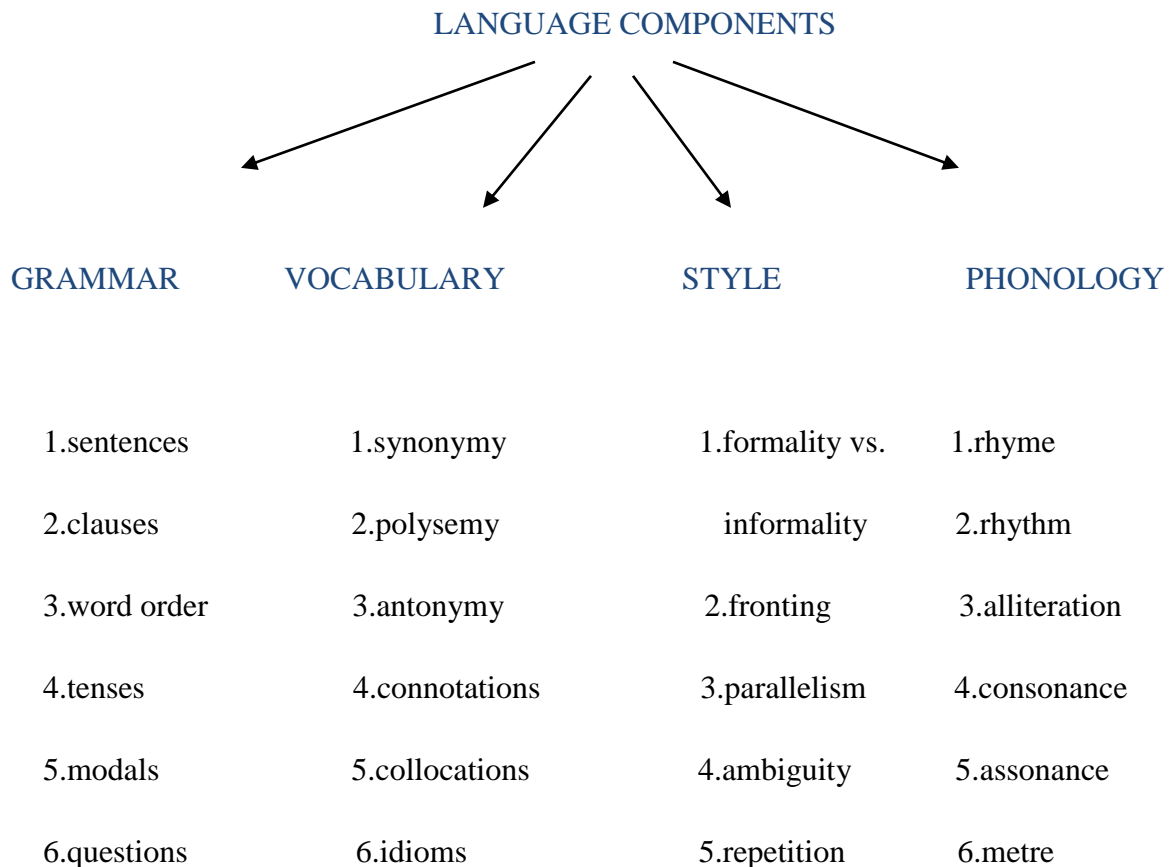
practitioners, philosophers and astrologers. Translation during this era passed through several stages: it began by translating materials on Medicine, Astrology, Mathematics, Philosophy and Logic, and culminated in the translation of various books on sciences and literatures. This activity eventually resulted in the diffusion of knowledge, development of thinking styles and growth of Islamic sects, whose methodology is based on dialectic. All of these climaxed in the flourishing of Syntax and the evolution of Rhetoric. It is however, pertinent to mention that the later translation experience, which started by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Rifa'at Tahtawi founded in Egypt the language academy for translation of European languages (English inclusive), was an upshot of those early experiences in translation. Thenceforth, translation became a science having its own fundamental principles, after it had been an art relying on the competence and genius of a translator.

Now, when we translate, what do we translate? Grammar, words, style or/and sounds, or something else? The following point answers this question.

## 4. What Do We Translate?

---

We translate neither grammar, words, style nor sounds. What do we translate then? We always translate one thing only: MEANING. What is meaning? It is a big question that is difficult to answer easily, directly, exhaustively and decisively. However, a general, satisfactory and simple answer can be given here. Meaning is a complicated network of language components comprised of: Syntax (grammar), Vocabulary (words), Style, and Phonology (sounds). Each of these components includes several points, shown in Figure 1:



7.negation	7.proverbs	6.redundancy	7.foot
8.imperatives	8.metaphors	7.short/long	8.chiming
9.adjectives	9.technical terms:	sentencing	9.stress
10.adverbs	Arabization	8.irony	10.pitch
11.articles	10.proper names	9.punctuation	11.tone

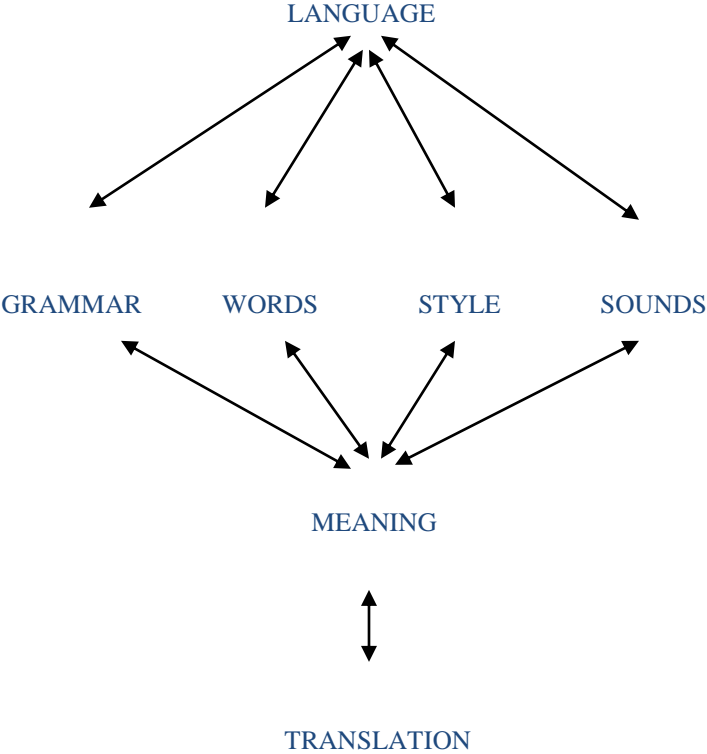
(Fig. 1)

Thus, meaning is the product of the different components of language taken together, occurring in a certain type of text and context, and directed to a certain kind of readership.

In translation, although we do not translate, say, English grammar into Arabic, we account for its role in shaping meaning, making it either easier or more difficult to understand and, hence, translate. The same can be said of other language components. We are always interested in how they combine, produce, influence, reflect and crystallize meaning.

Hence, with few exceptions, we translate meaning, nothing else but meaning. This means that anything not relevant to meaning is usually disregarded in translation (except for certain texts like poetry where sound/prosodic features are sometimes more important than meaning). On the other hand, meaning is not the

product of words only -as many would wrongly think - but also of grammar, style and sounds. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between meaning, language, language components and translation (it can be read both ways, top-bottom and bottom-up):



(Fig. 2)

## 5. Responsibilities of a Good Translator

---

Translation is the communication of the meaning of a text in a source language (SL) into a comprehensive version of target language (TL) without causing any loss to the original message. It is often thought that if one is a bilingual s/he can be a good translator, which is not the truth. People having good communicative and writing experiences in both the languages can be good translators, which includes their being bilinguals.

While translating, a translator discovers the meaning of a text behind the forms in the source language (SL) and reproduces the same meaning in the target language (TL) with the forms and structures available in the target language. The form changes but the meaning or sense or message remains the same. Nowadays we find translators using computers to translate one language into another, but human beings still play the major role in deciding the final output. While translating images/metaphors and emotive expressions in literary texts, computers cannot replace human beings. Translating is more than simply looking up a few words in a dictionary.

**Faithfulness to the Original Text and the Author:** A competent translator should try to get into the mind of the writer of the original text in the source language. S/He should also fully understand the sense and meaning of the original author. S/He should try to put in every effort to ensure that the translation resembles the original text or is very close to the original text in terms of its sense and message. Expert and experienced translators know the requirements of a text, and make changes to communicate the style and essence of a text with minimal variations from the original. While trying to be faithful to the original text, s/he should not try to find difficult equivalent words in the hope that this will add to the

perfection of your translation. A faithful translator should act like the author's mouthpiece in a way that he knows and comprehends fully whatever the original author has said in his text. The translation should have all the ease of the original composition.

A good translator is not born, but made. With a little care and some labor, a person can acquire the skills of a good translator. Some of the qualities that distinguish a good and successful translator from a bad or unsuccessful translator are mentioned below:

1. The translator needs to have a strong interest in language and a feeling for it.
2. S/he must have a good knowledge of the source language and of the regional culture and literature, as well as a sound knowledge of any special subject that is dealt with in the work that is being translated.
3. The translator should understand the meaning of the source text and be able to present the meaning in the target language through proper grammar and a good writing style.
4. S/he should have linguistic competence in both source language and target language so that s/he can analyze grammatical and lexical relationships in texts and deal with complex structures to determine the intended meaning.
5. The translator should be familiar with other works of the original author.
6. S/he must be an experienced and innovative writer in the target language and nearly will always be a native speaker of it.
7. The translator should always be capable of switching between different styles in the language depending on subject of the work being translated.
8. The translator should always aim at conveying the message of the original work and not just rendering accurate meaning of the words.

9. S/he should be competent to produce a text that reads well, and at the same time echo the tone and style of the original work – as if though the original author were writing in the target language.

Therefore, Translation as an art and a science is a difficult task and requires constant practice to acquire expertise. It demands sound knowledge of various branches of the source language as well as that of the target language. The task of the translator goes beyond reliance on dictionary; rather he should be able to present the real and appropriate meaning in a language construction in vogue, so that he can express the ideas of the source language.

The flair, skill and experience that are required by a good translator are similar to the qualities that are needed by an ‘original’ writer; hence, writing and translating often go hand in hand.



## 6. Translation and Interpretation

---

Interpretation and translation are different professions. Each requires a distinct set of skills and aptitudes, and most people are better suited for one or the other. While interpreters often work into and from both languages, translators generally work only into their active language.

Translation is the process of changing the language that is written or spoken in to another language. It is said that there are as many translations as there are languages in the world which reminds us with the need and importance of the art of translation. The importance of translation emerges by the reason that it is one of the important disciplines being very much useful in various spheres of human activities. Besides, a large number of languages spoken or written all over the world, and, as such, an individual would not like to be confined to one language or the native language only, but preferably would be interested to learn different language for a specific purpose. The need and importance of translation also arises when one wants to know the words or phrases or a language used in other countries so as to familiarize oneself for a particular purpose. Translation is also important when a person forms thoughts about how it would be possible to be mingled with the people of different country if he needs to stay in connection with the business or employment. Moreover, there are times that necessitate sharing beliefs, values, customs, practices and the social behavior of a particular nation.

Interpreting is one of the oldest professions since the evolution of languages. Communication among different communities speaking different languages was documented throughout history. We can spot many examples of interpreting in the early Muslim states when Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) sent

messengers to the neighboring empires, for instance Rome and Egypt. Presumably those messengers could speak one language and the hosting empire used to provide an interpreter. Throughout history, interpreting played a vital role in different eras and for many purposes.

However despite the obvious similarities, these two disciplines are very different and it's incredibly rare to see an individual who does both professionally. The problem arises from different areas such as:

1. Translators focus on written content, while interpreters focus on oral speech.
2. The time limit is a very important factor and forms a big difference.
3. Translators don't have to be fluent in their second language, while interpreters have to be fluent as native speakers.
4. Translators can use references and dictionaries (electronic or paper) to complete their task, whereas interpreters use their memory for immediate interpreting.
5. Interpreters need thorough training in order to be professional.

## 7. Different Types of Translation

---

There are many different types of translation, each with its own unique processes and requirements. Despite these differences, they all fulfill the same purpose of facilitating communication across language barriers. The following are the most common types of translation:

### **Literary translation**

Literary translation deals with translating literary works such as novels, poems, plays, and short stories. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the literary genre as “*Of or relating to the writing, study, or content of literature, esp. of the kind valued for quality of form.*” However, defining the literary genre is difficult, and what is considered to be of artistic merit does change over time.

To translate literary content, translators must be proficient in both languages and possess literary skills to capture the style, tone, and cultural nuances of the original work. Literary translation requires creativity and sensitivity to preserve the artistic integrity and emotional impact of the original text while making it accessible to readers in the target language.

### **Audiovisual translation**

Audiovisual translation includes translating audiovisual content such as movies, television shows, documentaries, and video games. Subtitling, dubbing, and voice-over are common techniques used in audiovisual translation. Audiovisual translators must consider factors such as timing, synchronization, lip-syncing, and cultural adaptation to ensure that the translated content is natural and engaging for the audience.

## **Specialized translation**

Specialized translation is a type of translation that focuses on specific subject areas or industries, requiring in-depth knowledge and expertise in those fields. Here are some examples:

- Legal translation: handles any legal document such as contracts, court documents, statutes, and patents. Translators need a deep understanding of legal terminology and concepts in both the source and target languages to ensure accuracy and precision.
- Medical translation: deals with medical documents, clinical trials, patient records, pharmaceutical information, and healthcare-related content. Translators must be familiar with medical terminology, procedures, and regulations to produce accurate translations that meet industry standards.
- Technical translation: covers a wide range of technical fields such as engineering, IT, automotive, aerospace, and manufacturing. Translators need expertise in the specific technical subject matter as well as knowledge of specialized terminology and industry standards.
- Financial translation: includes financial documents such as annual reports, financial statements, investment reports, and banking documents. Translators must be proficient in financial terminology and understand accounting principles and regulations in both languages.
- Scientific translation: deals with scientific research papers, academic journals, laboratory reports, and technical manuals in various scientific disciplines such as biology, chemistry, physics, and environmental science. Translators need a strong background in the relevant scientific field to accurately convey complex concepts and terminology.

## 8. How Do We Translate?

---

This question implies two major points: (1) Methods of Translation and (2) The Process of Translation.

### **Firstly: Methods of Translation:**

A method of translation can be defined as 'the way we translate', whether we translate literally or freely, the words or the meaning, the form or the content, the letter or the spirit, the manner or the matter, the form or the message, the direct meaning or the implied meaning, in context or out of context, and so on. Writers on translation have suggested different methods based on the two major old-new methods of translation, LITERAL and FREE.

### **1. Literal Translation:**

Literal translation method is understood and applied in three different ways, which can be summarized and exemplified as follows:

#### **a) Word-for-word Translation: Literal Translation of Words:**

Each English word is translated into an equivalent word in Arabic which is kept the same as, and in line with that of English: e.g.

a. That	child	is	intelligent
ذاك	الطفل	يكون	ذكي

(ذاك الطفل يكون ذكياً)

b. Mary wanted to take tea

ماري أرادت أن تأخذ شاي

(ماري أرادت أن تأخذ شاي)

c. He is living from hand to mouth

هو يكون عائشاً من يد إلى فم

(هو يكون عائشاً من اليد إلى الفم)

d. Please, stay with me on the campus

من فضلك ابق معي على الحرم الجامعي

(من فضلك ابق معي على الحرم الجامعي)

e. Stop beating about the bush

أوقف الضرب حول الشجيرة

(أوقف الضرب حول الشجيرة)

f. This man is a big shot

هذا الرجل يكون كبيرة رمية

(هذا الرجل كبيرة رمية)

g. I know this information

أنا أعرف هذه المعلومة

(أنا أعرف هذه المعلومة)

This method regards translation to be a translation of individual words. All we have to do is find the equivalent word in Arabic for the English word, regardless of

differences in grammar, word order, context or special use. Moreover, the whole concentration is on the source language, whereas the target language should follow, imitate and mirror it blindly, perfectly and precisely, neither more nor less. Thus, it seems an easy, straightforward way of translation, which makes it common among students in particular.

In fact, this method is risky as it may disrupt meaning and, hence, translation, for a number of reasons, some of which are:

- (1) It ignores the Target Language completely, making it subject to the Source Language wholly and entirely.
- (2) It disregards the grammatical differences between the two languages which belong to two sometimes sharply different language families. That is, English is an Indo-European, West Germanic language, whereas Arabic is Semitic.
- (3) It transfers the SL grammar and word order. It does not acknowledge the different word order(s) of the two languages.
- (4) It has no respect for the context of words in language and allows for words to be understood in isolation, not in combination with other surrounding words.
- (5) It transfers the primary (or common) meanings of. By this, it dismisses the possibility of any polysemous, special, indirect or metaphorical use of words.
- (6) It cannot deal with the SL words that have no equivalents in the TL.
- (7) It views meaning as the product of words only, which is not acceptable (see point 3 above).

Accordingly, the Arabic versions above are unacceptable, and have to be corrected as follows (the unacceptable words or grammatical sequences are underlined):

- A. (ذاك الطفل ذكي)-----→(ذاك الطفل يكون ذكياً)
- B. (أرادت ماري أن تشرب(تتناول)شايًا) → -----→(ماري أرادت أن تأخذ شايًا)
- C. (يعيش على الكفاف)-----→(هو يكون عائشاً من يد إلى فم)
- D. (من فضلك امكث(ابق)معي على الحرم الجامعي)-----→(من فضلك ابق معي في الحرم الجامعي)
- E. (كفَّ عن اللف والدوران/عن المراوغة)-----→(أوقف الضرب حول الشجيرة)
- F. (هذا الرجل يكون كبيرة رمية)-----→(هذا الرجل عظيم الشأن/مهم)
- G. (أعرف هذه المعلومة).-----→(أعرف هذه المعلومات)

### **b). One-to-one Literal Translation:**

"One-to-one translation" is "a broader form of translation; each SL word has a corresponding TL word". It respects collocational meanings in their powerful context. Besides, "one-to-one translation is more common than word-for-word translation". This method of translation means to translate each SL word or phrase into an identical word or phrase in the TL, with the same number, grammatical class and type of language. That is, a noun is translated into a noun, two nouns into two nouns, one adjective into one adjective, two into two, and so on and so forth. In a similar way, an idiom should be translated into an idiom, a collocation into a collocation, a proverb into a proverb, a metaphor into a metaphor, etc. All these translations are done in context, not out of context: e.g.

- a. My neighbors are good. (جيرانني يكونون طيبين)
- b. Sanyo is a well-known trademark. (سانيو تكون علامة تجارية معروفة جيداً)
- c. He is a young man. He is kind-hearted. (هو يكون رجلاً شاباً. هو يكون طيب القلب)
- d. Sara loves reading wholly and heartedly. (سارة تحب المطالعة كلية ومن كل قلبها)



- e. I have blind confidence in you. (أنا أملك ثقة عمياء بك)
- f. Let us shake hands. (دعنا نتصافح بالأيدي)
- g. Show me your back. (أرني عرض أكتافك)
- h. A true friend does not stab in the back. (الصديق الحقيقي لا يطعن في الظهر)
- i. All that glitters is not gold (ما كل ما يلمع ذهباً)
- j. This mission is a can of worms. (هذه المهمة تكون حفنة مشاكل)

It is important to point out that such Arabic translations might look too primitive, or unreasonable to accept even from a beginner. The case may be so, but personal practice and experience with the students of translation, especially at early stages, in different Arab Countries, confirm the fact that these translations are frequently come across. Not only this, unfortunately and not surprisingly, some practitioners of translation produce similar versions from time to time.

This method of literal translation is similar to the first one in two respects:

- (1) It keeps the SL word order in the TL.
- (2) It insists on having the same type and number of words.

Yet, it is different from it in two respects too:

- (1) It takes context into consideration.
- (2) It translates collocational meanings, special and metaphorical SL words and phrases into their TL equivalents, if and when available.

Therefore, it is perhaps more acceptable and better than word-for-word translation. Yet, both methods are questionable. In fact, one-to-one translation is sometimes unsatisfactory because:

(1) It transfers the SL grammar and word order, regardless of the TL grammar and word order. This is confirmed in the examples by: (a) starting all the Arabic versions with a subject then a verb each, ignoring nominal sentences (الجملة الاسمية) and the start with the verb in verbal sentences (الجملة الفعلية); (b) insisting on translating verbs ‘be’ into (يكون) and ‘have’ into (يملك) only in all the examples; and (c) translating all personal pronouns.

(2) It insists on having the same number and types of the SL words and lexical groups in the TL. The result is two possible mistakes: first, the insistence on having an SL collocation, idiom, metaphor, etc. translated into a TL equivalent collocation, idiom or metaphor, even though it may not be available in its lexicon. ‘Shake hands’, for example, has no equivalent collocation in Arabic, for (يصافح) is not a collocation and has an unnecessary use of (بالأيدي), which is implied in (يصافح). After all, people have (مصافحة) with ‘hands’ only. Another example is the translation of the metaphor ‘a can of worms’ into (حفنة مشاكل). Usually, in Arabic such a metaphor is not available, just an ordinary collocation (مشكلة عويصة), which is a good translation, is available in Arabic; secondly, the insistence on the same number of words in the translation, which is sometimes not possible to achieve. That is why the one-word good translation, (يصافح) is not used here to translate the two-word collocation, ‘shake hands’. Likewise, ‘well-known’ should be translated into one word like (مشهورة/معروفة/شهيرة), despite its possibility in Arabic. Nor is it acceptable to join the two short sentences of ‘c’ into one sentence as the number of words will be less than the original, although it is quite feasible in Arabic, as the following improved versions for the above examples on the right handside show (the changed or omitted words are underlined):

a. (جيرانني يكونون طبيين)

(جيرانني طبيون)

- b. (سانيو تكون علامة تجارية معروفة جيداً) (سانيو علامة تجارية معروفة)
- c. (هو يكون شاباً. هو يكون طيب القلب) (هو شاب طيب القلب)
- d. (سارة تحب المطالعة ومن كل قلبها) (تحب سارة المطالعة من كل قلبها)
- e. (أنا أملك ثقة عمياء بك) (عندي ثقة عمياء(مطلقة)بك)
- f. (دعنا نتصافح بالأيدي) (دعنا نتصافح/لنتصافح)
- g. 'h' and 'i' are unchanged .
- j. (هذه المهمة تكون حفنة مشاكل) (هذه المهمة مشكلة عويصة/بالغة الصعوبة)

More details about the problems of translating such examples are forthcoming.

### **c) Literal Translation of Meaning: Direct Translation:**

This type of translation is keen on translating meaning as closely, accurately and completely as possible. It can also be called close or DIRECT translation. It is the translation of meaning in context; it takes into account the TL grammar and word order. Metaphorical and special uses of language are also accounted for in the TL. In this sense, it can be described as the 'full translation of meaning'.

Indeed, it can be described as the best method of literal translation. It has a different view to literal meaning. Literal meaning is not one single, unchanged direct meaning for a word, but its different meanings in different texts, contexts and combinations with other words. For example, 'run' does not always mean (يجري) in all texts and contexts. Therefore, we cannot say that this is the literal meaning of 'run'. Rather, it is more precisely described as its common or primary meaning. Usually, these two meanings –literal and common- are taken to be one and the same meaning, which is applied to all meanings of the same word. This is

not quite acceptable, for 'run' is a polysemous word with different meanings in different contexts, each of which is its literal (or real, precise or contextual) meaning in a certain context: e. g

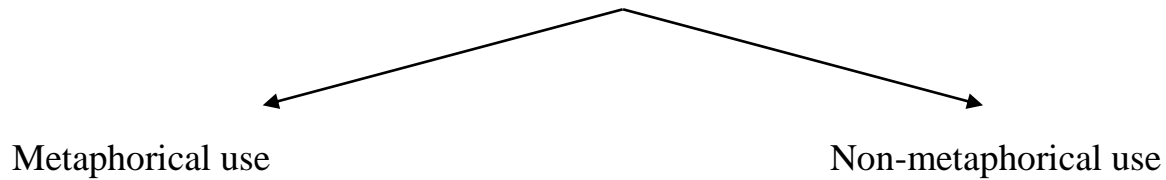
1. "To run in the race" (يجري/يركض في السباق)
2. "To run a company" (يدير شركة)
3. "In the long run" (على المدى البعيد)
4. "To run short of money" (ينفذ ماله)
5. "To run round" (يطوف/يقوم بزيارة خاطفة)
6. "To run to fat" (يميل إلى السمنة)
7. "To run through" (يتصفح/يمر مرور الكرام)
8. "To run wild" (يتيه/يسير على هواه)
9. "To run across" (يصادف)
10. "To run back" (يعود بذاكرته إلى الوراء)
11. "To run into" (يلقى مصادفة/يصادف)
12. "To run its course" (يأخذ مجراه الطبيعي)
13. "To run in" (ينضد السطور المطبعية/يقحم/يعتقل ويرمي في السجن)
14. "To run on" (يستمر)
15. "To run out" (ينفذ/يتضاءل/يأخذ في التناقص)
16. "To run dry" (ينضب)
17. "The runs" (إسهال)

Each of these meanings of ‘run’ can be described as literal in a certain combination and context. We have here 20 literal meanings (three in 13, and two in 15). It is unacceptable, then, to say that it has only one literal meaning, which is number 1 (يجري), because 2, for example, does not have two meanings, one literal, one non-literal; it has only one meaning, which is (يدير). Therefore, translating it into (يركض/يجري) is not a literal translation, but a WRONG translation, for we do not say (يجري/يركض شركة) in Arabic, only (يدير شركة). The same applies to the rest of the examples.

Similarly, metaphorical expressions like idioms can be looked at in the same way. That is, their metaphorical meanings are the only meanings available in language and, hence, in translation. Thus, “to beat around/about the bush” means only (يلف ويدور/يراوغ); “to get the sack” has only the meaning of (يُطْرَد), regardless of its origin; “monkey business” means (أشياء مريبة) only; “tall order” has only one meaning as (مهمة شاقة). Other equivalent translations for these idioms are acceptable, anyway. In literal translation of meaning, these are the only meanings available and permissible to the translator.

It is possible to say, then, that literal translation is committed to the real meaning, or meanings, of a word or an expression in language, regardless of whether it is direct or indirect, common or uncommon, non-metaphorical or metaphorical. In other words, literal meaning is the real, accurate and contextual meaning of a word, whether used metaphorically or non-metaphorically, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Literal meaning=real meaning=accurate meaning=contextual meaning



(Fig. 3)

Hence, a metaphor is translated into a metaphor, or any other equivalent available in the TL. Likewise, a direct, literal meaning is retained in literal translation as accurately as possible, with no predetermined, special attempt to change it into a metaphorical one. For example, “his efforts came to nothing” would be translated into: (ضاعت جهوده سدى/لم يصل إلى شيء) rather than into: (تبخرت ) (جهوده في الهواء/ضاعت جهوده هباء منثوراً), because they are metaphorical and expressive and, therefore, far from the direct meanings of such a simple, straightforward sentence, especially in a general text. However, such translations can be described as free translations which are justifiable in certain texts and contexts.

Thus, this method of literal translation is the translation of the real meaning of a word, or an expression in its linguistic context as accurately and closely as possible, regardless of its metaphorical/non-metaphorical use. It is confined to, and conditioned by its context. Indeed, it is a contextual meaning that is enveloped in its context, neither free, flexible nor variable, but straightforward, accurate, close and full. Therefore, this method can be the most acceptable among the methods of literal translation, and the most widely spread and popular in practice among students of translation and translators. Hence, it is recommended for the students in particular and translators in general. Yet, this does not mean that free translation is unacceptable, for it is highly recommended for certain texts, especially literary and figurative texts (see below).

Free translation, on the other hand, is a different method, as the following discussion would confirm.

## **2. Free Translation:**

Like literal translation, free translation has been a well-established method of translation since antiquity. Usually, it is associated with translating the spirit, or the message, not the letter or the form of the text. It used to earn wide reputation as the better method at the expense of literal translation, the worse method of translation. It is the method that is not committed to translate every single word in a text. It means to translate freely without constraints. The translator is not strictly constrained by the type of text or context, or the direct and available meaning of words and phrases. He goes outside texts and out of contexts, behind and beyond words and phrases, looking perhaps for the spirit, or the message. He can translate something the way he understands it. His way of understanding is confined by text and context variably to some or great extent. It is perhaps the only restriction on him. He cannot translate the way he likes, but the way he understands. (All other terms pointed out above and used nowadays to substitute for “free”, such as ‘communicative’, ‘dynamic’, ‘pragmatic’, ‘creative’ and ‘idiomatic’ coincide with many of these implications).

The question now is whether free translation is acceptable or not. The answer can be sought for in the next two types suggested for this method. The first type is close and related to context directly, whereas the second is far and related to context indirectly, as the following discussion and examples confirm:

### **a) Bound Free Translation:**

This type of free translation is derived from the context in a direct way, though it may go out of it in some way or another, in the form of exaggeration, expressivity, and effective, rhetorical or formal language. It is the type we usually understand by the term 'free translation'. Here are examples:

1. He got nothing at the end (رجع بخفي حنين/عاد خالي الوفاض)
2. She was sad deep down (تقطر قلبها من الحزن/أصبح فؤادها فارغاً)
3. You look quite cool (تبدو رابط الجأش)
4. Swearing is a bad habit (سباب المسلم فسوق)
5. East or west, home is best (كم منزل في الأرض يألفه الفتى وحنينه أبداً لأول منزل)
6. Love me, love my dog (وأحبها وتحبني ويحب ناقتها بعيري!)
7. Come down to earth (كفاك تيتها/أقلع عن أوهامك)
8. My friend got to the top very soon (امتطى صديقي صهوة المجد في أسرع من البرق)
9. She had a new baby (رزقها الله مولوداً جديداً)
10. Are you lying to me ? (أتفتري على الله كذباً؟)

Common among these translations is their expressive, effective, rhetorical and very formal Arabic, by means of using:

(a) expressions from the Holy Quran (10);

(b) a Prophetic Tradition (i.e. 'Sunnah') (4);

(c) popular religious expressions(9);



(d) proverbs(1);

(e) collocations (2,3) (رابط الجأش/تفطر من الحزن) and 8 (امتطى صهوة+في أسرع من البرق);

(f) poetry (5 & 6);

(g) pompous, exaggerated expressions(7).

All these free translations are derived in one way or another from the original.

Although they have gone far from the context, they have not gone too far from it, or outside it. This means that this type of free translation is not loose, or without limitations, but is bound to context in some way. For these reasons, this method of free translation can be acceptable, especially when justified by the type of text, or language which allows for exaggeration or expressivity of some kind. It is very close to creative translation. However, when the translation is quite strange to, and far away from the context and type of text and, it is not advisable. Having said that, accurate, straightforward, literal translation of meaning is probably a more preferable version for these statements, especially in simple, general texts, as suggested below:

- |                                 |                                      |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. (لم يحصل على شيء في النهاية) | 2. (كانت حزينة من الأعماق/جداً)      |
| 3. (تبدو هادئاً)                | 4. (السب عادة سيئة/مذمومة)           |
| 5. (لا شيء مثل الوطن)           | 6. (من أحبني أحب أولادي)             |
| 7. (كن واقعياً/تواضع)           | 8. (وصل صديقي إلى القمة بسرعة فائقة) |
| 9. (وضعت مولوداً جديداً)        | 10. (أتكذب علي؟)                     |

## **b) Loose Free Translation:**

This free translation method goes far away from the direct linguistic context to inferences. It is based on the translator's conclusions about what the speaker/writer wants to say. In other words, it is the translation of intentions. In this sense, it is a version of pragmatic translation. Therefore, it does not relate directly to the original context, but is concluded from it. Here are some illustrative examples:

1. Thank you, Mr. Wilson. Next please. (تفضل بالانصراف يا سيد ويلسون. عندنا غيرك)
2. It is half past nine. (انتهى الوقت/انتهت الحصة/علينا بالمغادرة/تأخرنا كثيراً/حان الوقت)
3. Thank you, thank you ladies and gentlemen. (هدوء أيها السادة والسيدات)
4. I am frightened. (ابق معنا)
5. You are a bigmouth! (أغلق فمك/اسكت!)
6. No bacon with my breakfast, please (أنا مسلم)
7. Honesty is the best policy. (أنت خنت الأمانة)
8. Books are very expensive today. (لقد عزف الناس عن القراءة اليوم)
9. You should buy a lock for your car. (سرقة السيارات منتشرة كثيراً هذه الأيام/الأمان معدوم)
10. Have you classic records? (سحفاً للموسيقى الحديثة/فن هذه الأيام منحط)

All these translations are conclusions, based on the original. They are indirect, pragmatic translations, rendering the meaning intended by the speakers beyond what they say. That is, in '1', the speaker says "thank you" to a guest or a customer at the end of their meeting, as an indirect way to ask him/her to leave. So, instead of asking him/her directly to leave, he goes for "thank you", which is understood as "will you leave, the interview is over" (تفضل بالانصراف ، انتهت المقابلة).

The speaker of '2' implies that the time of a class, a meeting, etc. is over, or the time of leaving, or doing something is due.

In '3', the speaker (e.g. a tennis umpire) likes to be so polite and respectful to people, so he says 'thank you' instead of 'quiet', or 'silence, please' to tell them to stop talking and keep their quiet.

The speaker of '4' means to say that he/she cannot stay on his/her own because he/she is afraid of something. Therefore, he/she asks the listener to stay with him/her, however indirectly.

In '5', the speaker uses the idiom, 'bigmouth' to express his dissatisfaction with a person who yells at talking, or talks excessively, noisily and boastfully. Hence, the translation, (أغلق فمك) expresses this dissatisfaction, ordering the big-mouthed person to hush in a rude way.

"No bacon" in '6' indicates that the speaker is a Muslim because pork is forbidden meat in Islam, but not in Christianity. That is why the Arabic translation jumps to religion.

On the other hand, '7' is taken as an indirect comment on a dishonest act by the hearer. Hence the translation, (أنت خنت الأمانة).

As to '8', it is a general comment on the expensiveness of books, but understood as one reason for the people's little interest in reading.

However, '9' is understood by implication to issue a warning against the widespread car theft and vandalism these days.

Finally, '10' reflects the speaker's interest in classical music, which is an expression of his contempt of modern music. The Arabic translation conveys this implied sense.

These are loose translations that have in a sense deserted their direct, linguistic contexts. They are more personal conclusions by the translator than direct translations restricted in some way to context. Therefore, other translators may rightly and equally have different conclusions. In other words, this method of free translation allows such loose freedom for the translator to go far and translate the intentions and implications beyond the direct context of texts. It does not matter whether these translations are convincing and justified or not; rather, what matters is the fact that they do not translate the language and the context on the page. They reflect indirect inferences and far interpretations of translators. Therefore, they seem completely different from the original to the extent that they can be seen by many as unrelated to it.

Broadly speaking, it is not expected from the translator to translate his own conclusions about a text. Rather, he is expected to transmit the text on the page as directly and contextually as possible into an equivalent TL text that is closely, clearly and directly related to it. The interpretations and implications beyond it are left to readers in both languages to conclude. After all, this is a matter of respect for them. The translator should not do the reading for the TL readers. It is not his responsibility, then, to interpret and reveal what the source text hides or says indirectly. Hence, the following are suggested alternative, closer and more advisable Arabic versions for the same English sentences, to compare with the loose versions above:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. (شكراً يا سيد ويلسون(الأخ)الذي يليه لو سمحت | 2. (إنها (الساعة) التاسعة والنصف)           |
| 3. (شكراً... أيها السادة والسيدات)             | 4. (إنني خائف/خائفة جداً)                   |
| 5. (إنك صخاب)                                  | 6. (لا أريد شرائح الخنزير مع فطوري لو سمحت) |
| 7. (الأمانة خير ضمان/الصدق منجاة)              | 8. (الكتب باهظة الثمن اليوم)                |
| 9. (ينبغي عليك أن تشتري قفلاً لسيارتك)         | 10. (هل عندك أشرطة تسجيل/تسجيلات قديمة)     |

Thus, the students of translation are advised to be careful with this type of free translation. The first type, bound free translation, however, is more possible and acceptable than this. Yet, it is not as direct as the third method of literal translation of meaning. (i.e. direct translation), which is easier, more secure, suitable, widely used, reasonable and convincing type of translation for them than other methods.

Having said that, and as pointed out earlier, this does not mean that free translation of both types cannot be recommended as good methods of translation. On the contrary, they are perhaps more appropriate than literal methods for the translation of specific types of language and text like literary texts of all genres, general, cultural, journalistic, political or any text translated with the purpose of understanding its message (the so-called 'الترجمة بتصرف'), regardless of full details. Free translation has always been in use a long time ago in history by famous translators, and is still popular and favorable among many translators nowadays. After all, it is the translator's decision to adopt either a literal or a free translation method, provided he translates in context as directly as possible.

---

### **Secondly: The Process of Translation:**

The process of translation (or translating) describes how we proceed at translating something in practice, when we put pen to paper to start translating. It is the organized stages of translating in application. At translating a sentence or a longer text, for example, do we proceed a word by word? a phrase by phrase? a clause by clause? a sentence by sentence? a paragraph by paragraph? or a text by text? Many would proceed a word by word, taking translation to mean the translation of words from one language into another (which is the practice of word-for-word translation method above). In fact, we do not proceed this way; we proceed a unit by unit. Each unit is called 'a unit of translation'.

## **The Unit of Translation:**

Scholars of translation disagree on identifying the unit of translation. Some scholars consider a word to be the unit of translation; others believe that a unit of translation may be a sentence, piece of text, or culture.

A unit of translation is any word, or a group of words that can give either a small or a large part of the meaning of a sentence. Therefore, it is a unit (or a part) of meaning which can be taken together and understood independently. It marks a stop we take at translating to write down a meaningful part of a sentence that is not affected by, or dependent on its remaining part. This means that it can be one word (like: thus, therefore, yet, actually, clearly, but and other adverbials at the beginning of sentences); a phrase (e.g. collocations like: pass a law (يسن قانوناً), brain drain (هجرة الأدمغة), etc.; and idioms such as: tall order (مهمة شاقة), sitting duck (لقمة سائغة/فريسة سهلة) (see chapter 2 for more examples); a clause (e.g. (1) “she did not come to work yesterday (2) because she was sick” (لم تأت إلى العمل أمس، لأنها كانت) (مريضة): two clauses = two units); or a sentence (e.g. “the man who paid me a visit last week when I was away, was an old friend of mine.” (كان الرجل الذي قام بزيارتي حين كنت مسافراً، صديقاً قديماً لي). The last example is regarded as one unit because the main clause (i.e. “the man was an old friend of mine”) is divided into two parts: one at the beginning of the sentence (i.e. ‘the man’) and another at the end of it (i.e. ‘was an old friend of mine’). Thus, the main verb of the sentence (i.e. ‘was’) occurs toward the end of the sentence, away from its subject (i.e. ‘man’). In Arabic, we start the sentence with this verb (i.e. كان), which means that we have to read the whole English sentence before starting translating.

Thus, in practical terms, the largest unit of translation is the sentence for it is the basic unit of thought, not the clause, nor the text. Yet, from time to time, we might have clearcut clause borderlines in a sentence, where clauses are separated parts of meaning that can be taken as a unit of translation each. Similarly, at times, we may need to resort to the whole text to understand a sentence. Yet, this is the exception, not the rule.

So far, we have discussed basic concepts about translation, including: the meaning of translation, what we translate, and how we translate, with concentration on methods of translation and the process of translation. We also have recommended the literal method of direct translation of meaning to students for it might be safer, more secure and appropriate to them than other methods of translation suggested above. At the same time, free translation is not rejected nor undermined, but, rather, recommended strongly more than literal translation for certain texts. Sometimes, both methods, literal and free, can be applied alternately by the translator when the need arises to use free translation only when literal translation makes the translation inaccurate. The following part will discuss the obstacles presumably faced at translating and how we overcome them. In other words, what are the problems of translation? What are the solutions that can be suggested to them? And on what bases?



## 9. Exercises

---

### **Choose the correct answer:**

**1) What do we translate in a text?**

- a) Grammar
- b) Style
- c) Sounds
- d) Meaning

**2) What is the role of grammar in translation?**

- a) To be translated directly into the target language
- b) To shape meaning
- c) To be ignored
- d) To replace vocabulary

**3) What is the term for translating each English word into an equivalent Arabic word?**

- a) Free translation
- b) Literal translation
- c) Dynamic translation
- d) Communicative translation

**4) Which method of translation is described as risky due to its potential to disrupt meaning?**

- a) Free translation
- b) Dynamic translation
- c) Word-for-word translation
- d) Communicative translation

**5) What does the "literal translation of words" method ignore?**

- a) Vocabulary
- b) Context
- c) Equivalent
- d) Number of words

**6) Which of the following is an example of translating foreign words written in Arabic letters as pronounced in their native origin?**

- a) aspirin (اسبرين)
- b) democracy (ديموقراطية)
- c) speak (يتكلم)
- d) satellite (قمر اصطناعي)

**7) Translation is considered:**

- a) A modern invention
- b) As old as human civilization
- c) A task for experts only
- d) Irrelevant in the digital age

**8) Which of the following is not a quality of a good translator?**

- a) Linguistic competence
- b) Faithfulness to the original text

- c) Personal creativity in changing the original meaning
- d) Knowledge of both source and target languages

**9) What is not considered part of the translation process?**

- a) Understanding the context
- b) Changing the entire meaning of the original text
- c) Using proper vocabulary
- d) Ensuring faithfulness to the original message

**10) What role does style play in translation?**

- a) It changes the meaning
- b) It reflects how meaning is conveyed
- c) It has no impact
- d) It is unrelated to translation

**Decide whether the following statements are true or false:**

- 1) Translation is mainly concerned with transferring the sound of the source text.
- 2) Literal translation always preserves the context of the source text.
- 3) Free translation focuses on conveying the literal meaning of words.
- 4) Metaphorical meanings like idioms are the only meanings available in language and, hence, in translation.
- 5) Free translation methods are not suitable for literary texts.
- 6) Literal translation method is understood and applied in five different ways.

- 7) English and Arabic belong to two distant language families. Consequently, their grammars are sharply similar.
- 8) Verb “be” in the present simple, “am, is, are” is usually dropped in Arabic translations, both as main as well as auxiliary.
- 9) Literal translation method is understood and applied in five different ways.
- 10) “To beat around/about the bush” can be translated as (يلف ويدور / يراوغ).

# 10. Translation Problems

---

A translation problem is any difficulty we come across while translating. It invites us to stop the process translating in order to check, recheck, reconsider or rewrite it, or use a dictionary, or a reference of some kind to help us overcome it and make sense of it. It is anything in the SL text which forces us to stop translating.

A translation problem can be posed by grammar, words, style and/or sounds. Thus, we have grammatical, lexical, stylistic, semantic and phonological problems. However, grammatical problems will be the focus of this preliminary level.

## Grammatical Problems:

English and Arabic belong to two different and distant language families: West Germanic, and Semitic. Consequently, their grammars are sharply different. Several grammatical features of English create variable problems of translation into Arabic. Experience shows that one of the primary mistakes committed by the students of translation is their presupposition that English grammar and Arabic grammar can translate each other in a straightforward way. The following are some reasons behind such a problem:

a. Complicated SL grammar: e.g.

“Of the three books you have recommended to me, I have chosen only one”  
(من بين الكتب الثلاثة التي نصحتني بها ، اخترت واحداً فقط) . Starting the sentence with ‘of,’ and postponing the main clause (‘I have chosen’) to a back position, makes it complex. The students of translation find it difficult to understand easily and directly. The point becomes clearer at comparing it to the following normal, direct structure: “I have chosen only one of the three books you have recommended to me”(اخترت واحداً فقط من بين الكتب الثلاثة التي نصحتني بها), where the main clause is right at the beginning.

#### b. Different TL grammar:

Most English tenses, for example, do not exist in Arabic grammar. Also, all English sentences are verbal (i.e. should include a main verb each), whereas in Arabic they are either verbal, or nominal (viz. no verbs at all). Likewise, some modal auxiliaries have no grammatical equivalent. etc. (See Ch.1 for further details).

#### c. Different TL word order:

For example, all English sentences usually start with the subject, followed by the verb, whereas in Arabic, verbal sentences normally have the verb first and then the subject. Another example is the position of the adjective: in English it precedes the noun, while it proceeds it in Arabic.

Among the important and frequent grammatical problems of translation, discussed in the current book, are the following:

1. Translation of verbs 'Be', 'Do' and 'Have'.
2. Translation of Word order.
3. Translation of personal pronouns.
4. Translation of adjectives.
5. Translation and the change of word class.
6. Translation of articles.
7. Translation of sentence connectors (like and, or, but, in fact, etc.).

All these problems are defined and exemplified for clearly in the next chapter, with a view to pointing out their ensuing difficulties, and the possible solutions to them. After all, our discussion of grammatical problems aims solely at locating any lost or unclear part of meaning. We always trace meaning in translation, nothing else but meaning, with very few exceptions, though.

## A. Translation of verbs 'Be', 'Do' and 'Have'.

---

### **1) Translation of Verb 'BE' (i.e. 'am, is ,are/was, were/be, been'):**

Problem 1: Literal translation of 'am, is, are':

When these verbs are the main and only verbs in the sentence, they are translated by many students literally into (يكون), which is a poor translation: e.g.

1. "I am a student": (أنا أكون طالباً)
2. "She is kind": (هي تكون طيبة)
3. "You are a father": (أنت تكون أباً)

Solution: 'am, is, are' can be omitted altogether here, thus changing the English verbal sentences into Arabic nominal ones: i.e. into a topic and a comment (مبتدأ وخبر) each. e.g.

1. "I am a student": (أنا طالب)
2. "She is kind": (هي طيبة)
3. "You are a father": (أنت أب)



Therefore, verb 'be' in the present simple is used here to connect as much as equate between two words. It is exactly like saying: 'X=Z'. Thus: 'I=student': (أنا = طالب); 'She = kind': (هي=طيبة); and 'You=father': (أنت=أب). That is why it is called an 'equative verb'.

The same applies to the translation of 'am, is, are' when used as auxiliary verbs to form the present progressive tense and the present passive voice. A good number of students translate them literally: e. g.

a. The present progressive:

1. "I am leaving now": (أنا أكون أأأأر / مآأأرأ الآن)
2. "He is eating an apple": (هو يكون بأأل / أأأأ تفأأة)
3. "We are speaking English": (نحن نأون نأألم / مأألمين الإنأليزية)

The good versions of these examples drop verb 'be', as follows:

1. "I am leaving now": (أنا) أأأر الآن / أنا مآأر الآن
2. "He is eating an apple": (هو بأأل (أأل) تفأأة)
3. "We are speaking English": (نحن نأألم (مأألمون) الإنأليزية)

The progressive tense markers, Verb ‘be’ and the ‘ing’ ending for the main verbs have no equivalent in Arabic grammar. Therefore, the use of (يكون) in the first group does not refer to the progressive tense, or the time of action. An adverb like ‘now’ (الآن) is the only way to refer to the time of action. Other good versions drop the pronoun, as illustrated later in this chapter under the translation of personal pronouns.

### b. The present passive voice:

1. “I am given another chance”: (أنا أكون أُعطى فرصة أخرى)
2. “She is invited to the party”: (هي تكون تدعى إلى الحفلة)
3. “They are put in the same situation”: (هم يكونون يوضعون(موضوعين)في الموقف نفسه)

The more acceptable versions of Arabic translation dispose of verb ‘be’:

1. “I am given another chance”: (أنا) أعطى/معطى فرصة أخرى)
2. “She is invited to the party”: (هي تدعى(مدعوة)إلى الحفلة)
3. “They are put in the same situation”: (هم يوضعون(موضوعون)في الموقف نفسه)

Thus, verb ‘be’ in the present simple, ‘am, is, are’ is usually dropped in Arabic, both as main as well as auxiliary. It is mostly unacceptable and poor in Arabic grammar and word order.to translate it into (يكون) (exception: 'Be, and it is'(كن فيكون)).

### Problem 2: The same literal translation of was\were into (كان):

Unlike 'am, is, are', the past simple of 'be' 'was' and 'were', are translated literally into (كان) both as main as well as auxiliary verbs:

a. As main verbs: e. g.

1. "The child was ill": (كان الطفل مريضاً)
2. "The bird was beautiful": (كان الطائر جميلاً)
3. "The players were one team": (كان اللاعبون فريقاً واحداً)

b. As auxiliaries: the past progressive: e. g.

1. "Her mother was preparing lunch": (كانت والدتها تعد الغداء)
2. "My brother was writing a letter": (كان أخي يكتب رسالة)
3. "Our guests were praying": (كان ضيوفنا يصلون)

Yet literal translation is unfavorable when these verbs are used as auxiliaries to form the past passive voice, as illustrated in the following examples:

c. The past passive voice: e. g.

1. “The food was eaten”:  
(كان الطعام مأكولاً/كان أكل الطعام)
2. “I was deceived”:  
(أنا كنت خُدعت/مخدوعاً)
3. “The boys were dismissed”:  
(كان الأولاد مطرودين/كان الأولاد (قد) طردوا)

Solution: ‘was’ and ‘were’(كان)can be neglected in Arabic, as follows:

1. “The food was eaten”:  
(أُكُل الطعام)
2. “I was deceived”:  
(أنا) خُدعت)
3. “The boys were dismissed”:  
(طُرِد الأولاد)

Therefore, ‘was’ and ‘were’ are retained in ‘a’ and ‘b’, but dropped in ‘c’ only.

Problem 3: the negligence, or literal translation of ‘been’:

The past participle of ‘be’ (i.e. been) is wrongly ignored, or translated literally into (كائن) in Arabic:

1. “Where have you been?”:  
(أين كنت كائناً؟)
2. “She has been late”:  
(كانت كائنة متأخرة)

3. “They had been released”:

(كانوا كائنين أُطلق سراحهم)

Solution: ‘Been’ (كائن) is changed into the past simple (see 1&2 below) or disregarded (see3):

1. “Where have you been?”=where were you?:

(أين كنت؟)

2. “She has been late”=she was late:

(كانت متأخرة/تأخرت)

3. “They had been released”=they were released:

(أُطلق سراحهم)

Thus, the dictionary meaning of ‘been’ as (كائن) in Arabic is strictly not advisable to use.

Contrastively, the full form of verb ‘be’ (i.e. be) is always literally translated and, thus, poses no problem: e.g.

1. “He will be with us”:

(سوف يكون معنا)

2. “You can be a good citizen”:

(تستطيع أن تكون مواطناً صالحاً)

3. “We must be in the hospital now”:

(ينبغي أن نكون في المستشفى الآن)

## 2) Translation of Verb 'DO':

As a main verb, 'do' does not pose a grammatical problem. However, as an auxiliary, it poses more than one problem:

### Problem 1 and solution: 'Do' in the negative:

Verb 'do' is used in English to form the negative of all verbs, except 'be', 'have' and the modal verbs. 'Do' and 'does' are used with the present simple, whereas 'did' is used with the past. All these forms are meaningless in Arabic. However, they have the function of indicating the tense of the verb (i.e. present or past). What is translated into Arabic is the negative particle 'not' (لا) only: e. g.

1. "He does not like coffee": (إنه) لا يحب القهوة
2. "Some people do not smile": (بعض الناس لا يبتسمون)
3. "That girl does not comb her hair": (لا تمشط تلك الفتاة شعرها/تلك الفتاة لا تمشط شعرها)

### Problem 2 and solution: 'Did' in the negative:

The same can be said of the translation of 'did not'. The negative word 'not' is usually translated into (لم) with the present, and occasionally into (ما) with the past:

1. “She did not eat much”:  
(لم تأكل/ما أكلت كثيراً)
2. “We did not find the money”:  
(لم نجد/ما وجدنا النقود)
3. “The horse did not fall down”:  
(لم يسقط/ما سقط الحصان)

### Problem 3 and solution: ‘Do’ in questions:

Verb ‘do’ is used to form the questions of all English verbs except 'be', ‘have’ and modal verbs. At translating it into Arabic, it always implies the question particle (هل) whether in the present or in the past: e.g.

1. “Do you sleep early?”:  
(هل تنام باكراً؟)
2. “Does John play football? ”:  
(هل يلعب جون كرة القدم)
3. “Did Ali wait for you last night?”:  
(هل انتظرك علي ليلة أمس؟)

### Problem 4 and solution The misunderstanding of ‘do’ as a substitute verb:

‘Do’ is used as a substitute verb replacing a whole clause to avoid repetition, especially as an answer to a question. It is not easy for students to understand it clearly, because it can substitute for all the verbs which require ‘do’ in the interrogative.

Solution: The general solution for this problem is to translate ‘do’ into. (يفعل):e. g

1. “Do you admit that? Yes, I do”: (هل تقر بذلك؟ نعم أفعل)
2. “Did she swear? Yes, she did”: (هل أقسمت؟ نعم فعلت)
3. “Do they work at night ? No, they don’t”: (هل يعملون في الليل؟ لا ، لا يفعلون)

This solution is acceptable. Not only this, it is easier and more favorable to students. Yet, the better solution is to translate it into the main verb of the first sentence: e. g.

1. “Do you admit that? Yes, I do”: (هل تقر بذلك؟ نعم أقر بذلك)
2. “ Did she swear? Yes, she did”: (هل أَقْسَمَتْ؟ نعم أقسمت)
3. “ Do they work at night? No, they don’t”: (هل يعملون في الليل؟ لا لا يعملون)

#### Problem 5 and solution : ‘Do’ as a main verb:

As a main verb, ‘do’ is meaningful in translation. Usually, it is translated into Arabic as (يفعل). However, it can sometimes be translated into:

e.g. (يقوم بـ(عمل)، يؤدي عملاً، يؤدي، يعمل، يفعل)

1. “I will do my best”: (سأفعل ما بوسعي)
2. “Mary does her job well”: (تقوم ماري بعملها على خير ما يرام/تؤدي ماري عملها بشكل حسن)
3. “we did it yesterday”: (عملناها/فعلناها أمس)



In the following example, 'do' can be translated either as (يؤدي، يعمل) or exceptionally as 'write' (يكتب):

4. “Some students do their home works quickly”: (يكتب/يعمل بعض الطلبة واجباتهم بسرعة)

Thus, at translating verb ‘do’, the students see whether it has a grammatical function (i.e. used as an auxiliary), or is a main verb. As an auxiliary, it has no lexical meaning in Arabic, but implies the grammatical question particle (هل). However, as a main verb, it has a full lexical meaning.

#### Problem 6 and solution: 'Do' as an emphatic device:

This verb can be exceptionally used as an emphatic device. Therefore, it is translated: e.g.

1. “Muslims do recite the Holy Koran everyday” (يتلو(يقرأ) المسلمون القرآن كل يوم بالتأكيد)
2. “That woman does fear Allah” (تلك المرأة تخاف الله فعالاً(حق الخوف))
3. “The girls did behave well” (لقد أحسنن الفتيات التصرف حقاً/لا شك أن الفتيات قد أحسنن التصرف)

(Emphatic words underlined)

The three forms of verb ‘do’ are used in the same sense and for the same function of emphasis. Therefore, they can be translated equally into any of the following Arabic emphatic words and phrases (فعالاً، حقاً، بالتأكيد، من المؤكد، لا شك، مما لا شك فيه، لا ريب، ما إلى ذلك)

### **3) Translation of Verb ‘HAVE’:**

Like the previous two verbs, ‘Be’ and ‘Do’, verb ‘Have’ (i.e. have, has, had ) is used both as an auxiliary and a main verb. As an auxiliary, it is not so problematic. However, as a main verb, it can pose a few problems to the students of translation.

#### **Problem 1 and solution: ‘Have’ as an auxiliary:**

Verb ‘have’ is used as an auxiliary to perform important grammatical functions with regard to tenses in particular (see tenses later). In this case, it is meaningless in Arabic, and the students can simply ignore it altogether: e.g.

1. “The workers have left early today”: (غادر العمال باكراً اليوم)
2. “Two girls had finished knitting fast”: (أنهت فتاتان الحبك بسرعة)
3. “The patient has had the medicine”: (أخذ(تناول) المريض الدواء)

#### **Problem 2: ‘Have’ as a main verb: different meanings:**

Many students translate ‘have’ into one version only, that is: (يملك), when it is the main verb of the sentence. This is only one of its several meanings, and students are advised to be careful at translating it.

Solution: Students should understand ‘have’ as a verb of several meanings. Here they are:

1. “She has money”:  
(هي)تملك نقوداً/عندها نقود/في حوزتها نقود/لديها نقود/معها نقود)

(All these translations are possible, but the last version may be the most common, while the first could be the least common).

2. “She has her breakfast at 7 O’clock everyday”:  
(تتناول فطورها عند الساعة السابعة كل يوم)

3. “She has the tablets on time”:  
(تأخذ(تتناول) الحبوب(أقراص الدواء) في الوقت المحدد)

4. “She has just had the ticket “:  
(حصلت على التذكرة للتو)

5. “She had a telephone call this morning”:  
(تلقت مكالمة هاتفية(اتصالاً هاتفياً) هذا الصباح)

6. “ She has to speak two languages”:  
(يجب عليها أن تتحدث بلغتين)

7. “She had a nice holiday”:  
(قضت عطلة جميلة)

8. “Have a good journey”:  
(استمتع برحلة جميلة/أتمنى لك رحلة ممتعة)

9. “Have a bash”  
(حاول/جرب(حظك))

What helps students distinguish between these meanings of ‘have’ is the consideration of the word immediately after it (i.e. its object). Together with its object, ‘have’ makes a special combination in Arabic (i.e. collocation). For instance, although we can say (يملك نقوداً), we cannot say (يملك دواء) or (يملك مكالمة هاتفية), etc.

## B. Translation of WORD ORDER

---

The normal order of the words of the Arabic sentence is sometimes different from that of the English sentence whose normal order is as follows: subject-verb-object/complement. In Arabic, however, the normal word order is two types:

1. Nominal word order: Topic and comment/subject and predicate (مبتدأ وخبر): Two nouns, a noun and an adjective, or a noun and a verb when the noun is emphasized.

2. Verbal word order: Verb-subject-object/complement. ('2' is more frequent than '1').

Problem 1: The reservation of the English word order:

The English word order is usually translated literally: N-V-O/C into Arabic, regardless of its normal word order, which is possible, but not advisable as a rule unless the noun is emphasized. In the following examples, the word order is normal, and the English subject is not emphasized. Therefore, translating them into English word order in Arabic is not justified:

1. “The diplomat left Damascus for London”: (الدبلوماسي غادر دمشق إلى لندن)
2. “The sky became cloudy”: (السماء تلبدت بالغيوم)
3. “The pupils enjoyed their holiday”: (التلاميذ استمتعوا بإجازتهم/بعطلتهم)

Solution: The change into normal Arabic word order:

In normal cases, the English word order is replaced by the more frequent and normal Arabic word order of: verb–subject-object/complement. The examples can, therefore, be retranslated as follows:

1. “The diplomat left Damascus for London”: (غادر الدبلوماسي دمشق إلى لندن)
2. “The sky was cloudy”: (تلبدت السماء بالغيوم)
3. “The pupils enjoyed their holiday”: (استمتع التلاميذ بعطلتهم)

where the verb is first, followed by the subject and then the object(1), or the complement(2&3)(see also the previous section).

#### Problem 2: Similarity of the word order of English and Arabic:

There is one type of word order in Arabic which is identical with the English word order: subject-verb-object/complement. However, in Arabic it is a nominal rather than a verbal word order, because the subject becomes a topic and the verb functions as a comment. The problem with this similarity is that students mostly translate English into this identical word order in Arabic, regardless of the more normal nominal and verbal word orders discussed above. This is due to the possibility of translating word for word into Arabic. In other words, this word order of a noun and a verb becomes the rule for the students.

Solution: Identical SL&TL word order is the exception:

As a matter of fact, this identical English-Arabic word order is the exception, not the rule. It is used when greater emphasis than usual is intended to be put on the subject. To understand this, we may compare the part of the verse of the Holy Quran (الله يتوفى الأنفس) (where the subject (الله) is unusually first for more emphasis, for Allah the Almighty only can take the souls, followed by the verb (يتوفى)) to the more normal version, (يتوفى الله الأنفس) (i.e. the verb (يتوفى) is prior to the subject (الله)). Understanding the difference between the original verse and the hypothetical version makes the point clearer, I hope. At all events, such Arabic word order is not wrong, nor meaning is affected considerably. There is a possibility that the students may always follow the same English word order, ignoring in effect the other types of word order available in Arabic grammar, especially the more frequent verb-subject order. In the following examples, the first word receives special emphasis in both languages:

1. “God likes us”: (الله يحبنا)
2. “The Zionist police kill children”: (الشرطة الصهيونية تقتل الأطفال)
3. “The earthquake took place yesterday”: (الزلازل حدث أمس)

However, we cannot always translate in this word order in Arabic because we do not emphasize everything in translation. On the contrary, emphasis is the exception, not the rule. Therefore, it is not advisable to translate the following English examples with an identical Arabic word order, as follows:

1. "Mary fell ill last week": (ماري مرضت الأسبوع الماضي)
2. "My brother always comes back home late": (أخي دائماً يعود إلى البيت متأخراً)
3. "Today looks nice": (اليوم يبدو جميلاً)

Rather, we would translate them more normally into:

1. "Mary fell ill last week": (مرضت ماري الأسبوع الماضي)
2. "My brother always comes back home late": (يعود أخي إلى البيت متأخراً دائماً)
3. "Today looks nice": (يبدو اليوم جميلاً)

Problem 3: Unified, flexible TL word order: (إن) sentence:

In Arabic, there is one type of sentence where both the English and Arabic word orders meet, that is, the 'inna' (إنّ) sentence. It is a sentence headed by (إن) that, on the one hand, retains the English subject-verb word order, with an acceptable Arabic word order in effect. So all we do is put 'inna' at the beginning of the English sentence, with no change of word order. Here are paired examples with two equally acceptable versions of translation, the first of which is more emphasized than the second:

1. "Hypocrites live a miserable life" (إنّ المنافقين يحيون حياةً تعسةً/بائسةً) (cf. (يحيا المنافقون حياة...))
2. "Ladies hide the truth about their age": (إنّ السيدات يخفين حقيقة سنهن): (cf. (تخفي السيدات...))



3. "Her father suffers from asthma": (إن أباها يعاني من الربو) (cf. يعاني أبوها من الربو)

This type of sentence and word order is frequent in Arabic. However, it should not be overused at the expense of the frequent nominal sentences and the more frequent verbal sentences. On the other hand, (إن) is emphatic and, hence, would rather be used with care. In any case, these three possible types reflect the flexibility of Arabic word order, in comparison to the single, inflexible English word order.

Problem 4: Imperative statements are an exception:

Imperative sentences are an exception in the word order of English and Arabic. Both have an identical word order of imperatives;

Solution: Word-for-word translation of word order (metaphorical statements are not included):

The literal, word-for-word translation of the English word order of the imperative into Arabic is feasible: e. g.

1. "Stay where you are":

(إبق حيث أنت)

2. "Be patient":

(كن صبوراً/صابراً)/اصبر/تحلّ بالصبر)

3. "Listen to me carefully":

(إسمعني/اصغ إلي جيداً)

4. “Beware of the dog”: (إحترس من الكلب)
5. “Hold your tongue”: (أمسك (عليك) لسانك/أصمت)
6. “Meet your promises”: (ف (أوف) بوعدك)
7. “Don’t believe him”: (لا تصدقه)
8. “Do not backbite your friends”: (لا تغتب أصدقاءك)

## C. Translation of PERSONAL PRONOUNS

---

### Problem 1: the straightforward translation of personal pronouns:

To students, English personal pronouns have a straightforward translation into Arabic. This is correct when they are translated in isolation, or translated into a topic followed by a comment in an Arabic nominal sentence: e. g.

- |                         |             |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| 1. "I am tired":        | (أنا متعب)  |
| 2. "She is a nurse":    | (هي ممرضة)  |
| 3. "They are butchers": | (هم جزارون) |

However, in Arabic verbal sentences, they can be omitted, unless emphasized, because there is a letter in the verb which replaces the reference of the pronoun.

### Solution: The omission of personal pronouns:

When the sentence is verbal in Arabic, the pronoun (which is the subject) is deleted because it is included in the verb's reference to it as the subject of the sentence: e.g.

1. “I will contact you later”:

(سوف أتصل بك فيما بعد)

(The letter (أ) in Arabic bears the reference to (I) in English. Therefore there is no need to repeat the pronoun by saying:

(أنا سوف أتصل بك فيما بعد)

2. “She participated in the discussion”:

(شاركت في المناقشة)

(هي) is dropped because the last letter (ت) implies a direct reference to it. Thus, it is unnecessary to translate it as follows:

(هي شاركت في المناقشة)

3. “We are expecting someone now”:

(نتوقع شخصاً ما الآن)

(It is not required to translate ‘we’ literally into (نحن) in Arabic, as the first letter (ن) in the verb (نتوقع) implies it)

Verbs can have a reference to all personal pronouns in Arabic as follows (in the present and in the past):

Write	(يكتب) (present)	(كتب) (Past)
I write	أكتب (أ)	I wrote كتبت (ت)
We write	نكتب (ن)	We wrote كتبنا (نا)
You write	تكتب/تكتبين/	You wrote كتبت/كتبت (ت)
	نكتبون/نكتبن/ (ت)	كتبتما/كتبتم/كتبن (ما/م/ن)

He writes	يكتب (ي)	He wrote	كتب
She writes	تكتب (ت)	She wrote	كتبت (ت)
It writes	تكتب/يكتب (ت-ي)	It wrote	كتب/كتبت (ت)
They write	يكتبان/يكتبون/يكتبن (ي)	They wrote	كتبوا/كتبتوا/كتبتن (ا/وا/ن/ت)

(The same reference (ت) in (تكتب) ‘you write’ and ‘she writes’ is usually not confusing in Arabic. Also, the reference of the third person pronoun singular ‘he’ (هو) is absent from (كتب) because it is understood as the implied pronoun (هو) and as a root verb in Arabic).

Personal pronouns can also be replaced by both (إنّ) and an attached pronoun (ضمير متصل) bearing a reference to the personal pronoun (with a proportion of emphasis):

I	(إنني)
We	(إننا)
You	(إنك/إنكِ/إنكما/إنكم/إنكن)
He	(إنه)
She	(إنها)
It	(إنه/إنها)
They	(إنهما/إنهم/إنهن/إنها)

## D. Translation of ADJECTIVES

---

Adjectives in English have quite variable forms. Some of them are interchangeable with nouns. Above all, they are ordered in the sentence in a way different from Arabic.

### Problem 1: An adjective-noun order in English:

It is a general, well-known rule in English that the adjective occurs before the noun, whereas in Arabic it comes after the noun.

### Solution: Reversing the English adjective-noun order in Arabic:

This solution is easy and known to students: e.g.

1. “Generous people are kind-hearted”: (الناس الكرماء طيبو القلوب)
2. “That tall young man is my cousin”: (ذاك الرجل الطويل ابن عمي)
3. “She likes polite colleagues”: (تحب الزميلات المهذبات)

### Problem 2: The ordering of a series of adjectives:

A number of adjectives can follow one another in a certain order in English. When translated into Arabic, usually the same order is reserved. However, translating them in the back order is also feasible.

Solution: Translate a series of adjectives either way:

Successive adjectives in English can be translated either from left to right, or from right to left in Arabic: e. g.

1. "The English weather may be cloudy, rainy and sunny at the same time":

(قد يكون الطقس الإنجليزي غائماً ومائطراً ومشمساً (مشمساً ومائطراً وغائماً) في الوقت نفسه)

2. "He read a big, popular, useful book": (قرأ كتاباً كبيراً شعبياً مفيداً (مفيداً شعبياً كبيراً))

3. "Throw that small, round ball": (ارم تلك الكرة الصغيرة المدورة (المدورة الصغيرة))

Yet, the same English order of adjectives is usually preferred. e. g.

1

2

3

1."The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)".

(منظمة الأمم المتحدة للتربية والعلوم والثقافة : اليونسكو)

3

2

1

Problem 3: Imitation of the English sequence of adjectives:

At using a number of English adjectives consecutively, a comma is used to separate them from one another, with 'and' being used only before the last one. Many students and translators do the same in Arabic. But the sequence in Arabic is different, and we have to abide by it.

Solution: The repetition of ‘and’, or no ‘and’:

When ‘and’ is used before the last adjective in English, it is repeated before every adjective in Arabic: e. g.

1. “The two ministers discussed the political, social and economic matters”:

(ناقش الوزيران القضايا السياسية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية)

2. “Her dress is blue, soft, comfortable and cheap”:

(ثوبها أزرق وناعم ومريح ورخيص)

But when ‘and’ is not used in English, it may either be dropped, or retained in Arabic, as follows: e. g.

1. “Lucy is an innocent, good, kind girl”:

(لوسي فتاة بريئة طيبة لطيفة/لوسي فتاة بريئة وطيبة ولطيفة)

2. “Mohammad prefers simple, homely, tasty food”:

(يفضل محمد الطعام البسيط المألوف اللذيذ/والمألوف واللذيذ)

Problem 4: The use of adjectives as nouns:

Adjectives can be used as collective nouns in English when preceded by ‘the’ and not followed by nouns: e g.



1. “poor people” → “the poor”
2. “elderly people” → “the elderly”
3. “handicapped people” → “the handicapped”

(This is a general rule in English).

Some students may confuse such a special use of adjectives as singular nouns or adjectives in Arabic.

Solution: ‘The+adjective’ → plural noun in Arabic:

Adjectives used as collective nouns are translated into plural nouns in Arabic, not into adjectives or singular nouns: e. g.

1. “The rich should help the poor = rich people should help poor people”:

(يجب على الأغنياء أن يساعدوا الفقراء)

(We cannot translate ‘the rich’ into (الغني) or ‘the poor’ into (الفقير))

2. “The elderly are wiser than the young”=the elderly people are wiser than the young people”: (المسنون أعدل من الشباب).

“People’ is included both in ‘the elderly’ and (المسنون).

3. “The handicapped can do many things ‘=’the handicapped people can do many things”: (يستطيع المعاقون أن يفعلوا أشياء كثيرة)

‘The handicapped’ cannot be translated into (معاق) because the noun singular in English is ‘a handicap’.

## E. Translation and CHANGE OF WORD CLASSES

---

The grammatical classes (or categories) of words in English are: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, articles and connectors (or conjunctions). When a noun is translated into a verb, an adjective into a noun, an adverb into an adjective, etc., the word class is changed. This creates one or two problems for the students.

### Problem 1: Adjectives as nouns:

Usually English adjectives are translated into equivalent adjectives in Arabic. The problem for the students is the application of this as a fixed rule to the translation of all adjectives in both languages. But the case is not always so.

### Solution: adjectives → adjectives/nouns:

Adjectives are translated into adjectives or nouns in Arabic:

1. “The presidential palace”: (القصر الرئاسي / قصر الرئاسة)
2. “The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)”: (منظمة الأمم المتحدة للتربية والعلوم والثقافة)

(This example does not have another translation into adjectives).

3. “Political, administrative and economic affairs”:

(الشؤون السياسية والإدارية والاقتصادية/شؤون السياسة والإدارة والاقتصاد)

Problem 2: Nouns as adjectives:

Nouns can be used as adjectives in English. They might cause a problem to students.

Solution: Nouns → nouns/adjectives:

The choice is between translating some English nouns into nouns or adjectives in Arabic: e.g.

1. “The status quo”:  
(الوضع الراهن)
2. “Gas cylinder”:  
(أسطوانة غاز/أسطوانة غازية)
3. “Nerve cell”:  
(خلية أعصاب/خلية عصبية)
4. “Steam engine”:  
(قطار بخار/قطار بخاري)
5. “Music concert”:  
(حفلة موسيقية)
6. “Television program”:  
(برنامج تلفزيوني)
- (“Television programs”)  
(برامج التلفاز/برامج تلفزيونية)
7. “the attorney general”  
(قاضي القضاة/النائب العام/وكيل النيابة/المحامي الأول)

8. “Bank account”: (حساب مصرفي)
9. “Office equipment”: (تجهيزات مكتبية/تجهيزات مكتب)
10. “Ring road”: (طريق دائري (حلقي))

It is clear from these examples that most of the phrases have more than one version of translation each, some of which are identical with English, and some are not in this regard. More interesting is the translation of ‘Quranic verses’ into both (آيات قرآنية/آيات من القرآن الكريم), (i.e. ‘noun+adjective’, and ‘prepositional phrase’), but ‘Quranic Chapters’ cannot accept but one version that has become a collocation in Arabic nowadays, namely, (سور من القرآن الكريم) (Chapters from the Holy Quran). Usually we do not come across (سور قرآنية) at least in formal writings and discourses.

### Problem 3. Nouns as verbs:

English nouns are usually translated into nouns, or at times into adjectives in Arabic. However, a noun can be translated into a verb too.

### Solution: Nouns → nouns/verbs:

The majority of English nouns are translated into nouns or adjectives. Yet, some of them would accept translations into verbs in Arabic: e.g.

1. “Keeping indoors for a long time is boring”:

(البقاء في البيت لمدة طويلة ممل/أن تبقى في البيت لمدة طويلة شيء ممل)

2. “May I take my leave”:

(أستأذن/اسمحوا لي)

3. “Attention/pay attention”:

(انتبه/انتبهوا)

4. “They gave their agreement”:

(أعطوا موافقتهم/وافقوا)

5. “He is a convert to Islam”:

(اهتدى إلى الإسلام/اعتنق الإسلام/أسلم/دخل الإسلام)

#### Problem 4: Verbs as nouns:

Generally speaking, main verbs in English are usually translated into verbs in Arabic. But some can be changed into nouns.

#### Solution: Verbs→ verbs/nouns:

Moreover, some verbs may have two versions in Arabic: verbs and nouns: e. g.

1. “I am going home”:

(أنا ذاهب إلى البيت/أذهب إلى البيت)

2. “English is easy to understand”: (الإنجليزية سهلة الفهم/الإنجليزية سهلة" أن تُفهم)
3. “We are ready to buy the house”: (نحن جاهزون(مستعدون)لشراء المنزل/لنشترى المنزل)
4. “To make use of time, Nada prays”: (للاستفادة/لكي تستفيد من الوقت، تصلي ندى/تقوم بالصلاة)
5. “The president leaves for India today”: (يغادر الرئيس إلى الهند اليوم/الرئيس مغادرٌ إلى الهند اليوم)

Usually, the first versions of these pairs are natural and recurrent, whereas the second versions -especially '2' and '5'- are artificial, poor and awkward. Therefore, the students are not advised to use them, despite their possible use in Arabic grammar.

## F. Translation of ARTICLES

---

There are two articles in English:

1. The definite article 'the': (أَل التّعريف)
2. the indefinite article 'a/an': (أداة النكرة)

In Arabic, however, there is only one article, the definite article. No equivalent is available for the indefinite article. The problem is not with this difference of articles between the two languages, but in the use of the definite article 'the' in Arabic.

### Problem 1: the translation of 'the':

It is obvious that the use of 'the' is usually brought to a minimum in English. Moreover, in general and abstract words, for instance, 'the' is implied, not mentioned, but in Arabic it is mentioned. On the other hand, in the genitive case (الإضافة) 'the' is mentioned before each of the two nouns in English, whereas in Arabic it is used only before the second noun.

### Solution 1: Zero article → definite article:

In English, general and abstract nouns are used without articles, but in Arabic they are preceded by the definite article (الـ), as the following examples illustrate:



1. “Man is a speaking animal” (general): (الإنسان حيوان ناطق)
2. “Philosophy is my favorite subject”(abstract): (الفلسفة مادتي المفضلة)
3. “Keep medicine out of children’s reach”(abstract): (أبعد الدواء عن متناول الأطفال)

(Notice also the general noun “children”, which is not preceded by an article in English,

yet (الـ) is used in Arabic).

4. “Scientists work day and night’ (general): (يعمل العلماء ليل نهار)
5. “Prayer is an obligation”(abstract): (الصلاة فريضة)
6. “Man-made shoes are of a high quality”(general): (الأحذية المصنوعة يدوياً ذات جودة عالية)
7. “Ladies like good manners”(general;abstract): (تحب السيدات السلوك الحسن)
8. “Translators may commit mistakes (general): (قد يرتكب المترجمون أخطاء)
9. “Is translation easy or difficult ?”(abstract): (هل الترجمة سهلة أم صعبة؟)
10. “Domestic animals are useful and harmless”(general): (الحيوانات الأليفة مفيدة وغير ضارة)

In fact, there are examples where the definite article is not used in either language:  
e.g.

1. “We have grammar now”(abstract): (عندنا قواعد الآن)
2. “His father teaches physics”(abstract): (يدرس والده فيزياء)
3. “Mona drinks milk in the morning”(abstract): (تشرب منى حليباً لبناً) في الصباح

Yet the greater number of the general and abstract nouns take ‘the’ in Arabic.

Solution 2: ‘the genitive’ → ‘genitive’ in Arabic:

The definite article is used twice in the English ‘of-genitive’, but only once in the Arabic translation for the genitive replaces the second definite article : e. g.

1. “The Organization of the United Nations”: (منظمة الأمم المتحدة)
2. “The singing of the birds”: (غناء الطيور)
3. “The man of the match”: (نجم المباراة/أفضل لاعب في المباراة)

In the case of an indefinite genitive, the Arabic translation is identical: e. g.

1. “ He is a man of confidence”:(هو(إنه)رجل موثوق/ثقة)
2. “We gave a word of honor”:(أعطينا كلمة شرف)
3. “It is a story of black magic”:(إنها قصة شعوذة)

Like the definite article, the definite genitive functions as a specifier for something or somebody in particular, whereas the indefinite genitive is similar to

the indefinite article, specifying nothing or nobody in particular. This applies to both languages. Therefore, either use of the genitive in English is preferably reproduced in Arabic for reasons of specification or non-specification, which may sometimes make a considerable difference of meaning.

Thus, it is not advisable to undermine such a translation problem of definite and indefinite articles. Indeed, sometimes it is too crucial to meaning to drop the definite article or to keep it, as illustrated in the following two versions of the notorious Security Council's Resolution, 242, after the Zionist Israeli war against the neighboring Arab Countries in June, 1967:

- A. (The English version): "Withdrawal (of Israeli forces) from Arab Occupied Territories."
- B. (The French version): "Withdrawal (of Israeli forces) from the Arab Occupied Territories."

A long dispute has been going on between the Arabs and the Zionists about the two versions, as the first(without 'the') is adopted by the Israelis for it is interpreted as 'withdrawal from some Arab occupied territories', whereas the second version(with 'the') is adopted by the Arabs as it means 'withdrawal from all Arab occupied territories'. The difference is obviously big between 'some' and 'all'.

## G. Translation of CONJUNCTIONS: SENTENCE CONNECTORS

---

Conjunctions (or Sentence Connectors) are the words or the phrases used to connect sentences together. They usually occur at the beginning of sentences, with possible occasional variations of position in the middle, or at the end of them.

It is hard to imagine a text of two or more sentences without some conjunctions used to connect its parts (i.e. sentences) with one another. Here is an example:

“English is relatively a modern language. Arabic is one of the ancient languages. Perhaps it is the oldest language on earth. More evidence is required to confirm that”.

Here we have independent statements rather than a united text, for sentence connectors which bring about this unity are left out. Consequently, translating them into Arabic as such will have an equally disintegrated text, as follows:

(تعتبر اللغة الإنجليزية نسبياً لغة حديثة العهد. تعد العربية إحدى اللغات القديمة. ربما تكون أقدم

لغة على وجه الأرض. مزيد من الأدلة مطلوب للتحقق من ذلك)

We feel that something is missing in between the sentences. Therefore, comprehension of the text as one whole unit is obstructed. By contrast, the provision of proper sentence connectors makes the text one organic unit that can be easily comprehended. (Sentence connectors are underlined):

“English is relatively a modern language. On the other hand, Arabic is an ancient language. Not only this, perhaps it is the oldest language on earth.

However, more evidence is required to confirm that”.

The connectors, ‘on the other hand’, ‘not only this’ and ‘however’, are inserted in between sentences to compose a unified text. The same can be said about the Arabic translation:

(تعتبر الإنجليزية نسبياً لغة حديثة العهد . من ناحية أخرى، تعتبر العربية لغة قديمة جداً. ليس هذا فحسب، ربما هي أقدم لغة على وجه الأرض. على أية حال هناك حاجة إلى مزيد من الأدلة للتحقق من ذلك).

The connectors: (من ناحية أخرى، ليس هذا فحسب، على أية حال) are employed to unite these sentences into one comprehensible text.

Having established the vital importance of conjunctions in language, it is possible now to introduce their main types.

### 1. Additive conjunctions: e.g.

‘and, also, or, furthermore, in addition, besides, beside that, alternatively, likewise, similarly, in the same way, for instance, for, that is, I mean, etc.’

-And	-حرف العطف (و)
-Also	-أيضاً
-Or	-أو
-Further, furthermore, moreover	
-In addition	
-Besides	-ثم/بعدهذا/بعد ذلك
-Beside that	-علاوة على ذلك/فوق ذلك
-Alternatively	-بالإضافة إلى ذلك/أضف إلى ذلك -بالإضافة إلى ذلك
-Likewise	-إلى جانب ذلك/بالإضافة إلى ذلك -بدلاً (عوضاً) عن ذلك/بدل ذلك
-Similarly/in a similar way,	-وبالمثل
-In the same way, by the same token	
	-وبالمثل/بطريقة مشابهة
-For instance/for example, to give(cite) an example, etc.	-بطريقة مماثلة/بالمثل
-That is, I mean, namely, viz. etc.	-على سبيل المثال/مثلاً/ولنضرب لذلك مثلاً -أي/معنى ذلك/يعني ذلك/ذلك يعني
	إلخ.

These conjunctions are used to add more information and details by way of addition (using: ‘and, also, besides, beside that, moreover, further, furthermore, in addition’); alternation (using: ‘or, alternatively, instead, rather’); exemplification (by means of: ‘for example, for instance, a case in point, to give(cite) an example, etc.’); explanation (using: ‘that is, I mean, namely, viz. etc.’), or resemblance (using: ‘likewise, similarly, in a similar way, in the same way, by the same token, etc.’).

## 2. Contrastive conjunctions: e.g.

“But, however, yet, though, although, nevertheless, nonetheless, despite that, in spite of, instead, rather, on the one hand ... on the other, on the other hand, on the contrary, in fact, actually, well, as a matter of fact, in any case, anyhow, at any rate, after all, above all, it is true that, etc.”:

-But

-لكن/لكنّ/على أنّ/بيد أنّ/إلا أنّ(إن)

-However

-لكنّ/على أية حال/مهما يكن من أمر

-Yet

-Though, although,  
nevertheless, nonetheless,  
despite that, in spite of, albeit,  
having said that

-لكنّ/ومع ذلك/على أية حال

-برغم ذلك/ومع ذلك/مع هذا/على

الرغم من ذلك

-Instead, rather

-عوضاً عن ذلك/بدلاً عن ذلك/بالأحرى

-On the one hand ... on the other(hand)

-من ناحية/جهة)...من ناحية/جهة أخرى

-On the other hand

-من ناحية (من جهة) أخرى

-On the contrary

-على العكس(من ذلك)

-In fact, actually, well, as a matter of fact, the fact of the matter

-في الحقيقة/في الواقع/حسناً/في واقع الأمر/حقيقة الأمر

-In any case, anyhow, at any rate

-After all, above all

-على أية حال/مهما يكن من أمر

-It is true that

-قبل كل شيء/قبل هذا وذاك

-صحيح أن ...





1. Sequence (e.g. first, secondly, next, then, after that, etc.). (أولاً، ثانياً، بعد ذلك(التالي)، من ثم(بعد ذلك/بعدئذ)، بعد ذلك)
2. Simultaneity (e.g. at the same time, in the meantime). (في الوقت نفسه، في هذه الأثناء(أثناء ذلك/في غضون ذلك))
3. Precedence: (e.g. previously, formerly, already, beforehand, before that) (سابقاً، في السابق(سابقاً/مسبقاً)، مسبقاً، مسبقاً(قبل ذلك)، قبل ذلك)
4. Conclusion (e.g. finally, at last. at the end, in the end, in conclusion, to conclude, etc.).. (أخيراً، أخيراً، في النهاية، في الختام، ختاماً، في الختام)
5. Immediacy: (e.g. at once, soon, next time (day), an hour later, on another occasion, until then, at this moment, etc.) (فوراً(على الفور/حالياً/الآن)، حالياً(في الحال)، في المرة القادمة(في اليوم التالي)، بعد ساعة(من الآن)، في فرصة أخرى، حتى ذلك الحين، في هذه اللحظة)
6. Present and past (so far, up to now, at this point, here, there, from now on). (حتى الآن، حتى الآن، عند هذه النقطة، هنا، هناك، من الآن فصاعداً)
7. Summary: (briefly, in brief, in short, in sum, to sum up, in fine, etc.). (باختصار، بإيجاز، بالمختصر(باختصار)، اختصاراً(باختصار)، بالمختصر(المفيد)، باختصار، خلاصة القول) ('باختصار' و'خلاصة القول' تترجمان أيضاً من هذه الروابط)

The following points can be made about the translation of sentence connectors into Arabic:

1. Synonymous translations for the same English connector are usually interchangeable. That is, ‘however’, for instance, can be translated into one of the following: (لكن، لكن، إلا إن، بيد أن، على أية حال، مهما يكن من أمر، غير أن ) . The same applies to ‘though/although’ which would have the following translations, each of which is perfectly valid: (برغم أن، مع أن، على الرغم من، برغم؛ إلخ).

2. Some Arabic connectors are sometimes misunderstood, or used in the wrong sense like (أما) and (و). The latter is normally used for addition to mean ‘and’, whereas the former means ‘but’ and is used for contrast. Sometimes these contrastive meanings are confused, as "أما" could be used for addition, ‘and’, for contrast. Consider these examples:

a. “Many people enjoy swimming, but I don’t”

(يستمتع كثير من الناس بالسباحة، أما أنا فلا)

b. “Many people enjoy swimming, and I enjoy it too”

(يستمتع كثير من الناس بالسباحة، أما أنا فأستمتع بها أيضاً)

In the second example, ‘أما’ should be replaced by ‘و’ for the relationship here is of addition, not contrast. It has to be corrected, then, as follows: (يستمتع كثير من الناس بالسباحة، وأنا كذلك أستمتع بها) . Moreover, both connectors can be used together in

Arabic only: “Many people enjoy swimming, but I don’t” (يستمتع كثير من الناس بالسباحة، وأما أنا فلا)

3. Some connectors are added necessarily or not in Arabic to achieve better cohesion among sentences, especially when a clearcut connector is not used. They can be described as initiating particles (أدوات استهلال/استئناف). Here are some of them:

e.g. (ف؛ فقد، لقد، إذ، حيث أن، إن، فإن؛ هذا و...)

1. “Dear Sister,

I received your letter of 20th. Ramadan...” :

(أختي العزيزة/الغالية ... فقد تلقيت رسالتك المؤرخة في 20 رمضان...)

(فقد) is added as an initiator, may be unnecessarily, just as a stylistic formula marking the start of a letter.

2. “The doctor diagnosed the disease perfectly. He used a special medical device for that” (شخص الطبيب المرض خير تشخيص. إذ استعمل جهازاً خاصاً لذلك)

(إذ) is a zero connector in English, added as an initiating conjunction to strengthen sentence connectivity.

3. “Watching T.V. programs is merely a waste of time. Many of these programs aim at entertaining T.V. watchers, sometimes cheaply. Some T.V. channels try to improve on the quality of their programs”:

(إن مشاهدة بعض برامج التلفاز مجرد مضيعة للوقت. إذ يهدف الكثير من هذه البرامج إلى تسلية المشاهدين، بشكل رخيص أحياناً. هذا وتحاول بعض القنوات التلفازية تحسين نوعية برامجها)

Here, the three connectors, (إن), (إذ) and (هذا و...) are used necessarily in Arabic to achieve cohesion, as the absence of connectors in English might lead to ambiguity and unclarity of cohesion.

In sum, sentence connectors are useful conjunctions, used to achieve the best possible degree of cohesion among sentences and paragraphs in both languages, English and Arabic, putting together an organic, comprehended text. Failing to use them properly in translation into Arabic would result in misunderstanding the original meaning properly. Therefore, translators and students of translation are required to take care of them as accurately as possible.

## CONCLUSION:

The grammatical problems of English-Arabic translation are numerous. They arise from differences between the two languages in grammatical aspects like tenses, word order, questions, negation, personal pronouns, adjectives, classes of words (verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc.) articles, sentence connectors, etc.

The account of grammatical problems given in this chapter is not final. All these problems of translation are followed by their possible solutions, so that the process of translation can proceed fluently and properly, and the search for meaning may, therefore, continue in the right direction, giving way for the far more important and difficult lexical problems of translation to be discussed in detail, located and, then, solved.

# 11. EXERCISES

---

## 1. Translate the following into Arabic:

### *(Part One)*

1. Giving up bad habits needs a strong will.
2. What's up?
3. Honesty comes at the top of the salient characteristics of a virtuous man.
4. This is no man's land.
5. The picture is by no means clear.
6. Everybody is required to do his/her job well.
7. Won't you tell me the whole truth?
8. Get well soon.
9. Ahmad may be bed-ridden
10. Here is my home address
11. Be careful with your superiors!
12. He wants to confess something
13. Distinguished students have been honored at the end of this academic year.
14. The innocent man was beaten to death.

15. Our new house will be furnished soon, God willing.

*(Part Two)*

1. A telephone is a mixed-blessing. Sometimes you get the wrong number and so you get angry. Some impolite people may disturb you while you are eating or even sleeping. Long ago people used pigeons to send messages. They were lucky.
2. People nowadays need to understand that learning must be lifelong. This is necessary because the world of work is changing very fast. To remain employable, people must always look ahead and learn new knowledge and skills.
3. Health is a splendid blessing that completes our happiness. It's worthy saying that we can't really enjoy our life if we are unhealthy. Healthy people are always proud of what they can achieve in the fields of sports and hard work.
4. The world's climate is changing. Scientists believe that this is due to a number of natural reasons, like heat from the sun, volcanoes and the increase in carbon dioxide. Global warming will cause ice in some regions to melt, sea levels will rise, there will be floods and lots of people will be homeless.
5. Internet shopping has greatly grown nowadays. Lots of shops and companies now have user-friendly websites to make buying easier, cheaper and more interesting. In this way, more and more people are attracted to online shopping.
6. Unfortunately, in the last fifty years many animals have become extinct. Now, some animals are protected and hunting them has been banned. In this way, we may be able to preserve wildlife.



7. The essence of good manners is consideration for other people. You can't help admiring decent people who naturally think of others and help them with good will.
8. Stress can be a friend or an enemy. It can warn you that you are under too much pressure and you should change your way of life. It also can kill you, if you do not notice the warning signals.
9. Personal success does not often come by accident. Most successful people know that they suffer a lot to reach their goals. Faithfulness, persistence and hardworking are the most keys to success.
10. As people will get used to everything being digital, e-book will be more common with book mania. But, there will always be some people who like books to hold and feel. Despite the recent technology, the traditional book will remain the best friend.
11. Travelling is a fantastic experience that most people look forward to. For many of those people travelling is an escape from the stress of daily life, but for others it is a way to broaden their horizons. Perhaps the most common form of travel is escapism.
12. Freedom of speech is a right to every person in our society. You can express your personal opinion freely regarding a certain subject, on condition that you shouldn't insult others or cause harm to them. If you respect others' point of view, yours will be highly appreciated.
13. Doctors always confirm the importance of sleep for people of all ages. They think that 7-9 hours of sleep daily is best for an adult. Babies need a lot more sleep than adults. When we sleep well, we feel comfortable and become active and alert all day.

14. Lots of people admire Jules Verne. He was a French writer who was born in 1828 and died in 1905. He wrote many novels in which he introduced scientific technological marvels such as the submarine, space travel and television.
15. Parents shape their children's characters from the early beginning of their childhood. They teach them values and customs. They also share their interests and games. They develop deep emotional ties with them.

## **2. Translate the following into English:**

1. يجب علينا معاملة ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة بطريقة إنسانية.
2. إن الشخص المتفائل غالبا ما يلتزم بعمله على عكس الشخص المتشائم.
3. يمكنك شراء ماتريد من منزلك عبر الانترنت.
4. يشهد عصرنا الحالي طفرة هائلة في عالم الاتصالات والتكنولوجيا الحديثة.
5. علينا جميعا أن نتعاون سويا وأن نكون متسامحين من أجل عيش حياة أفضل.
6. إن النظافة الشخصية ضرورة ملحة لتجنب الأمراض.
7. تحدد تصرفاتك واتجاهاتك وعلاقتك بالآخرين الجزء الأكبر من شخصيتك.
8. يعتبر الهاتف المحمول نعمة ونقمة في آن واحد.
9. الحروب الأهلية والجفاف والمجاعات تعوق التقدم في معظم الدول النامية.
10. في رأي الكثيرين، يعتبر السفر بالطائرة متعة كبيرة.
11. لا تستطيع أن تقود السيارة دون الحصول على رخصة القيادة.
12. تسلق الجبال أكثر صعوبة من ركوب الدراجات، أليس كذلك؟
13. هل تذهب للسباحة مع أصدقائك أثناء العطلة الصيفية؟
14. تشكل مشكلة تغير المناخ وارتفاع درجة الحرارة تهديدا كبيرا للبيئة.
15. يحذر الأطباء الناس من التدخين حيث أنه السبب الرئيسي للكثير من الأمراض.

16. يعتبر السلام حلم لكثير من الأمم التي قد عانت كثيرا من كوارث الحروب.
17. تلعب الإعلانات دورا بارزا فى إغراء الناس على شراء أشياء أكثر من اللازم.
18. تتوق كل الدول المحبة للسلام إلى حياة هادئة خالية من الحروب.
19. تقام مسابقات القراءة للجميع كل عام ويمنح الفائزون جوائز قيمة.
20. هل تعتقد أن مشاهدة التلفزيون أو الاستماع للراديو أو قراءة مجلة أو جريدة شيء مفيد أم مضيعة للوقت؟
21. يجب أن يلتحق الطالب بالكلية التي تناسب مواهبه وقدراته.
22. يجب أن تحدد هدفك وتبذل ما فى وسعك لتحقيقه.
23. لقد تغير العالم كثيرا وبصورة مذهلة وعلينا أن نساير هذا التغير حتى لا نتخلف عن ركب الحضارة.
24. لا بد من وقف انتشار الأسلحة النووية لأنها تشكل تهديداً للسلام العالمى.
25. العدالة هى إحدى القيم الأساسية الموجودة فى كل النظم الاجتماعية.

## References

---

The contents of this textbook have been reproduced from original sources for **educational purposes only** and all the cited references are documented below. The topics covered in this course have been selected carefully so that they address the varying needs of translation students at their preliminary level.

Abdelaal, Nouredin. *Translation between English and Arabic: A Textbook for Translation Students and Educators*. 2020.

Bassnett, Susan. "Translation Studies." *Routledge eBooks*, 2003, doi:10.4324/9780203427460.

Enani M. M. *English - Arabic Translation Manual*. Cairo: University Book Center, 2002.

Ghazala, H. *Translation as Problems and Solution*. Beirut: Dar El-Ilm Lilmalayin, 2008.

Lawrence Venuti. *The Translation Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Muhammed Attia. *The Translation Manual*. 2009.

Venuti, Lawrence. Ed. *The Translation Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 2000.