Introducing Translation Dual-linguistics

By M. M. Mousli

Translation dual-linguistics constitutes the narrower focussed theoretical framework of translation linguistics. It directly deals with the language pair relevant to the translating process, its product and assessment and critique. This is proposed to further expand translation studies in particular in the areas of analysing in depth linguistic aspects that are directly relevant to the language pair involved in any translating activity at any point in time. Having stated that, translation dual-linguistics is not meant to become the substitute for translation studies. Translating as an inter-lingual activity is of a linguistic nature in the first place, added to that is the interference of extra-linguistic elements; such as cultural or other elements. The general survey of this study is to be mapped out through introducing its objectives (forthcoming) that pertain a field of the translation-domain in its linguistic-exploratory facets and selected issues and aspects in their representation or manifestation. As translation is in the end an empiric linguistic activity, it encompasses multi-aspects embodiment (including cultural components), which vary across more than one language pair of the human languages. Translation dual-linguistics, therefore, is introduced to cater for researching and studying translation of one language pair one at a time.

The word ‘translation’, so far, has been conflated on a larger scale with a wide range of denotations and references, which mainly relate to the various prevailing concepts of ‘translation’ to mean, for example, the act of ‘translating’, the ‘translating process’ and ‘translation’ (the ‘translated text’: product of translating process). Translation as an integrated linguistic activity (process and product) means the carrying out of trans-lingual activity by ‘translator’ to render what has been written in language 1 (the ST) into language 2 (the TT to be produced). Approaches to study and analyse translation, until recently, were found interweaved in their introduced complex of presentation and representation. As the proposed study of ‘translation dual-linguistics’ constitutes the narrower focus of ‘translation linguistics’, this departs in its theoretical framework and approaches from studying ‘translation linguistics’; nevertheless it has its own territory within the broader framework of translation studies, theories and practice.

Mapping and Outlining the Theoretical and General Approach

Studying translation dual-linguistics is about relating to the languages involved in the translating process/s as its departure point. The applicable and employable approach of this field of studies can be determined through identifying (for translation purposes) what criteria determine what ST structural units and their TL counterparts found to be corresponding for matching purposes. This can only be related to when dual-linguistics of the language pair is inclusively in focus. The approach objectives and framework are meant to help with the search for the interpretation and explanation of the universality of the translating activity as a unitary linguistic exercise in its complexity. For working towards the objectives of arriving at the sought theoretical framework, the proposed approach therefore is to
facilitate formulating predictions, which in turn may lead to the implementation of workable analyses and researching methods.

‘Translation Studies’ inform ‘translation’, so far, has been approached as a linguistic activity, which has been predominantly dealt with by departing from linguistic labels. However, when we talk about translation, we definitely mean translation labels’ topics and issues that are primarily and directly relevant to ‘translation’ in focus. Such labels postulate the departing points in relation to the production of a target text as the result of employing translating process/s, and this assumes the status of a ‘corresponding text (the TT)’ that should function the counterpart text to the source text.

‘Translation linguistics’ objectives (to follow) are formulated to guide us through the studying of translation proper labels vs. previously focusing on linguistic translation and/or its’ manifestation into what is known with interdisciplinary translation. Translation dual-linguistics is about the accumulated knowledge (data), information and phenomena interpretation that are shared by the language pair involved in the translating process/s and its product.

**Studying Translation Labels vs. Linguistic Labels**

Studying ‘translation’, for the purpose of studying translation linguistics, has to depart directly from studying translation labels. This is about analysing the translating aspects as process, product and assessment and critique in their immediate relevance to linguistic labels. The new suggested approach (theoretical notions and their corresponding research methodology) is to be outlined by approaching analysing and studying what linguistic issues and aspects are likely to become directly relevant to the three pillars mentioned of the designated language pair one at a time. Hereupon, ‘translation labels’ are used to study, interpret and explain their relevant manifestations of a unitary linguistic activity. As translation is about an inter-lingual activity, where linguistic items are translated and/or transferred from one language into another language (including cultural components), an overlap with comparative linguistics inevitably might occur, and this by all means shouldn’t be understood as an offer of substituting the studying of linguistic labels and issues through abiding by comparative linguistics tenets and approaches. Due to inter-lingual relaying mechanism-factors of material (linguistic items and cultural components) of translating from one language into another to be carried out, the translation decision – making during the translating process/s (for the purpose of achieving TT), definitely, becomes the subject to linguistic constraint factors of both languages involved in such activity.

**Translation proper factors vs. multi-disciplinary translation studies**

The trends, which led to the evolvement of translation studies becoming an interdisciplinary translation field/s, in contrast to previous trends of translation proper, is a major shift in course, and this came as the result of applying linguistics thinking to studying and researching translation. In the context of swaying away from translation proper researching various linguistic tenets and research approaches, so far, set the path for recent evolvement of approaching studying and analysing translation. Under such trends is for example the contrastive linguistics approach.
that is to happen in the context of contrasting the STL against TTL. Gutt (1991), for example, ‘focuses more on the role of the TL text in the target culture than it does on the function of the original text’ (1991; cited in Nicholson, 1995: 49). Under **linguistic approaches** to study and analyze translation, the aim is at linguistically explaining ‘translation phenomena’ and ‘translation related aspects’ (Catford, 1965: 19). The **semantic approach**, for most translation researchers and theorists, is based on a departure approach to transfer meaning from language 1 into language 2. The **socio-linguistic approach** is about factors, which determine the linguistic shaping of the production of the TT for specific targeted readers. This has been promoted on the basis of inserting ST ‘recent introductions’ into TT without the need to have those translated. The **Approach to Translation as Text** and **Translation as a Process and Product** (Neubert and Shreve, 1992; cited in Ruuskanen, 1995: 451) departs from the argument about an “integrated” theory based on practice. This empirical approach, however, represents a difficult task, as this relates to considering the large number of translation studies rooted in linguistic traditions. Neubert and Shreve (1992) also suggest ‘translation models’ to approach translation in its complexity; (1) the **Practical Model** (empirical approach), (2) the **Linguistic Model** (treating translation as a specific language use), (3) the **Text-linguistic Model** (this relates the different sentences of the original text opposing those of a target text, but no text linguistics), (4) the **Socio-cultural Model** (‘unique products’ of a particular culture), and (5) the **Psycholinguistic Model** (the application to the ‘translation process’ only, excluding the TT placement into the TL and its culture). The **literary translation approach** is known under the **poly-system** theory (the overgeneralization to universal laws and escaping linguistic arguments have been its main focus).

**Translation methods** influenced the evolution of translation studies to go the interdisciplinary path. This happened as the result of expanding studying and researching translation by departing from linguistics thinking and tenets. The reviewed literature reveals the emergence of various understandings of introduced translation methods. **Translation methods** in translation studies, occasionally, have been conflated with translation approaches or vice versa. ‘Faithful translation’, ‘adequate translation’, ‘acceptable translation’ and ‘covert translation’ are translating methods that, so far, have been used and still apply to produce rendition in the target language. In the context of conflating methods with approaches and models, theoretical notions and technicality concepts/terms have been also used to describe other ways of producing translation, in particular those, which relate to translating literary piece/s of writing. House (1981) spoke of the **covert method** of translation, which ‘should enjoy the status of an original ST … in the target culture’ (1981: 194; cited in Gut 1991: 45). The **communicative translation method** is used to rendering the exact contextual meaning of the ST, and the **corpora data translation** is ‘the method of translating words, terms and units right through to one “sentence”. The **free translation method**, according to Catford (1965: 2), is to be criticised on the basis of adopting the concept of ‘equivalence’. The **literal translation method** is about ‘literal and word-for-word translation, though loosely used’ (Catford, 1965:25). The **semantic translation method** is based on the translation theory and studies notions, which refer to semantics in its general orientation (at the rank of word/term), mainly in its representation as ‘lexical expansion’, ‘descriptive substitutes’, ‘contextual specification’, ‘referential’, ‘connotative meaning’ and ‘basic components’ (common, diagonal and supplementary). Gutknecht and Rölle (1996) suggest the translating approach ‘by factors’ to apply to translating from English into German or vice versa.
This doesn’t mean ‘taking prescribed factors into account as such by bearing in mind the specific roles or functions these factors fulfil.’ (1996: 5ff).

Translation Labels and Dual-linguistics

The reviewed literature revealed studying the ‘translating process/s’ phase has been based on departing from linguistics tenets in their general theses and claimed universality. Reversing this trend in favor of departing from translation linguistics (in particular in its focus on dual-linguistics) instead requires, however, deep thinking about translation linguistics and its direct relevant areas. What may first click to mind is perhaps that this should depart from the theoretical points of studying ‘translation labels’ determined by the relevant translation dual-linguistics in their relationships to linguistics and sub-disciplines. Theorists of Structuralist Linguistics for analyzing language either consent or disagree on the relevance of some issues, as for example; what constitutes a ‘word’ in more than one language. As translation as a linguistic activity involves, in the context of linguistic labels of a language pair, contrastive elements of more than one language in perspectives, it is to say that the general consensus on the notion of ‘word’ covers several distinct linguistic concepts, including compounded units as of morpheme/ lexeme, word form, grammatical word etc. Reading and analyzing the ST can depart from this general approach to study language if this applies to the SL concerned. This universal view on language constructed units, order and structure has been found widely acceptable amongst linguistics scholars. What this could mean for ‘translation linguistics’ (as the suggested departure is from dual-linguistics approach/s) is its application to the languages involved in translating at any point in time, unless the contrasting language pair proves otherwise.

Translation Linguistics/Dual-linguistics Labels vs. Semantic Labels

The discussion already brought above should have set the background at looking into why translation linguistics and dual-linguistics constitute a significant area of research in its own right, in particular, when relating translation studies to linguistics and semantics has become an inevitable exercise. Translation dual-linguistics is directly related to semantics as this latest facilitates explaining the ST ‘sentence meaning’ in its grammatical and lexical aspects and features vs. those of the TL concerned. Language pair corresponding grammatical and lexical features can be identified and approached for analysing purposes from the perspectives of three aspects, which are: (I) semantics and grammar, (ii) semantics, lexicon and grammar and (iii) lexical relatedness. Relating translation dual-linguistics to translation semantics is based on relevance to the isomorphic (have the same semantic structure)-aspect.

Translation Linguistics Aspects

‘Translation linguistics’ studies and analyzes the linguistic translating aspects determining or resulting from carrying out an inter-lingual activity in conjunction with the employment of trans-lingual analytic and informative-scholarly approach. This is to be revealed and satisfied in its multi aspects and facets complex manifestation of the ‘translating process/s’, ‘translation’ as a ‘product’ and ‘translation assessment and critique’. Translation linguistics analyses, studies and researches ST in the context of the linguistic framework of the SL concerned in
conjunction with the prospected relaying into another language (the TL). Both languages (SL and TL) are to be drawn into corresponding/contrasting analyses for ‘translation purposes’ (by employing translation dual-linguistics approach) that is to start at the phase of the translating process right through to arriving at the product (by using and employing all linguistic means available/applicable, and this happens through the use of other auxiliary means of translating/transferring/transliterating to carry out matching of corresponding material and linguistic units of both languages in order to producing the target text as its main objective).

Translation linguistics concerns its research with three major areas, these are:

(1) Translating from one language into another is solely based on an inter-lingual activity relevant to dual-linguistics, which is determined by the language pair involved in the translating process/s.

(2) Translation linguistics analyzes what potentially available/possible in the light of generating an infinite/finite number of renditions of the translation product (the TT), which to correspond to one ST.

(3) Translation linguistics also analyzes the selected rendition (the TT) by the translator in the light of other potentially parallel translation products (TT/s) to be generated.

The TT is presumed to be the product expected to ‘correspond’ to the source text; this means enjoying the privilege of the ST that has been written independently from becoming considered for translation purposes. A TT (this represents one selected rendition out of more potentially renditions/versions to be produced) always is the product of translating process/s, which means it is a ‘reproduced text’ of the ST in the TL.

**Translation Dual-Linguistics Aspects**

‘Translation dual-linguistics’ is translation linguistics in action in its narrower focus on the language pair at any point in time. This has three facets of manifestations:

1. The first is about the translating process/s from a SL into TL, and these concerns ST and TT. Both languages involved in this process may happen to be related or unrelated languages.

2. The second facet is about the potential of generating finite or infinite number of renditions (versions) of the produced translation for one ST, as this has to do with the language concerned (the TL as a system) allows this to happen. The system may allow:

   (i) Reproducing more than one rendition, this could only apply to one word (synonymy), one sentence or a whole text.

   (ii) The production of more than one rendition could be partial (the case of a unit beyond word) or a complete another rendition (version) of the whole text. In the case of reproducing TL words, it may turn not to be possible to do that at all; the same may also apply to some collocations or phrases.

   (iii) For analysing purposes, the SL and the TL could/could not become the subject for matching in terms of language variations (geographical dialects
or other forms concord/not concord with standard version/s of the language concerned) or register, pragmatic and discourse aspects.

(iv) A SL uses orthographic system and the TL uses another (or in some cases it may be the same system). Both SL and TL may or may not use their own writing system (borrowed orthographic system). The used writing system (historically developed or borrowed) has been modified or adjusted to symbolize the phonological system of the language concerned. The phonetic reading of the used orthographic system has its own standard or non-standard values.

3. The third facet concerns comparison and assessment purposes. Both ST and TT is comparative prune in terms of the language and the orthographic system used, as changes in one or both languages might already have occurred after producing the TT, and both are to be considered relevant to the assessment and comparison process/s. In the same context, the following points are to be considered:

1. A ST constitutes part/unit/s of the SL economy independently of the time of its writing/production, where the TT doesn’t.
2. The TT language may/may not become an original/non-original piece of writing in the TL regardless of its assessment and comparison with the ST.
3. A TT becomes an original piece of writing in the TL if no assessment/comparison has taken place.
4. One selected out of other potentially renditions (TT versions) to be produced constitute the final rendition (following its selection), and this is considered the counterpart for the ST.

Conclusion

Studying ‘translation’, for the purpose of studying ‘translation linguistics, has to depart directly from studying translation labels. This is proposed to further expand translation studies in particular in the areas of analyzing in depth the linguistic aspects that are directly relevant to the language pair involved in any translating activity at any point in time. For studying and researching the product of translating process/s translation dual-linguistics, in particular, requires in its application and approaches both languages (SL and TL) to be drawn into corresponding and/or contrasting analyses. This is to include employing all linguistic means available/applicable, and this happens through the use of other auxiliary means of translating/transferring/transliterating to carry out the matching of corresponding material and linguistic units of both languages in order to producing the target text as its main objective. Translation linguistics analyzes what potentially available/possible in the light of generating an infinite/finite number of renditions of the translation product (the TT), which to correspond to one ST. Translation linguistics also analyses the selected rendition (the TT) by the translator in the light of other potentially parallel translations (TT/s) to be generated. The TT is presumed to be the product expected to ‘correspond’ to the source text, which means enjoying the privilege of the ST that has been written independently from being considered for translating purposes.
Footnotes

1. In the context of target text linguistics, the target text (also called ‘the translated text/the translation’) is the end product of the process of translating a written text into the TL; i.e., it is the product of a finished and completed translating process. A target text has been written/produced in relevance to the source text to perform function/s (communicative or others) and/or for achieving goals (objectives such as literary or else), as it has been planned/set up for the source text. A TT production also means analysis should have occurred on the basis of matching linguistic and other elements (perhaps cultural etc.) of the language pair dual-linguistics concerned. Nord (1997) wrote in the context of ‘target text linguistics’ (vs. English source text and its skopos (purpose)) ‘a target text is an offer of information formulated by a translator in a target language and its culture about an offer of information formulated by someone else in a source language and its culture. (1997: 141). This offer of new information accommodates not only target texts that are written for a specific purpose, but also literary texts as well. A target text may or may not become established in the host language in terms of its language and use. It may be rejected without having triggered any changes. For quite a long time priority has been granted to ST over TT when researching translation in translation studies. This tenet recently has changed course in favour of an adverse prominence grant. In this context Vermeer (1984) suggests to ‘dethrone’ the source text (Cited in Jakobsen, 1993: 160), where Reiss (1988), on the other side, fully recognises the translator’s authorial presence and responsibility, as in her view, the translator’s work ‘remains a service, (“Dienstleistung”), ...’ (1988: 68; cited in Jakobsen, 1993: 160). Both proponents and opponents of focusing on the target text, nevertheless, contributed to the advance of this field and its research.

2. Source text linguistics is the study and analysis of the total embodiment of language units of the text that is to be translated in conjunction with the process of producing a target text (objective/goal) to be worked towards or achieved. The linguistic analysis of source text is to be discussed in relevance to translating it into another language, as this is about the analysis concerned in relevance to translation linguistics/dual-linguistics of the languages involved in the translating process/s. A literary text is a class of texts that is distinguished through displaying features of meter, narrative structure and parallelism. In most cases of employing linguistic analysis to literary texts, which come from linguists, critique fall in the sphere of attitudes as linguistics and literature critiques both have a polarization of attitudes towards approaching literature and stylistics. In the context of translating poetry, Newmark (1988) wrote ‘the word has greater importance than any other type of text’ (1988: 163). Under legal texts come those, which display patterns of legal language, this is recognized mainly for legal discourse functions such as founding legal documents, contract agreements and court judgments, where under less strict binding patterns come for example police-reports and commercial contracts.

3. Annotated definition of “word” in Arabic, English and German

Word (Kalimah) in Arabic

‘Kalimah’ designates a unit that similes ‘word’ in structural linguistics. Arab grammarians find al-kalimah (the word) is viewed as an uninterruptible unit of the language, and that word-morphology is linked to morph-phonology. The salient stem feature of a ‘kalimah’ as a morphological unit is its’ triconsonantal root for derivational/inflectional formation, and a relatively small set of templates (fixed consonant vowel patterns), which are applied to word root morphology. This generates various categories of verb and noun stems. By reducing texts to their constituent units (word, phrase and sentence) (1) the [al]-‘kalimah’ is to be translated as a unit into a target language corresponding unit if it meets certain communicative function and falls in line with its syntactic slot. In the translating process/s ‘al-kalimah’ is translatable in its paradigmatic relations and syntagmatic functional placement (its linear word order placement within the compositional assigned slot of the bigger unit/stretch of words forming ‘al-jumlah’ [sentence]).

Word in English

Word is a phonological and orthographic complex (one or more morphemes) representation, which is subject to morphological formation in the forms of inflection and derivation. The first pertains the creation of word forms of lexemes through a change (plural or past tense, etc.) made to express its relation to other words in the sentence, where the second (derivation) the creation of new lexemes from
old lexemes (or roots) through various processes. New words are formed from existing words (adjectives from nouns, etc.) and **compound word** (single word) formed by combining two words (such as *house + boat = houseboat*).

**Word (Wort) in German**

‘Wort’ (‘word’) is a meaningful unit of the German language, which combines ‘form’ and ‘meaning’ in one unit. *Wort* is not necessarily the smallest meaningful unit, e.g. ‘Donaudampfschifffkapitán’. Language forms are meaningful when manifested into ‘Wort’ or in a unit that comprises more than one word ‘Wörter’. In German semantics ‘Wort’ is not a prime unit, it consists of a sequence of meaningful carriers (*signantia*) of parts.
References


The Author:

Dr. M. Majed Mousli completed his PhD thesis at Edith Cowan University (Perth, the State of Western Australia) in 2002, and received the award of Doctor of Philosophy in May 2003. The PhD thesis title is: Insertion of English Acronyms & Single Words/Terms in Arabic Translation. The author lectured in 1998 and 2002 in interpreting and translating at TAFE/Perth. Dr. Mousli has participated in international conferences on translation, where he held lectures and read papers in the area of “Borrowing and Code-switching in Translation” and “Translating/Transferring Idioms between English and Arabic”. His areas of specialization are linguistics, applied linguistics, translation linguistics and interpretation English/Arabic. Dr. Mousli has been a member of the Examiner’s Board of NAATI (Australia’s National Body for Accreditation in Translation and Interpreting). Currently Dr. Mousli is a member of the editorial board of the International Journal of Translation “Babel”.

The Author’s Most Recent Publications are:


The mailing address:

Dr Mohammad Majed Mousli
32 Torridon Avenue
Parkwood Western Australia 6147
AUSTRALIA