



## From Words to Meaning: Examining the Translation Process

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### Abstract

*Translation is the process of transferring meaning from a source language to a target language while preserving the message, context, and communicative intent of the original text. In the context of Arabic, translation poses unique challenges due to its rich morphological structure, flexible syntax, and context-dependent semantic nuances. This study aims to examine the translation process and several translation models developed by leading scholars. The method used is library research by collecting and analyzing literature related to translation theory and practice. The findings show that the translation process involves analysis, transfer, and restructuring stages, although each expert emphasizes different approaches. The classical model focuses on lexical equivalence, Nida and Taber highlight dynamic equivalence, Suryaminata emphasizes deep and surface structure, while Newmark focuses on contextual and stylistic interpretation. Understanding these models enables translators to produce more accurate, natural, and contextually appropriate translations.*

**Keywords:** Arabic Language, Equivalence, Models, Translation.

### PRELIMINARY

In this increasingly modern era, language has become a crucial aspect for adapting to changing times. People increasingly interact using foreign languages, particularly Arabic, which is widely used in religious, educational, and global communication contexts. This makes the ability to understand and translate Arabic an increasingly necessary skill for effective communication and to avoid misunderstandings.

Translation is essentially the process of transferring meaning from the source language into the target language so that readers can understand the message the author intends to convey (Zahro and Nu'man 2024). The primary goal of translation is to bridge understanding, so that readers in the target language can grasp the content, intent, and nuances intended by the original author in the source language (Amalia and Irawan 2021). In the process, translators must pay attention to important elements such as the source language and target language, meaning, equivalence, and contextual adjustments. This is especially evident in Arabic translations, which have a rich morphological system, flexible sentence structure, and nuances of meaning that are strongly influenced by the cultural context and context of use (Garcia et al. 2023).

Experts have developed various models and stages of translation to help explain how a text is translated into another language accurately and acceptably. Understanding these models is crucial for translators to determine the appropriate approach for the text type and its communicative purpose (Siti Shalihah 2017). Given the importance of accuracy in translating Arabic texts, the study of translation processes and models has become increasingly relevant.

Therefore, this paper discusses the translation process and some of the models that underlie it, with the aim of providing a more systematic overview of how Arabic texts can be translated into other languages without losing their meaning and context.

## METHOD

This research employed a library research method (Assingkily, 2021). This method involved collecting, reading, and analyzing various written sources relevant to the topic of translation, particularly those related to the translation process and models developed by experts. The sources used included books, scientific journals, academic articles, and scholarly works discussing the theory and study of Arabic translation.

This approach was chosen because the discussion of translation processes and models is theoretical in nature and therefore requires a strong conceptual foundation from existing literature. The data obtained was analyzed descriptively, namely by explaining and interpreting key concepts related to translation, then organizing them into a description to answer the focus of the research study.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Classical Era Translation Process Model*

This process is found in the book (Fathur Rohman 2017), which shows that translation is carried out directly without going through in-depth analysis stages. In this method, the translator tends to search for the literal equivalent of each word in the source sentence. After all the words are translated one by one, the words are then rearranged into a sentence in the target language without changing the original structure or arrangement. In other words, the grammatical structure of the source language is maintained in the translation, even though this often does not conform to the rules or customs of the target language. An example of a translation using this process is the phrase "the new car is in front of the school" translated:

السَّيَّارَةُ الْجَدِيدَةُ أَمَامَ الْمَدْرَسَةِ

### *Nida and Taber Model*

In the book by (Fathur Rohman 2017) it is explained that this translation process is known as dynamic translation, which includes three main stages: analysis, transfer, and restructuring. In the analysis stage, the translator studies the text in the source language by paying attention to grammatical relationships, the meaning of each word, and the overall meaning of the sentence. The goal of this stage is for the translator to be able to understand the message of the source text as a whole. Once the meaning is understood, the process continues to the transfer stage, namely transferring the meaning into the mind or thoughts of the translator to then be processed into the target language. The final stage is restructuring, where the understood meaning is rewritten into the target language by paying attention to the structure, grammar, and rules that apply in that language. For example, the sentence "Muhammad went to school on foot" is translated into Arabic as:

يَذْهَبُ مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ مَاشِيًا عَلَى الْأَقْدَامِ

In this process, the translator first analyzes the structure of the source sentence, such as determining the subject, predicate, and adverb. (Dhyaningrum and Nababan n.d.) Next, he interprets the meaning of each word and understands the overall meaning of the sentence. In the restructuring stage, the translator restructures the sentence into Arabic according to its syntactic rules. For example, in Indonesian, the word "Muhammad" as the subject is placed at the beginning, but in Arabic, the subject (فَاعِلٌ / fa'il) is generally placed after the predicate (فِعْلٌ / fi'il), so its position changes to second place. Likewise, with other words in the sentence, all must be adjusted to the structure and rules of Arabic when translated.

### *Suryawinata Model*

The translation model proposed by Suryawinata in his book (Fathur Rohman 2017) adopts the concepts of deep structure and surface structure from the theory of transformational-generative grammar. The translation process in this model consists of several main stages:

#### 1. Analysis stage or understanding stage

At this stage, sentences in the source language (the original structure) are analyzed based on grammatical relationships, lexical meaning (words or word combinations), textual meaning, and

contextual meaning. This process is known as back transformation, which is changing the original structure into an inner structure so that the deepest meaning of the text can be fully understood by the translator. An example of a translation using this stage model is "Prepare an umbrella before it rains." The translator analyzes the grammatical aspects of each word, for example: *أَعَدَّ* (as a predicate), *مِظَلَّةً* (as an object), *قَبْلَ الْمَطَرِ* (as an adverb). In addition, the translator also tries to connect the textual, contextual, and grammatical meanings.

## 2. Transfer stage

Once the meaning has been successfully analyzed and understood, the next stage is transfer, a mental process in which the meaning that has been formed in the inner structure is transferred from the source language to the target language. At this stage, the word order in the target language has not yet been formed; all processes still take place in the translator's cognitive realm. In the translation process, the translator attempts to capture the meaning contained in expressions such as "prepare an umbrella before it rains." This understanding can take the form of interpretations such as "one must always be prepared for all possibilities," "one should be alert to potential dangers," and various other similar interpretations. At this stage, the word order in the target language has not yet been formed, because the process is still taking place internally in the translator's mind.

## 3. Restructuring stage

At this stage, the translator begins to rebuild the meaning that has been transferred into a natural structure in the target language. He looks for equivalent words, expressions, and sentence structures that are in accordance with the rules and norms of the target language. The goal is so that the message, meaning, and nuances contained in the source text can be conveyed accurately and naturally in the target language. The translator looks for equivalent words, for example: *أَعَدَّ* = ready, *مِظَلَّةً* = umbrella, *قَبْلَ* = before, *مَطَرٍ* = rain. After that, the translator tries to find equivalents for these expressions in the target language. For example;

إِسْتَعِدَّ مِظَلَّةً قَبْلَ الْمَطَرِ، الرَّادُّ قَبْلَ الدَّهَابِ، اسْتَعِدَّ نَفْسَكَ قَبْلَ بُعْدِ السَّفَرِ، الْوَقَايَةُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْعِلَاجِ،  
تَمَامًا الْكُنَائِنِ قَبْلَ الرِّمَاءِ

## 4. Evaluation and revision stage

After obtaining the translation results in the target language, the translator evaluates them by comparing them with the source text. If discrepancies, missing meanings, or insufficient information density are found, a revision process is carried out to improve the translation.

## B. Newmark Model

According to B. Newmark, translation is the activity of transferring a source language to a target language by replacing a written message or statement in one language with the same message or statement in another language. (Newmark 1988) In the book (Fathur Rohman 2017), the translation process can be summarized into three main stages as follows:

### 1. Interpreting and Analyzing the Original Text

The first stage involves thoroughly understanding and examining the source text. Translators must be able to interpret the content, structure, and meaning of the text, grammatically, lexically, and contextually. An example of a translation that follows this translation process model is the Indonesian phrase "The Qur'an was revealed in the month of Ramadan." At this stage, the translator conducts text analysis, understanding the content or message of the text, analyzing sentence structure, and finding equivalents for each word. For example:

القرآن (Al-Qur'an)، نُزِلَ (revealed)، في (at)، شهر (month)، رمضان (Ramadhan)

Structurally, this sentence can be analyzed as follows:

- a. In Indonesian, this sentence is a passive sentence, while in Arabic, this form is known as *الجملة المجهول* (a sentence whose doer is unknown), so that the subject or *fā'il* is not stated explicitly (it is only *muqaddar* or implied).

- b. In Indonesian, the word "Al-Qur'an" is the subject. In Arabic, it is the subject (nā'ibul fā'il) (replacing the agent in passive sentences).
- c. The word "derunjung = نُزِلَ" in Indonesian functions as a predicate, while in Arabic, the passive form of this verb is called fi'l lil-majhūl.
- d. The word "di = في" in Indonesian can be interpreted as a description of place or time, while in Arabic, similar elements can be ḥarf jar or ḥarf (adverb of time/place).
- e. The word "Ramadan," in both Indonesian and Arabic, refers to the holy month full of blessings. However, grammatically, in Arabic, the word is called ism majrūr (a noun preceded by ḥarf jar) or maḥrūf, while in Indonesian it functions as an adverb.

## 2. Translation Process

In the second stage, the translator begins the direct translation process. This can be done by adjusting the sentence structure from the source language to the target language, or through other approaches such as interlanguage, underlying structure, or tertium comparationis, a neutral meeting point used to compare elements in both languages. The translator can carry out the direct translation process, namely by translating the sentence without changing the original structure or structure. For example, the sentence "The Qur'an was revealed in the month of Ramadan" can be directly translated as *أَلْقُرْآنُ نُزِلَ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ*, without significantly changing the order of the sentence elements. However, translation can also be done with a freer approach, namely by emphasizing the core message or main meaning to be conveyed. For example, if the most important information is that the Qur'an was revealed in the month of Ramadan, then the sentence can be rearranged as:

فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ نُزِلَ الْقُرْآنُ

## 3. Text Restructuring

The final stage is redesigning the final form of the text in the target language. In this process, the translator must consider the original author's intent, the position or characteristics of the target reader, and the norms of the target language so that the translation can be understood well by the reader and still conveys the message consistent with the original text. At this stage, the translator restructures the translated text from the previous stage by adapting the meaning or message of the text to the original author's intended meaning. In addition, the translator also considers the choice of expressions in the target language to suit the reader's level of understanding, and composes sentence structures according to commonly used and easily understood linguistic rules. For example, in Arabic, a good passive sentence structure that conforms to commonly used *uslūb* (language style) follows the pattern:

فعل للمجهول + نائب الفاعل + ظرف مَظروف / جار ومجرور

By following this pattern, the sentence "The Qur'an was revealed in the month of Ramadan" will be arranged as: *نُزِلَ الْقُرْآنُ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ*.

This structure not only complies with the grammatical rules of Arabic, but also reflects the clarity and regularity of message delivery in the target language (Afifah 2023).

## *Differences in Translation Models*

The differences between the four translation process models mentioned above in the book by (Fathur Rohman 2017) are as follows: *first*, this model is applied when the translator is dealing with a simple text, both in terms of meaning and sentence structure. This type of text does not require a complex restructuring process because the equivalent words and sentence forms in the source language are relatively easy to transfer to the target language without much adjustment. *Second*, the second model is used when the source text has vocabulary that is lexically easy to find equivalents in the target language, but the sentence structure is significantly different. Therefore, the translator needs to restructure so that the translation results are in accordance with the grammar and structural habits in the target language.

*Third*, the third model is used when translators translate texts that cannot be understood textually by simply translating every word in them, even after restructuring, we still cannot understand the meaning. Usually, these texts are literary texts or those with implied meanings that must be appropriate to the

context of their use. *Fourth*, the fourth model is used when translators translate texts that require a deep understanding or delving into the author's thoughts and choosing a type of translated expression that suits the reader's level of understanding.

## CONCLUSION

Translation is a complex process that involves not only transferring words but also capturing the meaning, context, and communicative purpose of the source text. In Arabic translation, these challenges are even greater due to the richness of morphology, structural flexibility, and depth of meaning influenced by cultural context. Based on literature review, the translation process generally involves the stages of analysis, transfer, and restructuring, although each expert offers a different approach and emphasis. The classical translation model tends to be literal, while the Nida and Taber models emphasize dynamic equivalence. Suryawinata highlights the role of inner and outer structures, while Newmark emphasizes contextual meaning and style. Understanding these various models is important so that translators can choose an approach that suits the type of text and communication needs, resulting in a more accurate, natural, and easily understood translation for readers in the target language.

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