

**A TEXT-LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO TEACHING  
TRANSLATION AND THE IMPACT ON IRANIAN STUDENTS**

**By**

**MOHAMMAD ALI FALAHATI**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Symbol	Description
R	The median of the scores of the three raters
R1	The scores of rater No.1
R2	The scores of rater No.2
R3	The scores of rater No.3
CP	Communicative dimension, pretest
PP	Pragmatic dimension, pretest
SP	Semiotic dimension, pretest
TP	Structure & Texture, pretest
CPA	Communicative dimension, pretest, group A
PPA	Pragmatic dimension, pretest, group A
SPA	Semiotic dimension, pretest, group A
TPA	Structure & Texture, pretest, group A
CPB	Communicative dimension, pretest, group B
PPB	Pragmatic dimension, pretest, group B
SPB	Semiotic dimension, pretest, group B
TPB	Structure & Texture, pretest, group B
CMA	Communicative dimension, mid-test, group A
PMA	Pragmatic dimension, mid- test, group A
SMA	Semiotic dimension, mid- test, group A
TMA	Structure & Texture, mid- test, group A
CMB	Communicative dimension, mid-test, group B
PMB	Pragmatic dimension, mid-test, group B
SMB	Semiotic dimension, mid-test, group B
TMB	Structure & Texture, mid- test, group B
COA	Communicative dimension, post-test, group A
POA	Pragmatic dimension, post-test, group A
SOA	Semiotic dimension, post-test, group A
TOA	Structure & Texture, post-test, group A

COB	Communicative dimension, post- test, group B
POB	Pragmatic dimension, post-test, group B
SOB	Semiotic dimension, post-test, group B
TOB	Structure & Texture, post-test, group B
P'A	Pretest , group A
P'B	Pretest, group B
MA	Mid-test, group A
MB	Mid-test , group B
OA	Post-test , group A
OB	Post-test , group B

## LIST OF CONVENTIONAL SOUND SYMBOLS

Sound Symbol	Phonetic Features
P	bilabial, stop, voiceless
b	bilabial, stop, voiced
t	dental, stop , voiceless
d	dental , stop , voiced
k	palatal , stop , voiceless
g	palatal , stop , voiced
gh	uvular , stop , voiced
ʔ	glottal , stop , voiceless
m	bilabial , nasal , stop , voiced
n	alveolar , nasal , stop , voiced
ch	alveo-palatal, affricate , voiceless
j	alveo-palatal , affricate , voiced
s	alveolar , fricative , voiceless
z	alveolar , fricative , voiced
f	labiodental , fricative , voiceless
v	labiodental , fricative , voiced
kh	uvular , fricative , voiceless
h	glottal , fricative , voiceless
sh	alveo-palatal , fricative , voiceless
zh	alveo-palatal, fricative , voiced
L	alveolar , lateral , voiced
r	alveolar, trill,voiced
y	palatal , glide , voiced
i	front vowel , close , spread , long
e	front vowel , mid , half spread short
a	front vowel , open , open spread , short
u	back vowel, close , rounded, long
o	back vowel, mid, half rounded , short
ä	back vowel, open, open rounded, long

## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini melihat bagaimana kursus teks-linguistik mempengaruhi pelajar-pelajar universiti di Iran. Para pelajar ini telah dibahagikan kepada dua kumpulan dan kajian telah dibuat dalam satu semester bagi melihat kesan model teks-linguistik yang diguna pakai sebagai 'rawatan' dalam penterjemahan teks yang mereka lakukan. Salah satu kumpulan yang menerima rawatan ini sepanjang pertengahan pertama semester, manakala kumpulan kedua menerima pembelajaran yang mendedahkan mereka kepada jenis pengajaran yang biasa diguna pakai di universiti-universiti di Iran. Pembelajaran tradisional ini dinamakan Struktur dan Tekstur dalam kajian ini. Seterusnya, kumpulan kedua menerima 'rawatan' semasa kumpulan satu menerima pembelajaran dari kursus Struktur dan Tekstur. Dengan ini, setiap kumpulan bertindak sebagai kumpulan kawalan kepada kumpulan lawan secara bergilir. Pra-ujian telah diadakan pada awal kajian, dan ujian pertengahan diadakan pada pertengahan semester sebelum pertukaran kursus dilakukan. Seterusnya, ujian akhir mengakhiri proses pengumpulan data.

Terjemahan yang diterima di kaji dengan meneliti tiga aspek oleh tiga orang penilai bebas. Melalui kajian data ini kesimpulan dapat dibuat iaitu pengetahuan tentang teks-linguistik yang diaplikasikan dalam bentuk analisis teks memberi manfaat kepada pelajar dan ia merupakan faktor yang mempengaruhi keputusan yang dibuat dalam penterjemahan. Kaedah tradisional dapat memperbaiki pertimbangan aspek struktur dan tekstur dalam terjemahan pada tahap yang tertentu sahaja, tetapi ia didapati tidak berkesan dalam mengajar pelajar tentang hal-hal lain yang perlu dipertimbangkan seperti laras bahasa, pragmatik, semiotik dan sebagainya.

## **ABSTRACT**

The present study investigates the influence of a text-linguistic course on some Iranian university students. Two groups of subjects were examined during a semester to find out how the text-linguistic model employed as a treatment affect their performance in translating texts. One of the groups received the treatment during the first half of the semester while the second group was learning the more traditional material common in Iranian universities, as called the Structure and Texture in this study. Conversely, the second group received the treatment when the other one was doing the Structure and Texture Course. So each group acted as a control group for the other one alternately. There was a pre-test at the very beginning of the study, and a mid-test in the middle of the semester just before interchanging the two courses. Finally, a post-test ended the process of data elicitation.

The translations were assessed from different angles by three independent raters. Analyzing the data led to the conclusion that knowledge of text-linguistics applied in the form of text analysis is beneficial to the students and is, in fact, a determining factor for their translation decisions. The traditional method improved the structural and textual considerations of the translations to some extent, but was proved ineffective in teaching them other influential considerations such as register, pragmatics, semiotics, etc.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The origin of the present dissertation is rooted in the desire to study the feasibility of improving the way Iranian translator training students render texts. The researcher as a lecturer has noticed the poor quality of the students' work mainly due to literal translation. The quality of their work shows that they lack the criteria by which to make plausible decisions. As yet no systematic text analysis has been incorporated in the program to help them analyze a text. However, it seems that an organized approach to text analysis is essential to provide them with some criteria to effectively analyze a text before producing the target text.

To justify the need for an objective study of text analysis and its effects on students we present background considerations and familiarize the reader with the current status of the pedagogy of translation in general (see 1.2) and its status in Iran (see 1.3). These considerations pave the way for presenting the statement of the problem. After stating the problem, we continue with the rationale and significance of the study, the objectives, research questions, limitations of the study, and organization of the study.

#### **1.2 Background to the Current Status of the Pedagogy of Translation**

Translation scholars have recently paid their attention to pedagogical issues and have started to research them scientifically. Many scholars, Newmark (1991), Kiraly (1995), Kussmaul (1995), Hatim (2001), and Colina (2003) among them, believe that

the pedagogy of translation is still new, and demands more attention. One of the reasons for the inattention, according to Kiraly (1995), is that the number of learners in the area of translator training compared to other fields like second and foreign language teaching is very small. Therefore, the field has not attracted enough attention and does not have a considerable body of literature like the other two fields.

Colina (2003) states that the pedagogical gap is particularly true in the United States where the field of translation studies does not have an academic status like many other disciplines. The situation worsens where as Kiraly (1995) puts it, the translation instructors are selected from the foreign language departments. The majority of these instructors have experienced translation as a language exercise in foreign language courses. They usually lack the necessary knowledge and skills for teaching translation and sometimes they themselves do not realize this problem and try to teach translation as they were taught. They often choose texts independently and ask their students to translate them, and their only common pedagogical principle is that at the end of the course, the students should translate better. The students are provided with some fragmentary hints but they themselves are derived from the instructors' experience in translation rather than objective studies. In such a situation, the translation classroom is assumed as a place where translation knowledge is transferred from the teacher to the students, and where they can control their translations and deviation from the ideal versions that the instructor suggests with the expectation that they will not commit the same mistakes in the future!

The following three reports on traditional classes are quoted in Kiraly (1995: 7-9). The first is House's (1980: 7-8) description of such a typical class:

“The teacher of the course, a native speaker of the target language, passed out a text (the reason for the selection of this text is usually not explained, because it is often a literary essay that the teacher has just “found” by accident). This text is full of traps, which means that the teachers do not set out to train students in the complex and difficult art of translation, but to ensnare them and lead them into error. The text is

then prepared, either orally or in written form, for the following sessions and then the whole group goes through the text sentence by sentence, with each sentence being read by a different student. The instructor asks for alternative translation solutions, corrects the suggested versions and finally presents the sentence in its final, "correct" form ... This procedure is naturally very frustrating for the students ..."

The other report on such traditional classes and the way professors taught translation is from Enns-Conolly's (1986: 2-3) own experience:

"These classes involved professors asking students for their renditions of particular sentences, and then pointing out the divergences from their own master copies. This was a rather frustrating experience inasmuch as my translation could be classified as inadequate on the grounds that it did not match the definitive criteria for rightness and wrongness, and my task as student was to approach rightness as much as possible. Under those circumstances it was difficult for any student whose translation differed from the master version to gain confidence in their own work. When I volunteered a rendition that the teacher believed to be inaccurate, I hesitated to enter further discussion afterwards. In the fact of a right or wrong ruling on my work, my openness towards class discussion was thwarted. My underlying reasoning in translating was not considered, only my visible translation and how well it met the norm set by the teacher."

Rohl (1983: 6-7) describes her own experience of such typical passive classes as:

"... first, I sat silently in a translation practice class, listening to translation suggestions and sometimes marking corrections in my text; then I listened silently to a lecture read aloud by an instructor; then, in a seminar, I listened silently to a paper read aloud by a student. This was followed by a silent attempt in the cafeteria over a cup of coffee to pour fresh energy into myself in preparation for my afternoon classes. Then came my afternoon classes where I was also silent except in one class for final-seminar students where there were only three participants. ...This summary of my day's activities may be a bit exaggerated, but my guess is that it is not atypical of the daily routine of student translators."

Here, the principles and methods of translation teaching have their bases mainly in the instructors' experience rather than objective and verifiable data derived from the real settings of the classroom. Barcsák (1995) points out that the majority of students recognize the need for and the significance of translation theory. Kiraly (1995) argues that some instructors who are professional translators as well can provide their students with some hints and tips based on introspection on their own experience, but it is necessary to base our translation decisions on justifiable facts derived from different disciplines such as text linguistics, sociolinguistics, etc. and

not merely personal experience. Schäffner (2002: 6) points out “in the context of university training, it may be pedagogically useful to focus initially more on the text analysis and bring in the translation focus in a second step”. She goes on to say that “students often (want to) begin translating right away”. House (1997) states that a theory of translation should necessarily underlie any pedagogic training.

Colina (2003) believes that it is necessary to bring research closer to the classroom in an attempt to base translator training programs on an objective foundation. She goes on to say that translation pedagogy must be dependent on objective research to become a true scholarly discipline. If we want to determine the practicality and relevance of teaching methods that we use in our classrooms, we should carry out research on them. What our students need is a systematic body of knowledge derived from scientific research on translation to guide them to make justifiable decisions when confronted with similar problems in the future. Adab (2002) argues that it seems indisputable to benefit from discourse analysis. It can sensitize our students to language as a communicative means and make them be more careful in using language in their translations. Nord (1997:2-3) asserts:

“... future professional translators must be trained not only to produce ‘good’ (that is, functional) translations satisfying their customers’ need, but also to find good arguments to defend their products against unjustified criticism from clients and users”.

Kussmaul (1995) states that there are people, even among professional translators and teachers of translation, who wrongly believe that some knowledge of linguistics and translation theory is not helpful to the translators at all. Similarly, Newmark (1991: 137) asserts: “teaching such a necessary but tricky subject as translation which is at once a skill, a science, an art and an area of taste has to be discussed, particularly when there are veteran professionals who think it cannot be taught or learned ...”.

Here, Newmark's view indicates that translation is not a mere field of art or taste, but a field in which one can find teachable rules as well. For example, while translating a single sentence into a particular language we do not simply follow our own taste; there exist some conscious and unconscious rules in our minds based on which we initially decide which of the translations suggested to our minds are *acceptable*. Then, after recognizing the acceptable ones, we manipulate our taste to do the final selection. Note that these rules are claimed to be teachable and theories of translation are generally different attempts at formulating scientific rules in the form of models.

Shreve (1997: 121) states, "There is general agreement in the literature that translation ability is not an innate human skill, but there is considerable disagreement about the nature and distribution of translation ability." Similarly, an Iranian scholar – Yarmohammadi – (1989:26) believes that the ability to translate is composed of three factors: skill, creativity, and theoretical knowledge. Skill is obtained through practice, and creativity is related to the ability of the translator to decide which of the various options that come to his mind should be chosen. Creativity is strictly under the influence of practice and theoretical knowledge. He believes that by teaching theoretical knowledge we can enhance creativity. He illustrates the point with the fact that the drop of an apple provoked Newton's creative gift to discover the law of gravity because he was already familiar with the theoretical knowledge of physics. Likewise, Einstein's knowledge of physics and mathematics led his creative talent to the principle of relativity. He concludes that if we expect our students to benefit from their creative gift, initially, we have to teach them the theoretical knowledge.

Colina (2003) states that a few talented people might become self-taught translators; however, the majority would benefit from the systematic instruction.

According to Kussmaul (1995) one may think that the ability to translate is an intuitive process and related to creative gift, but he goes on to say that it is possible to create an atmosphere to develop intuition. When we want to decide which of the options should be chosen, intuition should be counterbalanced by reflection.

Kiraly (1995) believes that before we train translation students, we should ask ourselves two questions: first, what skills or knowledge do professional translators have that our students lack? Second, how can we as translation instructors create an appropriate environment to foster the acquisition of those skills and knowledge? Similarly, Wilss (1996) (as quoted in Fraser, 2000: 51) states: "...what is needed is an emphasis on real, profession-oriented translation, mainly in the form of classroom teaching". Kiraly (1995) points out that some isolated initiatives in the translation studies community suggest the idea of providing students with tools for text analysis to deal with pedagogical issues. Through such text-based teaching approaches, the teacher provides the class with tools necessary for analyzing the text and consequently producing a translation based on that analysis which takes into account textual and situational variables. Nord (1997:62) believes that it is not crucial which text-linguistic model is used, then she adds:

"What is important, though, is that they [models] include a pragmatic analysis of the communicative situations involved and that the same model be used for both the source text and the translation brief, thus making the results comparable".

Colina (2003) asserts that the main reasons for analyzing the source text are: first, to identify the features or markers of text type and genre and their counterparts in the target text and to determine how they mark the same text type, and second, to determine whether the translation task is practical for a particular situational context or whether it is necessary to discuss the purpose and situational features with the commissioner of the translation task for revision. Finally, to decide, which aspects

should be changed, whether the function of the target text should be changed or not, and what strategies have to be used to achieve the translation goal. Larson (1984: 481) states: “a good translation is based on good analysis. If the analysis was well done, and the meaning is clear, the translator will not find it difficult to express the meaning in the receptor language”.

### **1.3 Background to the Status of the Pedagogy of Translation in Iran**

Since the present study is limited to Iran, first, we need to deal with the academic profile of the students and then with the English translator training curriculum to provide the reader with some background information about the participants of the study. Finally, we deal with the pedagogy of translation in Iran.

#### **1.3.1 School Education System in Iran**

The school education system of Iran is divided into five levels namely, preschool, primary, middle, secondary and pre-university education. The following description of these levels is mainly based on the on-line information provided by the Higher Education Advisory of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Canada.

The preschool education level is a one-year course for children at the age of six. The main purpose of this course is to prepare them for entering the primary school. At this stage the children do not need to sit for any exam and are promoted automatically to the primary level.

The primary education level starts at the age of seven and lasts five years. The students study different subjects at this obligatory stage including science, mathematics, literacy skills, religious instructions, etc. There are five grades in this level and at the end of each academic year the students take exams and by passing them successfully are promoted to the next grade.

The middle level continues with grades six to eight. The main purpose of this phase is to recognize the aptitudes and interests of the students in order to guide them to the appropriate branches of study in the next level. The main characteristic of this level is the start of English language teaching program at the first grade which continues to the pre-university level at the average rate of four hours a week.

The secondary stage is the next level in the school education system. It is divided into two main categories: academic/general and technical/vocational branches. According to the plan approved in 1990 the secondary education has been reduced from four to three years. The students should pass ninety six credits in order to be awarded the High School Diploma.

If they want to take the University Entrance Examination for admission to universities, they should complete a further one-year program known as pre-university course. The competitive University Entrance Examination is a yearly exam given simultaneously throughout the country by an organization named Evaluation and Education Organization of Iran. The students are admitted for their chosen courses of study and universities based on their performances in the examination.

### **1.3.2 English Translator Training Curriculum at Iranian Universities**

The English translator training program is an eight-semester course designed for a BA. During the first stages of the course, the students study the basic level of English including reading comprehension, grammar and writing, essay writing, English language laboratory, etc. Then other subjects related to linguistics, English literature, translation and interpreting are introduced.

The *Committee of Educational Revolution* is responsible for determining the university curricula and syllabuses in the country. The specialized translation and



interpreting courses which are on the curriculum at Iranian universities are the following two-credit courses (Razmjou, 2001):

Translation Techniques, Translating Simple Texts, Translating Journalistic Texts (I), Translating Journalistic Texts (II), Translating Political Texts, Translating Economic Texts, Translating Documentation & Official Writing (I), Translating Documentation & Official Writing (II), Translating Audio & Video Tapes, Persian Writing, Persian Language Structure, Modern Persian Literature, Translating Literary Texts, Interpreting (I), Interpreting (II), Interpreting (III), Advanced Translation (I), Advanced Translation (II), Individual Translation (I), Individual Translation (II), A Survey of Islamic Translated Texts (I), A Survey of Islamic Translated Texts (II), Contrastive Linguistics, Theories & Principles of Translation, English Morphology.

### **1.3.3 The Pedagogy of Translation in Iran**

The status of the pedagogy of translation in Iran is not satisfactory and there exist some shortcomings. In his Persian article, Yarmohammadi (1991) mentions the problems and suggests some solutions. The main shortcomings according to him are as follows:

Some of the students do not acquire a good knowledge of English; therefore, sometimes a considerable amount of time during a translation class is devoted to explaining the terms, grammatical points, etc.

The students do not acquire Persian writing skill to an acceptable standard prior to starting translation learning.

It is necessary for the lecturers to possess a good knowledge of the source and target languages, to be competent in theories and principles of translation, and to have experience and talents in translating. Unfortunately, a lecturer hardly possesses these qualities all together.

There do not exist suitable textbooks illustrated with Persian examples; therefore, each individual lecturer tries to collect his/her own favorite material for teaching translation and applies his/her own method of teaching. The books chosen are mostly unsuitable or even irrelevant. This has caused a state of disorder in the discipline of translator training in the country.

The objectives of courses determined by the Committee of Educational Revolution are stated in general terms, i.e. the syllabuses lack detailed behavioral objectives. He illustrates the point with quoting the objectives and syllabuses of Advanced Translation I & II as follows:

“Objectives: To develop the students’ knowledge of the details of different kinds of translation and the difficulties of developing more practical skill in translating. Syllabuses: Examining and criticizing samples of translated texts from English into Persian and vice versa. Translating suitable and fairly easy texts selected from fields such as behavioral sciences, Islamic ideology, Iranian culture, etc.” (my translation) (1991:188).

He argues that in such a circumstance, lecturers interpret such general objectives and syllabuses differently and adopt their personal methods of teaching and testing.

Yarmohammadi (1991) has made some suggestions about how to tackle the problems; among them are applying English and Persian proficiency tests before the students take specialized translation and interpreting courses, providing suitable textbooks with Persian examples, presenting workshops, etc. He, as an applied linguist, states: “perhaps due to my academic background, I believe that if we resort to modern linguistics in the form of discourse analysis, we can solve most of problems in translating” (my translation) (1991:186).

Similarly, according to Razmjou (2001) the majority of Iranian translation lecturers and professors who participated in her study believe that one of the shortcomings of the present undergraduate curriculum for English translator training at Iranian universities is the lack of some fundamental courses like text analysis.

They have suggested familiarizing the students with pragmatics and communicative functions of utterances too.

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

As mentioned earlier, the status of the pedagogy of translation in Iran is not satisfactory. Scholars like Yarmohammadi (1991) and those participated in Razmjou's (2001) study have criticized it. The main cause of such dissatisfaction seems to stem from the lack of a systematic way of looking at the students' problems with translation. Problems are being discussed in class after the learners had already taken wrong decisions and used inadequate strategies. Nothing has been done to help foresee problems or prepare a set of strategies in advance in order to overcome the problems. Yarmohammadi (1991) has proposed resorting to modern linguistics in the form of text analysis to solve the main problems of the pedagogy of translation. Furthermore, according to Razmjou (2001), the thirty translation lecturers who participated in her study suggested introducing text analysis as a new course to the translator training curriculum to improve the status of the pedagogy of translation in the country.

However, the problem is that we have no empirical data to support such claims. Whatever methods we propose or follow are subjective and without a scientific basis unless we carry out objective studies to ensure that the steps are in the right direction. Integrating a new course to the curriculum, especially in a country where the curriculum is identical in all universities needs taking reasonable precautions to avoid undesirable results. Maybe after careful studies, the idea turns out to be an inconclusive one which would not improve the status of the pedagogy of translation in the country.

Still another problem is that the students lack the criteria by which to assess and defend their translation-decisions. It is not a plausible explanation as Kussmaul (1995) puts it, to argue that I prefer this translation because I feel it is better. Anderson (1983) (as cited in Presas, 2000: 29) states that learning is not just the acquisition of rules and data (declarative knowledge), but in addition, the ability to apply these rules and data to the resolution of problems (operative knowledge). Based on this statement, we conclude that our translation students lack criteria to serve as tools for enhancing their operative knowledge, namely, solving translation problems and defending their decisions. The findings of case studies suggest that repeated translation practice in the class might not provide the students with the required knowledge to produce high-quality translations, i.e. operative knowledge (Kiraly, 1995).

Furthermore, the students generally follow the source text structure in search of equivalence. The researcher as a lecturer has noticed the various misconceptions students have about translation perhaps due to their previous experience of grammar-translation method at school. For example, they have their own ideas about what translation units are: the notions range from the sentence level to the word level. They rarely think in terms of the totality of a text to be translated, i.e. the different elements of their translations do not match well and there are so many gaps in the information rendered that the reader may not readily understand it. They appreciate translation as a transfer of syntactic structures and words without any further considerations. This is where the lack of a theory or a model is felt. As we discuss later in a section named theoretical framework, the model we are going to apply has a semiotic dimension and aims at high-level translation units, that is, treating a text as a sign.

## **1.5 Rationale and Significance of the Study**

The significance of the present study can be viewed from three perspectives: Firstly, the findings of the present study can contribute to designing courses and teaching materials for translator training programs. Translation instructors, program administrators and others interested in the area of the pedagogy of translation can benefit from the findings. For instance, if the findings necessitate teaching text analysis for training translators, administrators can take steps to plan such a course for students of translation at universities. Thus, instead of letting them analyze a text and determine translation units in their own way, they would be encouraged to apply a more systematic approach to text analysis. Schäffner and Adab (2000: xiv) state: “There is agreement in all contributions that universities have a responsibility to train specialists in translation. Aims and objectives, as well as program structure and content, should be designed in such a way that the demands of the profession are fully met”. The findings of the study can also help the instructors to create and adapt materials suitable for teaching translation. Secondly, it is essential to apply hypotheses and models to a classroom situation to test them empirically. The findings can, in turn, be used to revise them. Given the newness of the pedagogy of translation, it seems reasonable to carry out such studies and generate objective data to gradually enrich it. Anderman and Rogers (2000: 69) state “marrying theory and practice would seem an obvious requirement in a subject such as translation studies which has more of a vocational angle than many other language-based disciplines”. Thirdly, we can prepare the trainees more efficiently for ‘the ultimate aim of translation’, namely playing a crucial role in improving the quality of intercultural life as Chesterman (2000: 88) puts it:

“... our trainees should be aware not only of the prevailing norms and the values underlying them, but also of the possibility of refining or breaking these norms, of

finding better ways to meet prevailing values, of refining the values themselves. In this way, translators can play a role in social progress in the largest sense, in improving the quality of intercultural life: this, after all, has often been acknowledged as the ultimate aim of translation”.

## **1.6 Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the present study is to determine the effects of a text-linguistic approach and a structure & texture one on the subjects’ translations, or more specifically:

1. To determine how the subjects of the two groups of study deal with the structure & texture, communicative, pragmatic and semiotic considerations in the *pretest*.
2. To ascertain the influences of the text-linguistic and the structure & texture approaches on the subjects’ communicative, pragmatic, semiotic and structure & texture considerations in the mid-test and post-test.
3. To determine which of the two approaches – the text-linguistic approach or the structure & texture one – is more effective in teaching translation to undergraduate students.
4. To suggest a framework of text analysis for English translator training students on an undergraduate program.

## **1.7 Research Questions**

1. Does the Text-linguistics Course have any influence on the subjects’ communicative considerations?
2. Does the Text-linguistics Course have any impact on the subjects’ pragmatic considerations?
3. Does the Text-linguistics Course have any effect on the subjects’ semiotic considerations?

4. Does the Text-linguistics Course have any effect on the structure & texture of the subjects' translations?
5. Does the Structure & Texture Course have any impact on the subjects' communicative considerations?
6. Does the Structure & Texture Course have any effect on the subjects' pragmatic considerations?
7. Does the Structure & Texture Course have any influence on the subjects' semiotic considerations?
8. Does the Structure & Texture Course have any influence on the structure & texture of the subjects' translations?
9. Which of the two approaches – the text-linguistic approach or the structure & texture one – is more effective in teaching translation to undergraduate students?

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

The present study has certain limitations. Some of them are potential issues for further studies and can serve as a means for the improvement of the pedagogy of translation. One of the limitations includes the external validity, or the generalizability of the findings of the study to other contexts. In fact, we are faced with the question: How far can we generalize the results of the study to other persons, places, or times? According to Trochim (2002) research findings can be generalized to other contexts provided that the researcher follows either the *sampling model* or the *proximal similarity model* to provide evidence for generalization. In the sampling model, we select a representative sample of the population randomly. Since the sample is representative of the population, and at the same time it would be selected randomly, we can generalize our findings to the whole population. In the

second model, we determine contexts which are similar to our context of study, then we claim that we can generalize our findings to these particular people, places or times because they are similar to our context of study.

Now, since the design of the present study is quasi-experimental, it follows the proximal similarity model for the generalization of the findings. In other words, we cannot safely claim that the approach is successful in all contexts. The findings are cautiously generalizable to an Iranian context similar to that of the present study. Future complementary studies are necessary to investigate the issue in other contexts. These studies would be more likely to produce findings generalizable to a larger population of students.

The second limitation has to do with the researcher bias. At the beginning of any study, the researcher must be careful about his bias and should refuse to make a judgment about what he would find until all the evidence or at least sufficient evidence is gathered. When I start this research, I do my best to resist the temptation to believe that the Text-linguistics Course would have positive effects on the students. Thus, I attempt to find evidence that prove or reject the idea. This postponement of judgment leads to a more objective analysis of the data.

The third limitation is the perspective adopted. The model used in this study is mainly that of Hatim and Mason (1990). However, future studies can test other models to compare the results. The comparative findings of such studies especially when derived from those conducted on different languages such as Arabic and French can be used to determine the most appropriate model(s) for translator training programs.

The last limitation of the study is related to the gender of the raters. It was only coincidental that they were all male as there are more male translators than female



ones in the country. However, since the content of the texts or passages used for translating is not related to issues of gender attitudes and roles, the abovementioned limitation does not affect the results.

### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

The present study is composed of seven chapters. The following outline describes the broad structure of the study:

Chapter I presents the introduction, background to the status of the pedagogy of translation in general and its status in Iran, respectively. Then, it deals with the statement of the problem, rationale and significance of the study, objectives, research questions, limitations of the study, and organization of the study.

Chapter II is devoted to the presentation of the theoretical framework and related literature. In this chapter, we discuss the three components of text-linguistics, that is, the communicative, pragmatic, and semiotic dimensions.

Chapter III presents a detailed description of research procedures, methods, and techniques used in the collection, evaluation, and analysis of the data.

Chapter IV deals with the descriptive and inferential statistics to provide a report on the results as obtained through different statistical analyses.

Chapter V discusses the data collected during the three stages of pretest, mid-test, and post-test, respectively.

Chapter VI is divided into two main parts. The first part examines some of the main textbooks of translations studied at Iranian universities and also deals with their pedagogical implications. The second part discusses the pedagogical implications of the present study.

Finally, chapter VII presents the conclusions as well as implications for further studies.

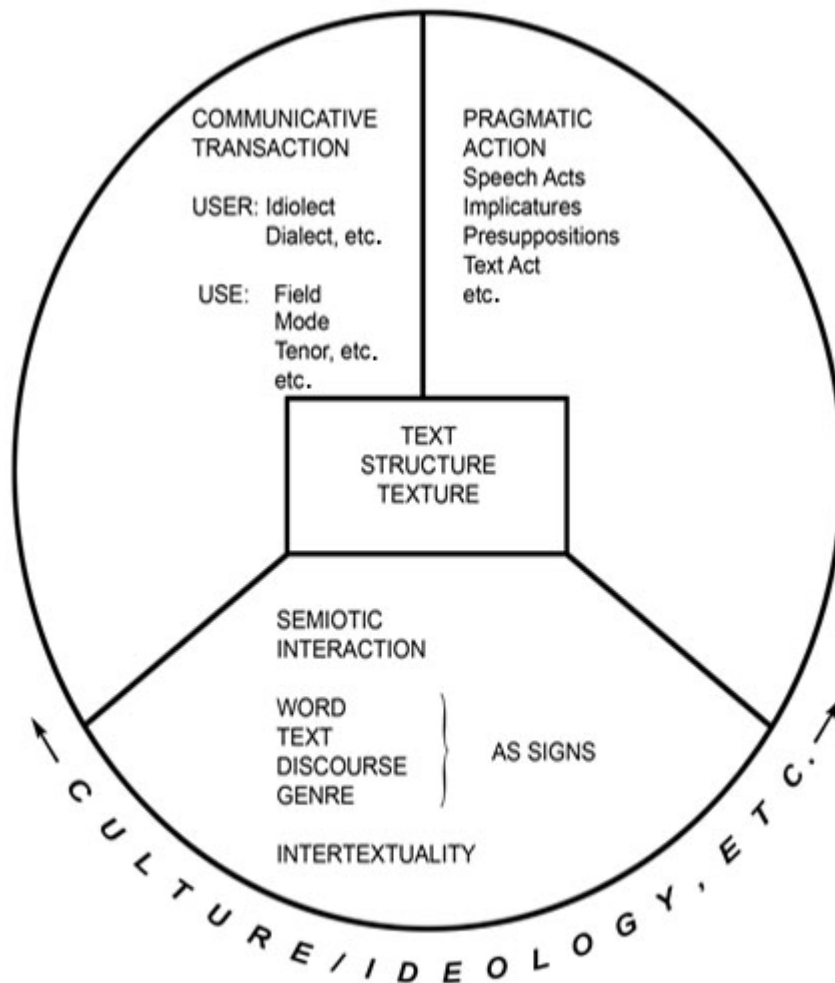
## **CHAPTER TWO**

### ***THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE***

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the three main components of text-linguistics, that is, the communicative, pragmatic, and semiotic dimensions. The first component is mainly based on the ideas of Halliday (1978), Gregory and Carroll (1978), and Hatim and Mason (1990). Pragmatics is the second component discussed using the viewpoints of scholars: Austin (1962), Searle (1969), Jacobson (1960) and Hymes (1962) among others. The final component is semiotics which is examined mainly based on the ideas of Ferdinand De Saussure and Charles Morris (1971) on Semiotics.

The following figure is a representation of the three dimensions of context as adopted from Hatim and Mason (1990: 58). It will be discussed in the following pages.



**Figure 2.1 The Three Dimensions of Context**

**Adapted from Hatim and Mason (1990:58)**

## 2.2 Communicative Dimension

We can trace many cultural conventions in a language that influence discourse. These conventions can give rise to problems in translating a text from one language into another, especially when cultural differences are very great. Translators usually have crucial functions in solving these problems. Bell (1991) believes that translators should have a competence by which to produce both grammatical and socially acceptable utterances. So it is important for translator trainees to be aware of the conventions of the source and target languages. In this way, they are able to make the necessary modifications and changes in the translated material so that the basic

meaning of the message is practically rendered in the best way. Krouglov (1995: 87) asserts “a deep understanding of the ways in which social and cultural features are combined in a language is indispensable in teaching translation and interpreting”.

As we know, language is not a homogeneous phenomenon and there exist many variations in a single language. Catford (1965) asserts that the notion of language is so broad and heterogeneous that it is not useful for many linguistic purposes such as comparative, pedagogical, etc. Therefore, it is useful to talk about sub-languages or varieties within a whole language. One of the conspicuous concepts newly adapted in translation are related to variations in the forms of register and dialect.

Language variations can be grouped into two types: dialect and register. Dialect is the user-based variation, i.e. it concerns or is associated with the speech community or people who use it, e.g. British English, Australian English, etc. Dialects are usually classified into four groups: geographical dialect which is related to the region or area where the speech community is situated, e.g. Yazdi which is spoken in the central part of Iran. Temporal dialect deals with the time when the speech community exists, e.g. Old English, Modern English, etc. Social dialect concerns the social group the speech community is connected with, e.g. the social dialect spoken among low social groups in Tehran. Finally, standard / non-standard classification is related to the global form of a language versus the related situational variety, e.g. standard or non-standard Persian. Remember that these categories are not clear-cut items and should best be considered along a continuum and not as separate items.

Register; however, is the use-based variation, i.e. it concerns the particular language activity the participant is engaged with, for example, baby talk is a

particular register that adults use while talking to babies. Halliday and Hasan (1985:38-39) define register as:

“A configuration of meanings that are typically associated with a particular situational configuration of field, mode, and tenor...[which] include the expressions, the lexico-grammatical and phonological features, that typically accompany or REALISE these meanings”.

Accordingly, Hatim and Mason (1990:46) state: “Registers are defined in terms of differences in grammar, vocabulary, etc., between two samples of language activity like a sports commentary and a church service”. However, sometimes the difference between a dialect and a register is not so apparent, that is, a variety may be considered as both a register and a dialect. For example, Ayatollah Khomeini’s political speeches demonstrate features of both his social dialect (the social dialect spoken among Iranian religious men as a social group) and political register.

Register is usually analyzed in terms of field, tenor and mode. Halliday (1978) suggests analyzing these three factors for detecting the real meaning of a text within its context. Similarly, Neubert (1994) points out that equivalence is not an isolated feature, it is a notion related to a particular context. Halliday (1978) explains the field of discourse in terms of what is going on in a text and also the quality of the social action occurring there, that is, determining the field of discourse is not identical with revealing the theme or discovering what the particular text is about, but determining what is being communicated and in what way or manner the language elements accomplish to do what we have aimed to. For example, language users make completely different choices while writing about a play and when actually writing a play. Therefore, field of discourse mainly concerns social activities. Note that it rarely matches the subject matter. We usually experience fields that concern a variety of different subject matters. The most salient example is a friendly chat which often includes different subject matters.

Gregory and Carroll (1978:30) state that the fields of discourse can vary from highly specialized fields such as ‘the English of Physics’ or ‘the English of Linguistics’ to non-restricted fields like ‘the English of Gossip’.

Hatim and Mason (1990) argue that field of discourse can bring about problems in translating a text, especially if there are significant differences between the scientific developments of the source and target language communities. In such a case, it is crucial to consider whether the text should be translated into that language or not.

Gregory and Carroll (1978:34) mention that at times a specialized field is used as a mask for hiding what actually is being said. An example is the language used by politicians where the primary meaning of the utterance disappears by using ambiguous expressions. When translating these texts, the translator should try to understand what is really being communicated prior to translating it.

Note that it is not possible to determine the field of discourse without considering both the participants and the language items they select. Hymes (1972) stresses the socio-cultural elements, and also the absurdity of analyzing the utterances of an isolated individual. Similarly, Mey (1993:42) points out the fact that all aspects of language are regarded as a social phenomenon; “the conditions of human language uses as these are determined by the context of society”.

The second element of register is the tenor of discourse. It refers to the participants involved in the social interaction, their relationships, their purposes, and their degree of intimacy. It is influenced by the role relationships of the participants, for example, their status to each other. This element affects many aspects of the language being used; among them are the degree of politeness, the level of formality, etc.

Hatim and Mason (1990:50) state “tenor refers to the relationship between the addresser and the addressee. This may be analyzed in terms of basic distinctions such as polite-colloquial-intimate on a scale of categories which range from formal to informal”. These categories have to be taken as a continuum and not as separate categories. Hatim (1997) points out that tenor is perhaps the most important factor in regulating the very complicated relationship between the participants.

Gregory and Carroll (1978) divide tenor of discourse into two groups: a) personal tenor of discourse and personal addressee relationship which is related to variations extending between high degrees of formality and high degrees of informality. It concerns the relationship between the participants, whether they know each other or not, for instance. If they fully know each other, they can use more abbreviations, non-verbal elements, and the like. b) functional tenor of discourse and functional addressee relationship which concerns what the language user aims to do with language, whether s/he intends to amuse or persuade somebody, advertise something, etc. If one knows the above-mentioned relationships, s/he can more accurately foresee the features of the language that is going to be used.

Tenor of discourse is important in translating a text. In some languages like Persian, for instance, it is common to address a single participant in the second person plural in formal situations. In some other languages, however, it is natural to address a person by his or her first name and in the second person singular in a formal situation like a classroom, something which is often prevented in Persian. Such a difference in the tenor of discourse should be taken into account while translating a text. In particular, the improper use of forms of address while translating an informal text into the formal version of another language can be regarded as insulting. Baker (1992: 16) points out “getting the tenor of discourse right in

translation can be quite difficult”. She goes on that the translator should evaluate whether a particular degree of formality is ‘right’ from the perspective of the two cultures. She exemplifies the point by the fact that an American teenager may adopt a very informal tenor while talking to his/her parents to the extent that call them by their first names rather than using *mum*, *dad* or other similar words. This degree of informality is inappropriate in many cultures including Persian.

The third component of register is the mode of discourse. Halliday and Hasan (1985:12) defines mode as “the symbolic organization of the text, the status that it has, and its function in the context, including the channel”. In other words, mode is the physical medium of communication, with the limitations and choices it brings about. Hatim and Mason (1997:22) view mode as “the degree of physical proximity between producer and receiver, as well as between users and subject matter”. Lyons (1977: 638) states:

“Many utterances which would be readily interpretable in a canonical situation-of utterance are subject to various kinds of ambiguity or indeterminacy if they are produced in a non-canonical situation: if they are written rather than spoken and ... if the participants in the language-event, or the moment of transmission and the moment of reception, are widely separated in space and time”.

Gregory and Carroll (1978:47) believe that mode variations could be classified as *speaking* and *writing*. Each of them is divided into subcategories. Speaking is divided into *spontaneously* and *non-spontaneously* speaking. Writing is classified into three classes: *to be spoken as if not written*, *to be spoken*, and *not necessarily to be spoken*. This last category (*not necessarily to be spoken*) is further divided into: *to be read* and *to be read as if heard (to be read as speech)* and *to be read as if overheard (to be read as if thought)*.

Hatim and Mason (1990) believe that shifts in the mode of discourse can result in problems in translation, and that shifts of this kind are not suitably reflected in the translated material. They (ibid: 50) state “...when films are subtitled, certain