



# 5. Formalia: Att översätta

När ska en arabisk text översättas och när ska den citeras?  
Översättningsstrategier

# QUOTING AND TRANSLATING ARABIC TEXTS

## Principles and Strategies

*Required* in essays, papers and theses at

*The Section for Middle Eastern Studies*  
*Department of Oriental Languages*  
Stockholm University

prepared by

Elie Wardini

*Januray 2013, v.1*



## **Quoting and Translating Arabic Texts Principles and Strategies**

The main and essential questions when deciding on quoting and translating Arabic texts are:

***Why do I need a quotation?***

***Why do I need a translation?***

The answers to these questions decide the rest.

***The overarching principle should be that the quotations and the translations are:***

- a. Necessary
- b. Relevant
- c. Adequate
- d. Consistent

**No more, no less!**

**NB:** *The present pamphlet is not meant to be a complete introduction to the intricacies of translation. It is just a very short outline to answer the most elementary questions that need to be addressed in the process of writing essays, papers and theses at the Section for Middle Eastern Studies.*

## **TRANSLATING AND QUOTING ARABIC TEXTS: Principles and Strategies**

## Contents

1. <i>The Purpose of a Quotation</i> . . . . .	5
1.1 The Corpus .....	5
1.2 The Quotations .....	6
2. <i>The Purpose of a Translation</i> . . . . .	9
2.1 Reader Friendliness .....	9
2.2 Verifiability and Accountability .....	11
2.3 Existing Translations .....	12
3. <i>Translation Strategies</i> . . . . .	15
3.1 World, Language, Text and Translation .....	15
3.2 Goals and Training .....	16
3.3 Types of Translations .....	16
3.4 Terminology.....	17
3.5 Equivalence.....	18
3.6 Strategies .....	20
3.7 An Example .....	22
4. <i>Literature</i> . . . . .	25

## **TRANSLATING AND QUOTING ARABIC TEXTS: Principles and Strategies**

## 1. The Purpose of a Quotation

Every academic essay, paper or thesis should be *reader friendly*. The language, structure and presentation should be *clear and easy to read*. Ambiguities should be more or less nonexistent. New information should be presented clearly. There should be a *clear and well structured progression* in the arguments presented in the work. The format should be *clear, logical and consistent*. The reader should not be required unnecessarily to flip back and forth in the text or to extensively consult external texts.

You will at times be required to base your essay, paper or thesis (henceforth ‘*your work*’) on *Arabic sources*. The analysis in your work should be based on the Arabic data, **not the translations**. When writing your work, you will have to present some or all of your Arabic data. The extent to which this is done depends on the Arabic data itself, the nature of your work and the intended reader.

### 1.1 The Corpus

Arabic sources, as with any other sources, should be clearly *defined and identified* and obtained from the most *reliable editions*. They should be clearly presented both in the section where your data is discussed in the body of your work and in the bibliography. There should be no doubt about the exact *corpus*—the selected texts—on which your analysis is based. The intended reader (and examiner) should be able to easily *consult* your sources in order to *verify* and hold you *accountable* for your understanding, treatment and analysis of the data.

Depending on the amount of Arabic data in your corpus, you will have to decide how to present it.

1. *If the Arabic data is not extensive, you may want to include all of it in the body of your work.*
2. *If the Arabic data is extensive but not freely available, you may want to include it in its entirety in an appendix.*

**NB: Use a detached appendix if the data is too extensive.**

3. *If the Arabic data is extensive, yet freely available, you will need to reference it accurately (author, edition, year, place of publication, editor, website, etc.)*

## 1.2 The Quotations

When arguing a certain issue in your work, you may want to present *evidence* for your arguments. This evidence may be in Arabic. There should always be a balanced approach to the presentation of evidence:

**Not too much and not too little.**

As with any presentation of evidence, the main principle is as stated above:

**Necessary, Relevant, Adequate and Consistent. No more, no less.**

This could be defined as *key evidence*, or *key examples*.

Depending on the type of the Arabic key evidence, you will have to decide how to present the data.

**NB: For transcription, consult the pamphlet *Transcription Rules*.**

1. *If the Arabic data is a word or a short phrase, you may want to include it in the actual paragraph.*

eg. The semantic content of the term *فتنة fitna* ‘strife’ is not easily represented in English with one single equivalent.

The phrase *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ bi-smi al-lāhi al-rahmāni al-rahīmi* ‘In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.’ (Quran: Surat al-Fatiha 1:1; translation by Pickthall)<sup>1</sup>, is not easily translated into English since the terms *الرحمان al-rahmān* and *الرحيم al-rahīm* are more or less synonyms in Arabic.

2. *If the Arabic data is a long sentence or a whole paragraph or a section, then present it in a separate indented paragraph.*

When possible the quoted text should be in a minimally smaller font size than the one used in the body of the text. eg. The body of the text is in 12pts, the quoted text and translation could be in 10pts.

eg. The following verse from the Quran, known as Ayat al-Kursi, is central to Islamic belief:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ  
(Quran: Surat al-Baqara 2:255)

1) All Quranic texts in Arabic and translation are retrieved from: <http://quran.com/>

**NB: Usually followed by a translation, also in a separate indented paragraph.**

**NB: Reproduce the source text as is, diacritical signs, errors or any specific characteristics that the text has. Do not alter the source text, since you will not be representing it faithfully. In case there are errors in the text, you should mark them with [sic], indicating that they are part of the quoted source text.**

**NB: If it is absolutely necessary, you may add short clarifying remarks in the quoted Arabic text. Always include them in brackets [xxx] in order to mark that they are not part of the quoted source text.**

eg. Quran: Surat al-Fatiha 1:3

[الله] الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ (Quran: Surat al-Fatiha 1:3)

**NB: If you need to omit part of the quoted source text, indicate the position of the omission with [...], informing the reader of the omission and that it is not part of the quoted source text.**

eg. Text 1, chapter 21, Schulz p.292

الأنظمة السياسية في العالم العربي  
نجد في العالم العربي حتى اليوم دولاً ذات أنظمة سياسية مختلفة [...] وقد  
قامت هذه الدول على أساس التقسيمات السياسية التي حصلت بعد انهيار  
الإمبراطورية العثمانية والنظام الاستعماري في إفريقيا والشرق الأوسط

**NB: If it is necessary, you may want to add comments either in the body of your work or in footnotes.**

**NB: Always be consistent.**



## 2. The Purpose of a Translation

Translations serve several purposes. The main purposes are, as with quotations, *reader friendliness*, *verifiability* and *accountability*. Again the main principle is that the translations should be:

**Necessary, Relevant, Adequate and Consistent. No more, no less.**

In general, you should present translations of all the Arabic quotes that are included in your work. If you use translations of Arabic texts that you do not include in your work, you should motivate why you are basing your arguments and analysis on translations and not the Arabic text. You do not need to present translations of your corpus should you include it in an appendix. If translations of your corpus exist, you should make a clear reference to them.

### 2.1 Reader Friendliness

As mentioned above, academic writing should be reader friendly. Not everyone who will read your work will know Arabic or know it well enough. It is therefore necessary to present the reader with an appropriate and adequate translation of your quotes.

Translations are also necessary from an angle of *completeness*. This will reduce unnecessary consultations of external works and will make for a fluid reading of your work.

#### Presentation

Translations should be presented in close proximity to the quoted text, so as not to open for confusion. Translations should be clearly marked, so that there is no doubt that a certain string of text is a translation of a given Arabic text.

Depending on the type of the Arabic key evidence and their translations, you will have to decide how to present the data.

1. *If the Arabic data is a word or a short phrase, you may want to include it in the actual paragraph.*

The transcription should be in *italics* and the translation included in single quotation marks 'xxx'

eg. The semantic content of the term *فتنة* *fitna* 'strife' is not easily represented in English with one single equivalent.

## TRANSLATING AND QUOTING ARABIC TEXTS: Principles and Strategies

2. *If the Arabic data is a long sentence or a whole paragraph or a section, then present it in a separate indented paragraph. Do the same for the translation.*

With longer sentences, paragraphs or sections you should weigh between whether a transcription of the whole passage is necessary and/or useful on the one hand and the extra information and reading the transcription entails on the other. *The necessity and usefulness of the information should take precedence, all the while trying to keep the text as simple as possible.*

eg. Text 1, chapter 21, Schulz p.292

### الأنظمة السياسية في العالم العربي

نجد في العالم العربي حتى اليوم دولاً ذات أنظمة سياسية مختلفة كالجُمهوريات والممالك والسلطنات والمشايخ وقد قامت هذه الدول على أساس التقسيمات السياسية التي حصلت بعد انهيار الإمبراطورية العثمانية والنظام الاستعماري في إفريقيا والشرق الأوسط

### **The political systems in the Arab world**

We find in the Arab world, up to the present, countries that have different political systems, such as republics, kingdoms, sultanates and shaykhdoms. These countries are based on the political divisions that have occurred after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the colonial regime in Africa and the Middle East. [my translation].

**NB: Remember to reproduce the source text as is, diacritical signs, errors or any specific characteristic that the text has.**

**NB: The translation should be of all the quoted text. If you want to omit a part of the text, this should be done in the quoted Arabic text, not in the translation.**

**NB: Omissions in the quoted Arabic text should be faithfully reflected in the translation, indicated by [...] in the quoted text as well as the translation.**

**NB: Always be consistent.**

*See comments above p.7.*

## 2.2 Verifiability and Accountability

Any reading, analysis or translation of any text is an exercise in interpretation. In an essay, paper or thesis you are presenting the reader (and examiner) with *your reading, understanding and interpretation* of the Arabic texts that are included in your corpus.

While *your analysis should be based on the Arabic text* and not the translations, translations are one of several means by which you present your understanding of the text, and thus the basis on which you argue for a certain conclusion. While a conclusion in your work may be based on grammar, images, intertextuality, etc., translations give the reader (and examiner) insight into your understanding of a word, phrase, passage or of a text as a whole.

In other words, *translations are one of the main tools* that you will be using while building an argument. Based on your translations and comments, *the reader will be able to verify whether and how you have understood* a certain term, passage or text. Based on your understanding and analysis of your Arabic data *you will be held accountable* for your conclusions.

Therefore, *good and adequate translations* are of the utmost importance to a study based on Arabic sources. They reflect your understanding of the sources and form the basis for your analysis, and thus the conclusions you arrive to.

eg. The phrase ضرب الولد is open to several interpretations. Depending on your understanding and interpretation of this phrase in its context you may come to divergent conclusions:

*daraba al-waladu* ‘The child has hit’

(*walad* is subject and therefore agent)

*daraba al-walada* ‘He has hit the child’

(*walad* is object and therefore patient)

*duriba al-waladu* ‘The child was hit’

(*walad* is subject of a passive verb and therefore patient)

**NB: A good and fluid translation often requires some choices and at times a certain departure of the source text. See Section 3. Translation Strategies below. If it is necessary for the sake of comprehension, analysis or argument you may want to add comments to your own or somebody else’s translation, either in the body of your text or in a footnote.**

eg. Quran: Surat al-Fatiha 1:1

(Quran: Surat al-Fatiha 1:1) بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. [translation by Pickthall].

The phrase بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ *bi-smi al-lāhi al-raḥmāni al-raḥīmi* is not easily translated into English since the terms الرحمان *al-raḥmān* and الرحيم *al-raḥīm* are more or less synonyms in Arabic.

eg. فتنة *fitna* ‘strife’<sup>2</sup> is prohibited in Islam.

**NB: Again the main principle is that the comments should be: Necessary, Relevant, Adequate and Consistent. No more, no less.**

### 2.3 Existing Translations

When working with Arabic texts, it is not only acceptable to consult other translations, but when possible it is indeed *necessary* and *required*. All scholarship builds on that which has preceded it. Unless there are special reasons to do otherwise, you are *required to consult and quote existing good and accepted translations*. You should not throw yourself into unnecessary double work or work that you may not be qualified to do, eg. Quran translations etc.

In many cases there will exist several editions and translations of a certain text. In your work, you will have to make a *choice* concerning the editions and/or translations that you will be using. Whichever choice you make, it should be *motivated* based on the needs of your work.

In most academic fields, some editions of texts or translations are considered as more *reliable* and are *better received* and *more widely accepted* and *used* than others. Therefore you should acquaint yourself with the field and the preferred texts and translations. Unless you have special reasons, you should use the more widely accepted texts and translations. eg. The translation by Guillaume of 'Ibn Ishāq's *Sīrat al-Nabī* is widely used, or Zettersten's Swedish translation of the Quran is usually preferred to Bernström's.

---

2) The semantic content of the term فتنة *fitna* is not easily represented in English with one single equivalent.

**NB: If it is necessary for the sake of comprehension, your analysis and argument you may want to deviate from or add comments to a certain text or translation.**

There should be no doubt whatsoever about the *authorship* of the editions and/or translations presented in your work. There should be no doubt in your work about which translations are yours and which are quoted from other translators. The sources of your translations, whether your own or those of others, should be *clearly marked* in your work, in the body of the text as well as in the bibliography.

Having said that, *you are ultimately responsible for all your choices*. You will be held accountable for the choices you make, even if you choose to use translations produced by others.

### Presentation

eg. Text 1, chapter 21, Schulz p.292

الأنظمة السياسية في العالم العربي  
نجد في العالم العربي حتى اليوم دولاً ذات أنظمة سياسية مختلفة كالجُمهوريات  
والممالك والسلطنات والمشايخ وقد قامت هذه الدول على أساس التقسيمات  
السياسية التي حصلت بعد انهيار الإمبراطورية العثمانية والنظام الاستعماري  
في إفريقيا والشرق الأوسط

### The political systems in the Arab world

We find in the Arab world, up to the present, countries that have different political systems, such as republics, kingdoms, sultanates and shaykhdoms. These countries are based<sup>[3]</sup> on the political divisions that have occurred after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the colonial regime in Africa and the Middle East. [my translation].

eg. Quran: Surat al-Baqara 2:255

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي  
الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا  
يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ  
حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ (Quran: Surat al-Baqara 2:255)

3) قام على أساس *qām 'alā 'asās* literally 'has risen on the basis of'. The verb قام على *qām 'alā* is in the active voice. It is here translated as passive voice in order to achieve a more idiomatic English translation.

## TRANSLATING AND QUOTING ARABIC TEXTS: Principles and Strategies

Allah! There is no deity save Him, the Alive, the Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtaketh Him. Unto Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that intercedeth with Him save by His leave? He knoweth that which is in front of them and that which is behind them, while they encompass nothing of His knowledge save what He will. His throne includeth the heavens and the earth, and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime, the Tremendous. [translation by Pickthall].

**NB: If it is absolutely necessary, you may add short clarifying remarks in the translation. Always include them in brackets [xxx] in order to mark that they are not part of the translated source text.**

**NB: Always be consistent.**

### 3. Translation Strategies

Many have argued that translation is like a *window into a world* to which the reader may or may not have access. As a medium, the less of a hindrance it is and the more transparent it is, the more effective translation becomes.

In research, we have argued above, translation is also a tool in the hands of the researcher. One could argue that *translation is a window into the mind of the researcher*. It exposes the understanding and reasoning of the researcher. It reveals the way linguistic data is handled, understood and analyzed.

In research, therefore, translation plays a double role. It:

- *gives the reader access to a world expressed in language*
- *gives the reader access to the thinking of the researcher*

#### 3.1 WORLD, LANGUAGE, TEXT and TRANSLATION

##### WORLD and LANGUAGE

Broadly one could say that LANGUAGE is a means of communication. *Language is a complex phenomenon*. The complexity of language arises from two main factors. The *complex WORLD* which language is used to communicate about, in and through and the *complexity of language itself*.

##### TEXT

In the same logic, *TEXT*, in its broadest sense, *is complex*. Text is one of many media through which communication is transmitted. Text is a subset of language, it is more or less limited to a narrower sense of language, excluding for example music, body language, etc.

The complexity of text is due on the one hand to the *many different elements involved in the composition of a text*: the language, the medium, the author, the reader, the transmitter, etc. On the other hand, the nature of text is also complex and diverse. In addition to the elements involved in the composition of a given text, *each text has a character of its own*, style, register, oral, written, cadence, tone, etc.

Combining the author(s)—presumed, known, unknown, fictitious or real—and their world(s), the reader(s)—past, present and future—and their world(s) and the

medium through which a text is composed and/or transmitted, the question of text's *intentionality* arises: Why was a given text composed the way it is? Why was this text transmitted? How was/is this text received? etc.

## TRANSLATION

The complexity described above is true when dealing with “one” language, “one” world, “one” text and “one” (set of) reader(s). Then *all the more complex the phenomenon becomes when dealing with two or more languages, worlds, texts, readers.*

The challenge posed by translation is on a *philosophical level* to convey a faithful representation of the source text to a given set of readers. On a *technical level*, the challenge is to achieve the *highest degree of equivalence* (see below, p.18) between the source and target texts on as many levels as possible.

### 3.2 Goals and Training

Translation is no easy task. It is as much an art as a technique that can be mastered. The following are goals that you should aim to achieve to higher and higher levels of proficiency through training and study:

- *mastery of the languages involved*
- *excellent knowledge of the texts involved*
- *excellent knowledge of the socio-cultural contexts of the texts*
- *excellent knowledge of the socio-cultural contexts of the readers*
- *excellent writing skills*
- *mastery of the discipline in which the research is conducted*

### 3.3 Types of Translations

There are many different types of translations: *literal, idiomatic, paraphrase, free*, etc. to mention only a few.

eg. صباح الخير

<b>literal:</b>	‘morning of goodness’
<b>idiomatic:</b>	‘good morning’
<b>paraphrase:</b>	‘what a nice morning’
<b>free:</b>	‘hello’

While it is expected that you, in general, will more often than not need to have *idiomatic* translations, it is nevertheless the specific needs of your work as a whole or in a specific part that will dictate which type of translation is, as stated above, **Necessary, Relevant, Adequate and Consistent**. Your translations should reflect the specific needs of every specific case in your work.

### 3.4 Terminology

In the field of translation there are hundreds of terms that are used. For our purposes here, we will define 8 terms:

***Connotative equivalence:***

The socio-cultural connotations of a certain term in a certain society (House 2009:31)

***Denotative equivalence:***

“The extralinguistic, ‘real-world’ referents to which the text relates” (House 2009:31)

***Equivalence:***

The level of equality - correspondence between two items.

*See also Connotative, Denotative and Pragmatic equivalence. See also below, p.18.*

***Pragmatic equivalence:***

Achieving in translation the same communicative function for a specific readership, in a specific socio-cultural context, as was the intention of the source text for another readership in another socio-cultural context. (House 2009:32)

***Semantic range:***

A lexical item, a word or word combination, has very often a wide range of meanings and nuances of meanings.

*head:*           uppermost part of the human body  
                  chief, leader  
                  thinker, planner  
                  etc.

**Source:**

In translation the language (source language = SL) or the text (source text = ST) from which a translation is made.

**Target:**

In translation the language (target language = TL) or the text (target text = TT) to which a translation is made.

**Text-normative equivalence:**

“The linguistic and textual norms of usage that characterize a particular text.” (House 2009:31, 32)

### **3.5 Equivalence**

As mentioned above, on a technical level, the challenge for a translator is to achieve the highest degree of *equivalence* between the source and target texts on all levels.

Equivalence has been defined as:

***The level of equality - correspondence between two items.***

In translations, equivalence can be summarized as such:

***Transmit what is said and how it is said, No additions and no deletions.***

The highest degree of *equivalence should be achieved on all levels: semantic, syntactic, textual and socio-cultural.*

In other words, ***the source text should be represented in all its complexities, meanings and nuances of meanings, intentionality, and socio-cultural references.*** This applies not only to lexical items but also to the syntax as well as to the composition of the source text as a whole.

For example, the translation of a clear and concise source text should result in a clear and concise target text. Similarly, a wordy (*style*) and ambiguous (*semantics, syntax*) source text should result in a wordy and ambiguous target text. A formal (*style*) text, should result is a formal text, and so on and so forth.

As mentioned earlier, as a translator, you will more often than not be presenting *idiomatic translations*. Thus the aim is to achieve the highest level of idiomatic equivalence rather than formal equivalence. For example, a literal translation aims at achieving formal equivalence, while an idiomatic translation *aims at achieving idiomatic equivalence*.

eg. صباح الخير

literal:	‘morning of goodness’
<b>idiomatic:</b>	‘good morning’
paraphrase:	‘what a nice morning’
free:	‘hello’

As a researcher, as opposed to a literary translator, you are expected to aim at achieving the highest degree of *denotative equivalence*, rather than other types of equivalence, such as connotative, pragmatic etc. *The focus should be on understanding and analyzing the text itself* rather than on the reader.

**NB: It is the specific needs of your work as a whole or in a specific part that will dictate which type of translation is Necessary, Relevant, Adequate and Consistent. Your translations should reflect the specific needs of every specific case in your work.**

*The translator’s goal* should be to achieve a *one to one equivalence*. In the real world, though, this is not always possible due to the complexities and diversity of the world. This is especially true when translating between “distant” languages or readerships. Thus when the translator is not able to achieve the ideal aim of *full equivalence* and some departure from the source text is inevitable, one should nevertheless attempt to at least achieve *near equivalence*. The target text should achieve the nearest possible equivalence to the source text.

Having said that, it is important to note that equivalence should be achieved on all levels including the *intentionality* of the source text:

- *Semantic*
- *Syntactic*
- *Textual*
- *Socio-cultural*

### 3.6 Strategies

The challenge for a translator is to achieve the highest degree of *equivalence* between the source and target texts on all levels.

The following are elemental strategies that can be followed in order to achieve a good and adequate translation:

**The following strategies are to be preferred:**

#### *One to One (many to many)*

eg.	قطار	'train'
eg.	صباح الخير	'good morning'

#### *One to Many*

eg.	تكبير	'proclaiming that God is the greatest'
-----	-------	----------------------------------------

#### *Many to One*

eg.	رأس المال	'capital'
-----	-----------	-----------

#### *Retention*

eg.	قرآن	Quran
eg.	شريعة	sharia

**The following strategies are to be used with much restraint and caution:**

#### *Calque*

eg.	صباح الورد	'rosy morning'
-----	------------	----------------

#### *Several Complementary Equivalents*

eg.	فتنة	'strife and discord'
-----	------	----------------------

#### *Explanation*

eg.	تكفير	'considering someone to be blasphemous and thus liable to punishment'
-----	-------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------

### Pitfalls in process of translation:

There are numerous pitfalls that need to be avoided when translating. The following are a few.

#### Semantic Range

Always make sure that you scrutinize the semantic range of the words or expressions in the source language and find equivalents in the target language that fit the context and intention of the source text.

eg.	عزيز	‘dear’, ‘beloved’
	عزيز	‘mighty’, ‘great’

#### Word order and Syntax

Make sure that you are not unnecessarily bound to the word order of the source language. **Word order is a powerful syntactic tool** in the production of language. Each language has its own rules and semantic implications of the possible ways words are combined. Much attention must be given so that **the target text follows the word order and syntax of the target language**, all the while trying to achieve the highest level of equivalence between the source text and the target text.

eg.	أكل الرجل التفاحة	‘the man ate the apple’ ( <i>unmarked</i> )
	الرجل أكل التفاحة	‘it is the man who ate the apple’ ( <i>marked</i> )

#### Domain

Not only do words and expressions have a (wide) semantic range, many words and expressions also have **specialized meanings** when used in **specialized domains**: legal, medical, technical, just to name a few. Make sure that you are aware of any specialized uses of words and expressions and find the appropriate equivalents in the appropriate equivalent domains.

eg.	زائدة	‘addition’ ( <i>unmarked</i> )
	زائدة	‘appendix’ ( <i>medical</i> )

## Metaphors and Expressions

It is important to keep in mind that *the meaning of expressions and metaphors is not always the equivalent of the sum total of the meaning of the lexical items that comprise it*. Therefore, in a translation, it is necessary to find the idiomatic equivalent of the idiomatic meaning of the word, expression or metaphor.

eg. ‘the apple of my eye’ ≠ ‘my eye has an apple’

### 3.7 An Example

In the following a source text and its translation are presented. Some comments are added in order to exemplify some of the issues discussed in this pamphlet.

**NB: It is the specific needs of your work as a whole or in a specific part that will dictate whether comments are Necessary, Relevant, Adequate and Consistent. Your comments should reflect the specific needs of every specific case in your work.**

Text 1, chapter 21, Schulz p.292.

الأنظمة السياسية في العالم العربي  
نجد في العالم العربي حتى اليوم دولاً ذات أنظمة سياسية مختلفة كالجumonيات  
والممالك والسلطنات والمشايخ وقد قامت هذه الدول على أساس التقسيمات  
السياسية التي حصلت بعد انهيار الإمبراطورية العثمانية والنظام الاستعماري  
في إفريقيا والشرق الأوسط

#### **The political systems in the Arab world**

We find in the Arab world, up to the present, countries that have different political systems, such as republics, kingdoms, sultanates[\*] and shaykhdoms[\*]. These countries are based[\*\*] on the political divisions that have occurred[\*\*\*] after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the colonial regime in Africa and the Middle East. [my translation]. [\*\*\*\*]

#### **Comments**

\* Note here that the term مشايخ *mašāyih* has been translated as ‘shaykhdoms’. See *Retention* in **3.6 Strategies** above. In our case here, the term *shaykh* has become a loan into English and thus the term *shaykhdom* is derived according to

the rules of the English language. The same applies for the term *sultanate*. Cf. *Oxford English Dictionary*.

\*\* قام على اساس *qām ‘alā ’asās* literally ‘has risen on the basis of’. The verb قام على *qām ‘alā* is in the active voice. It is here translated as passive voice in order to achieve a more idiomatic English translation.

\*\*\* While one could argue that logically تقسيمات *taqsīmāt* ‘divisions’ did not just حصلت *ḥaṣalat* ‘occur’, but that they were the result of the action of an agent, the source text has nevertheless chosen to leave the issue of the agent ambiguous and has used the stative verb حصل *ḥaṣal* ‘to occur’. This ambiguity is also reflected in the translation.

\*\*\*\* While the author of this text is discussing the establishment of the countries of the Arab world, he does not want to imply that these countries were ‘created’ and does not want to discuss the question of who established them the way they are. Therefore there is some ambiguity concerning the agent—the entity that has acted in the process of establishment—in the source text. This is also reflected in the translation.



## 4. Literature

Baker, Mona, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. New York: Routledge. 2011 (1992). ISBN: 978-0415467544

Dickins, J., Herve, S. & Higgins, I., *Thinking Arabic Translation: A course in translation method: Arabic to English*. London: Routledge. 2002. ISBN: 978-0415250658

House, Juliane, *Translation*. Oxford: OUP Oxford. 2009. ISBN: 978-0194389228

Schulz, E., Krahl, G. & Reuschel, W., *Standard Arabic. An elementary – intermediate course*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2005 (1996).

Quran

Quranic texts in Arabic and translation are retrieved from: <http://quran.com/>