

Lecture Notes: 01

**MA SEMESTER IV
TRANSLATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE
UNIT I**

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TRANSLATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

The Concept of Translation

Etymologically, the term 'translation' is derived from the Latin 'trans/latio' = 'across' 'carrying', that is, carrying across meaning from one language to another. Translation is a communicative activity that involves the transfer of information across linguistic boundaries. It is an act through which the content of a text is carried from the source language into the target language. The language to be translated is called the source language(SL), whereas the language to be translated into is called the target language(TL). The translator should have good knowledge of both the SL and TL besides a high linguistic sensitivity in order to transmit the writer's intention, original thoughts and opinions in the TL as precisely and faithfully as possible.

According to Catford (1995), translation is the replacement of textual material in one language(SL) by equivalent textual material in another language(TL)(20). Susan Bassnett(2002) states that translation involves transfer of "meaning" contained in one set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary and grammar; the process involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria also. (21) Also, translation is a product as it provides us with different cultures and civilizations through the translated texts.

Since the last thirty years, the status of translation and the role of translators have become significant. Translation is no longer seen as a 'derivative' act or merely a transfer of content from one language to another but a complex task. Following the cultural turn in Translation Studies in the 1990s, prompted by the work of scholars such as Lefevere and Bassnett,¹ the focus of the discipline has moved from linguistic transposition to cultural transference. Until then, translation was categorized as a sub-discipline of Applied Linguistics, whereas literary translations were considered a marginal issue in the area of Comparative Literature.

¹ *Constructing Cultures: Essay on Literary Translation*, Multilingual Matters, 1998.

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Types of Translation

In his essay “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” Roman Jakobson distinguishes three types of translation: "1) Intralingual translation or *rewording* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language. 2) Interlingual translation or *translation proper* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language. 3) Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems" (261). According to the Jakobsonian taxonomy, one who translates "legal language" into common parlance would be performing an intralingual translation, while one who offers a commentary on an obscure artwork would be engaged in an intersemiotic translation. Neither of the two can be said to be a translator. Only the one who translates a text from one language to another is engaged into actual translation.

Susan Bassnett (2005) observes that the central problem in all types is that while messages may serve as “adequate interpretations of code units or messages”, there is ordinarily no full equivalence through translation. Further,

Even apparent synonymy does not yield equivalence, and Jakobson shows how intralingual translation often has to resort to a combination of code units in order to fully interpret the meaning of a single unit. Hence a dictionary of so-called synonyms may give perfect as a synonym for ideal or vehicle as a synonym for conveyance but in neither case can there be said to be complete equivalence, since each unit contains within itself a set of non-transferable associations and connotations. (23)

Translation has a long history in multilingual India and is a means of communication between speakers of different languages. G. N. Devy calls the Indian consciousness a “translating consciousness” (*In Another Tongue*:135). The term ‘translation’ is often used synonymously and interchangeably with the following terms in various Indian languages- each having finer shades of difference with another. These are:

1.	'Anuvaad'	Sanskrit	Speak after
2.	'Bhashantar'	Sanskrit	Linguistic transference
3.	'Vivartanam'	Sanskrit	Change/ one specific appearance of a phenomenon
4.	'Tarzuma'	Arabic	Reproduction/ explication/paraphrase
5.	Mozhi paharappu	Tamil	?
6.	'Mozhimattam'	Tamil	Change of script/ tongue
7.	'Paribhasha'	Sanskrit	Interpretation
8.	Teeka	Hindi	Commentary
9.	'Rupantar'	Bengali	Change of form

At the first International Literature Festival held at Neemrana in 2002, at a session titled "Many languages, one literature", U R Ananthmurthy said: "I cannot live in only one language. I live in English, I live in Kannada, I live in Sanskrit, I live in so many translations..." He referred to a Kannada/Sanskrit word 'anusandhan' which means annexation, and to continuous and joyous 'anusandhan' in play between Indian languages, the play of adjust and accommodate with each other. Gujarati poet Sitanshu Yahashchandra: uses the word 'Setu bandhan'(building of bridges) to describe the translation process.

Translation Studies: Theory and Practice

Translation Studies has evolved in the past decades. It has become an autonomous discipline requiring independent study and research, rather than being studied as an adjunct to Linguistics or Comparative Literature. A course in Translation Studies explores the history of translation across languages and cultures, varieties of translation, methodologies and strategies, literary translation, and engages with culture, gender, marginality, ideology and power.

Translation Studies emerged as an outgrowth of the Creative Writing Workshop held in the US universities though translation did not become a part of the program until the late 1960s. Edwin Gentzler states that by 1970s and 1980s things begin to change. In his book, *Contemporary Translation Theories* (1993), he traced the beginnings of the discipline as it emerged in the West in a parallel fashion in several regions:

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In the United States, a more literary approach as an outgrowth of the Creative Writing Workshop; in Germany out of more linguistic and scientific disciplines; in Russia and Eastern Europe, translation studies emerged out of Russian Formalism; in Belgium and Holland out comparative literary and historical studies; in Israel out of cultural and systems theory; and in France out of literary stylistics, and later influenced by poststructural and semiotic paradigms. In 1970 in Slovakia, Anton Popovič published *The Nature of Translation*, the proceedings from a 1968 conference in Bratislava. In 1972 in Holland, James Holmes, an American, published his “Name and Nature of Translation Studies”, which many consider the founding document of the discipline...

Holmes advocated it as a science dividing it into ‘pure’ translation studies (encompassing descriptive studies of existing translations and general and partial translation theories) and ‘applied’ studies (covering translator training, translator aids and translation criticism among others).

Following the lead set by Holmes, Andre Lefevere in 1978 proposed that the name 'Translation Studies' should be adopted for the discipline that concerns itself with 'the problems raised by the production and description of translation' (Lefevere, 1978: 234). By 1980s and 90s Translation Studies became recognized as a discipline in its own right. With this recognition came various forms of institutionalization such books, journals and associations, international conferences in large numbers and graduate programmes in Translation Studies.



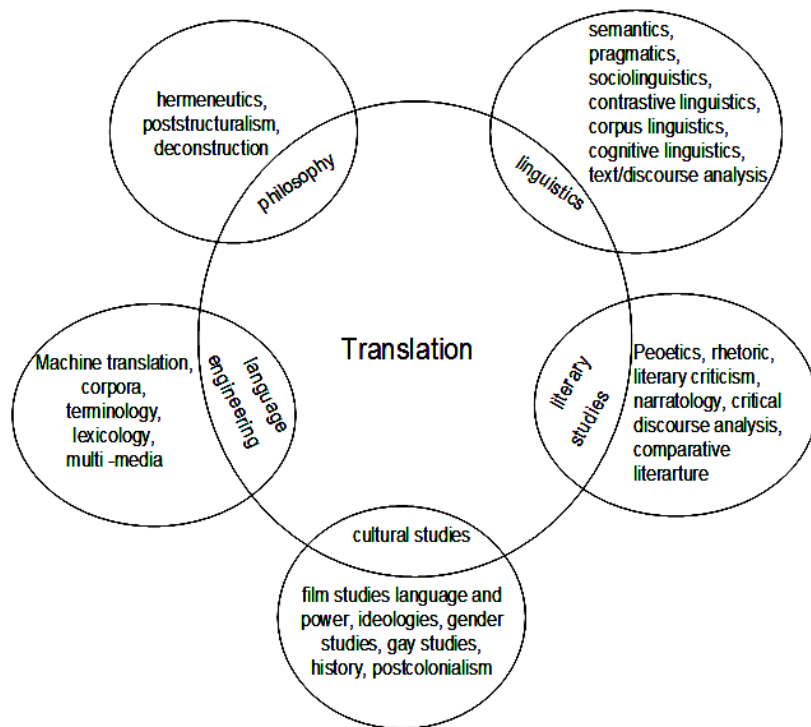
Listen to Jeremy Munday, 'An Introduction to Translation Studies' in this short YouTube video (4:30 mins) [here](#).

Translation Studies and Other Disciplines

Holmes’s paper ‘*Translation Studies*’ evolved to such an extent that translation was clearly seen as an inter-disciplinary field. In the 1970s, and particularly during the 1980s, translation scholars began to draw heavily on theoretical frameworks and methodologies borrowed from other disciplines. In 1988, Mary Snell-Hornby published *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach* or later an anthology *Translation Studies: An Interdiscipline* (1994) combined literary, linguistic and cultural studies approaches, allowing for different types of approaches

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depending upon the nature of the text to be translated. By 1995, Mary Snell-Hornby in her book *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation* talked about the richness of an “exciting new discipline, perhaps the discipline of the 1990s, bringing together scholars from a wide variety of often more traditional areas. The first move toward interdisciplinarity in translation occurred within the field during the early 1990s after two decades of tug of war between linguistics and literary studies. Translation Studies began to borrow from disciplines such as linguistics, cultural studies, philosophy, historical studies, literary studies, anthropology, psychology, cognitive science, and sociology and others (Munday 2009). It has also borrowed from various social theories (or schools of thought) such as feminist theory, critical theory, deconstructionism, postcolonial theory and social constructionism. Translation Studies has evolved to such an extent that it is “a perfect interdiscipline”(Basil & Munday 8) interfacing with a host of other disciplines. The following diagram displays the breadth of its contacts:



(Source: Hatim & Munday 2004:8)

Map of Disciplines Interfacing with Translation Studies

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‘Multidisciplinarity’ (or ‘pluridisciplinarity’) means the co-existence of disciplines which share an object of interest and investigate it from their disciplinary perspectives without integrating their insights into a common framework. With regard to translation, this co-existence of disciplines interested in the object of translation was what prevailed until the 1980s. In 2008, the 2nd edition of the *Routledge Encyclopedia* shows how far the discipline has evolved. It comments on ‘new concerns in the discipline, its growing multidisciplinarity, and its commitment break away from its exclusively Eurocentric origins, while holding on to the achievements of the past decades’ (Baker and Saldanha xxii).

Instructions:

1. Please read ‘Introduction’ (pages 12-21) from Susan Bassnett’s *Translation Studies*, (3rd edition) To find the book, click the link given below:
[http://www.translationindustry.ir/Uploads/Pdf/Translation_Studies_3rd_Ed_-_Bassnett,_Susan_\(Routledge\).pdf](http://www.translationindustry.ir/Uploads/Pdf/Translation_Studies_3rd_Ed_-_Bassnett,_Susan_(Routledge).pdf)
2. For more details on ‘Types of Translation’ (pages 23-24) click on the above-mentioned link.

Suggested Reading:

Baker, Mona. *In Other Words. A Coursebook on Translation*. Routledge, 1992.

Baker, Mona and Saldanha, Gabriela (ed.). *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies*. 2nd ed. Routledge, 2011.

Bassnett, Susan. *Translation Studies*. 3rd ed. Taylor & Francis, 2005.

[http://www.translationindustry.ir/Uploads/Pdf/Translation_Studies_3rd_Ed_-_Bassnett,_Susan_\(Routledge\).pdf](http://www.translationindustry.ir/Uploads/Pdf/Translation_Studies_3rd_Ed_-_Bassnett,_Susan_(Routledge).pdf)

Catford, J.C. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*. Oxford University Press, 1995.

Hatim and Munday. *Translation: An Advanced Resource Book*. Psychology Press, 2004.

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Holmes, James. "Name and Nature of Translation Studies.

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=James+Holmes,+%E2%80%9CThe+Name+and+Nature+of+Translation+Studies.&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

Munday, Jeremy. *Introducing Translation Studies*. 3rd ed. Routledge, 2012.

Nida, E. and Taber, C. *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. Brill, 1969.

Venuti, Lawrence, (ed.). *The Translation Studies Reader*. Routledge, 2000.