Book Review of Farghal and Al-Manna's Contextualizing Translation Theories: Aspects of Arabic-English Inter-lingual Communication*

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With the publication of the seminal contribution by Hatim and Mason *Discourse and the Translator* (Longman 1990), a new era of research in translation studies, including research and pedagogy of translator training, was ushered in. This pioneering work has been complemented by Munday's *Theories of Translation Studies* (2001/2008). Farghal and Al-Manna's most recent work, *Contextualizing Translation Theories: Aspects of Arabic-English Inter-lingual Communication* (2015), builds on those previous advancements in the field of translation studies to highlight the whole range of translation theories which diagnose and analyze persistent translation problems that affect the decision-making policies of today's trainee translators. The current volume offers an agenda for putting theory into practice while raising awareness of the proper techniques and strategies of translation practices and translation classroom pedagogy.

Comprising nine chapters and a conclusion, this book is not just another translation theory manual. Rather, it sets the record straight for an indefinite number of graduate trainee translators, as well as translators in general, by profoundly addressing fundamental and persistent issues of the debate in translation studies. It provides an elaborate systematic approach to the intricate relationship between the translation process and a multiplicity of theoretical variables governing the translator's decisions, offering prudent guidance to trainee translators and practitioners, stimulating reflection on the common objectives of translation practices coupled with a rationale for strategies for dealing with problematic aspects of translation.

It should be stated at the outset that this work does not develop progressively or cumulatively from beginning to end. That is, in order to understand what is expressed in the final chapter it is not necessary to have digested all that has gone before. As the authors explicitly state, "*It is possible for the user to pick out individual chapters for reading or for discussion as each chapter highlights a particular aspect of translation activity*" (cited from notes on the How to use the book by the authors). This functional feature of Farghal and Al-Manna's work makes it extremely practical for the concerned reader who can move directly to any particular area of interest without referring to extraneous issues.

Chapter One, then, opens with a significant contribution by the authors to contextualizing the concepts and practices of translators in past centuries by framing those ideas within modern up-to-date theoretical approaches. Reference to translation practices in the first century (BCE) is contextualized by interpreting/characterizing them in terms of how they can be seen from the

perspective of a modern translation theorist. This is not what most reviews of the historical approaches to translation offer as such reviews fail to draw the link between the concepts from that era and modern translation theory.

The authors highlight the historical traditions and approaches to translation and link them to today's translation theories, revealing a profound understanding of those practices in the early history of translation studies. Highlighting the dichotomy of word-for-word in contrast to sense-for-sense translation methods in the Abbasid period is also significant as it contextualizes the translation practices in that period.

The authors' successful attempt to draw parallels between the ancient dichotomy of word-to-word versus sense-for-sense translation approaches and today's similar dichotomies of modern translation theory attests to the authors' full assimilation of those translation trends from the ancient past. One might wonder at this point why the authors did not complement that display of ideas of ancient translation dichotomies with the notion of the continuum of translation approaches. However, they do address this major concept in subsequent chapters.

The second chapter offers a general framework for the intricate interrelationship between translators' decisions, on the one hand, and the socio-linguistic and socio-cultural parameters which govern that decision-making process. Furthermore, the theoretical approaches to translation and the micro- and macro-level constraints of the linguistic, textual, discoursal, and socio-cultural context are meticulously characterized. In a nutshell, this chapter sums up the whole story of translation as a process and a product, as well as the continuum of translating techniques, procedures and theoretical translation approaches.

Uniquely, this chapter highlights the significant but almost invisible pre-translation phase which tends to be neglected, if not totally forgotten, in most translator training courses. In addition, the authors perceptively point out that *"at the pre-translation stage there is usually a tug of war between several opposing poles: SL norms vs TL norms, TL master discourse vs TL unbiased discourse, ST authority vs target readers' needs, purpose of translation in SL vs purpose of translation in TL, fidelity vs infidelity, and so on" (p.46)*. In fact, thanks to the PACTE Group's efforts (2000/2003/2011) in developing a model of translation competence with the linguistic sub-competence as a pre-translating phase of the over-arching translation competence.

The next chapter is a self-contained entity, as it characterizes all those linguistic features which cause the mismatch between the SLT and TLT. A prescription is presented for trainee translators, particularly undergraduate students, which should always be adhered to throughout all the stages of the translator's work. The prescription is as follows: languages do not necessarily correspond with one   another at the lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and discoursal levels. This chapter is pedagogically informative to all translation studies students and very well positioned within the array of issues and concepts which are sequentially arranged in the chapters that follow it.

Here, however, there is a need to highlight the challenges of translating the redundant and verbose expressions of Arabic and the translators' decisions as to

what to delete and what to adapt. On the other hand, this type of written Arabic also omits much information about inherent ideas and ellipses that is necessary for the translator/reader to grasp prior to translating it. At this point I think the authors could have elaborated on the mind-boggling text processing of such "choppy" sentences to accurately render the intended jumbled messages. Admittedly they do so to a limited extent, but not to the degree that graduate/undergraduate trainee translators and practitioners become sufficiently informed of this salient feature of written Arabic discourse.

A significant aspect of Chapter Four is the issue of semantic relations across the paragraph which constitute the thematic progression of texts. One of the most challenging aspects of text analysis is the issue of how to figure out the implicit web of semantic relations which underlie the surface sentential and textual material of the source text. The tendency among translator trainees and practitioners is to dwell on isolated individual lexical items or, at best, to dwell on individual sentences as if they were independent entities. It is gratifying to note that the authors have highlighted this major textual feature of text design. Obviously, the authors are fully aware of the pressing need of trainee translators and practitioners for training in the analysis of source text thematic progression as a pre-translation phase. Their awareness of the translators' need to infer the implicit informational content, as well as the implicit pragmatic intentions, by observing the explicit content is one of the impressive merits of this chapter.

Chapter Five focuses on the significant role of mediation between two cultures above and beyond mediation between two linguistic systems. The authors' call for striking a balance between foreignization and domestication is an important pedagogical insight. Contextualization of the bi-polar strategies of foreignization and domestication is substantiated by the rigorous analysis of samples of excerpts whose translation requires foreignization and domestication (pp. 98-99). However, I think that the consideration of insider versus outsider, or foreignization versus domestication, can be fully appreciated if dealt with by both pragmatic and semiotic dimensions of texts.

Chapter Six offers a detailed discussion of the role of pragmatic knowledge in translating. The authors have contextualized the pragmatic theoretical concepts by applying them in their analyses of the selected data. This chapter establishes the distinction between **what is said** and **what is meant**. All translation activity is based on the pragmatic meanings and the appropriate strategies to deal with them, an approach that echoes Mona Baker's (1992) chapter on pragmatics in translation. The information presented here focuses on the theory of speech acts, meaning in context, implicatures, etc. This is another act of orienting the readers to the linguistic bases of translator training and translation practice.

I should point out that some translation teachers/trainers tend to limit the analyses of their students' products to superficial contrastive analysis at the lexical level and concentrate on individual isolated sentences with no reference whatsoever to pragmatic intentions, implicatures, text act, and speech act, etc. Hatim and Mason (1990) warned against this seemingly dominant practice in

some translator training classrooms. Thus, Farghal and Al-Manna (2015) have done justice to an issue of significant magnitude in translator training and translation practice.

Chapter Seven elaborates on the semiotic dimension of texts and its application to translation while Chapter Eight deals with stylistic features in translation. Here it is important to note that the content of both chapters and their main concepts are interrelated to the extent that they could have been merged. However, the extensive treatment of the semiotic dimension and raising students' awareness of the significant role of semiotics deserves a separate chapter. The extensive treatment of the term "style" at the beginning of Chapter Eight seems to be somewhat superfluous as the authors themselves conclude at the end of the discussion. However, the chapter ends with very convincing and reliable options for the translator who is performing the task of reflecting on the semiotic properties of the ST sign alongside their elements. The authors offer five options based on the semiotic properties that identify the semiotic sign (p. 137).

Chapter Nine is about language variations which are either user-related varieties or use-related varieties, that is, register. I think that registeral analysis should come after the pragmatic chapter as the tenor of the register is a crucial component of the register and of the pragmatic interpersonal dimension. The translation of register, speech acts and pragmatic implicatures are interrelated. That is why it should not be left till the end of the book.

Three main characteristics of this work make it a unique contribution for teachers, trainee translators, and practitioners. The three characteristics are:

- A thorough and clear exposition of all major linguistic concepts and models that are practically and efficiently utilized to diagnose and interpret an infinite number of prominent translation cases which are typically elusive for trainee translators and practitioners.

- An explanation/interpretation of the dynamics of translators' work based on the interrelationship between the theoretical model and its constituent components and the selected data which illustrate the intricate nature of the interaction between theory and practice.

- A solid pedagogical orientation and implementation for teachers, translators, and practitioners.

In a nutshell, this book is a "road map" for teachers of translation. It is an indispensable course book for graduate students, teachers, practitioners, and translation researchers.

Endnote
***Farghal, Mohammed and Ali Al-Manna.** (2015). *Contextualizing Translation Theories: Aspects of Arabic-English Inter-lingual Communication*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Paperback: 9781474401463; eBook (PDF): 9781474401470