



Answer Key

1. Identify any type of shift in the translation of the following sentences. (6 pts)

ST: States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care.

TT: تتعهد الدول الأطراف بأن تضمن للطفل الحماية والرعاية.

This example contains a **structure shift** in subject-verb sentence order. The translator rendered the **subject+verb** order in the English ST (States Parties undertake) into **verb+subject** in the Arabic TT (تتعهد الدول الأطراف). This structure shift was obligatory as the English sentence structure starts with the subject (subject+verb+object) whereas the Arabic structure starts with the verb (verb+subject+object). (2 pts)

ST: They shall be eligible for re-election if renominated.

TT: يجوز إعادة انتخابهم إذا جرى ترشيحهم من جديد.

This example contains a **unit shift** from a word in the ST into a sentence in the TT. The translator changed the English word (renominated) in the ST to the Arabic sentence (جرى ترشيحهم من جديد) in the TT. The English word (renominated) is a past participle forming the passive tense and also consists of the prefix 're-' which means 'to do again'. These implied meanings can only be rendered by a sentence in Arabic. (2 pts)

ST: Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution.

TT: اعتمدت وعرضت للتوقيع والتصديق والانضمام بموجب قرار الجمعية العامة.

This example includes a sequence of **intra-system shifts** from **indefinite nouns** in the ST (signature, ratification and accession) to **definite nouns** in the TT (التوقيع، التصديق، الانضمام). Definite articles were **not** used in English with abstract words due to grammatical rules. Nonetheless, the definite Arabic article (ال) was attached to the three Arabic equivalents of the indefinite English words. These **intra-system shifts** were obligatory due to the differences in linguistic systems between English and Arabic. (2pts)

2. Within the realm of untranslatability, different types of untranslatability are to be differentiated. Explain and illustrate with examples. (6 points).

The most key work in this respect is by J.C. Catford, who distinguishes between (**linguistic untranslatability**) and (**cultural untranslatability**).

- The **linguistic untranslatability** occurs when there is no equal lexical or syntactic substitute **in the target language (TL) for a source language (SL) item.** (1p)

Example:

- **كتبوا** **They (masculine) wrote** Katabu (third person plural, masculine)
- **كتبن** **They (feminine) wrote** Katabna (third person plural, feminine)
- **كتبا** **Both of them wrote** Katabaa (third person dual, masculine and feminine) (2pts)
- His second category, that is **cultural untranslatability**, is more problematic. **Linguistic untranslatability is caused due to differences in the SL and the TL, whereas cultural untranslatability is caused due to the absence of the particular cultural significance of a linguistic term in the TL for a relevant situational feature.** (1p)

Example:

- The term '**Cape-Horner**', which means « a ship that travels around Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America.»
- The term '**barque**' which refers to (a sailing ship with three, four or five masts)
- The term '**brig**' which refers to (a ship with two masts and square sails). (2pts)

3. Write an essay and illustrate with examples. (8 points)

According to Quine, one can obtain a multiplicity of correct translations. They might be incompatible with each other, yet there is no fact of the matter as to which is the "right" one.

Introduction.

Indeterminacy of translation. (1p)

The thesis defended by Quine that for any given language, there will always be multiple alternate ways of translating that language that are equally well supported by all the evidence that could possibly be available to a translator.

Radical translation (1p)

Quine adopts the strategy of supposing that a field linguist attempts to translate an unfamiliar language (spoken by a hitherto unknown tribe) into a familiar one. Imagine a field linguist, who is dropped into some remote area that has hitherto had no contact with the outside world. His goal: Translate the Jungle language into English.

Inscrutability of reference / Gavagai (3pts)

As the linguist and the native confront each other, a rabbit runs by. The native speaker points to a furry creature (rabbit) hopping into the bushes and says Gavagai! The linguist, Quine points out, would be ill-advised to conclude that Gavagai means "rabbit"; for Gavagai could



well mean "Lo! A rabbit!" "running," "furry thing," "animal," "a bad omen" or "supper tonight,".

Is the linguist justified in concluding that "gavagai" means "rabbit"? The linguist trying to understand the language has to decide whether the native speaker's utterance means "rabbit," "animal" or 'supper tonight",.....etc. It is exceedingly difficult to see how any amount of evidence could favor one of the translations of "gavagai" over another.

Examples. (3pts)

- Translating kinship terms is particularly problematic: For example, the word "**cousin**" has eight different Arabic equivalents, depending on the gender of the referent and which parental side . ابن خلة . ابن خال . ابن عمة . بنت خلة . بنت عم . بنت خال . ابن عم
- In order to translate accurately the English sentence "**I hired a teacher**," an Arab needs supplementary information, whether the "**teacher**" was a man or a woman, because he/she must make his/her choice between a masculine and feminine noun - معلم or معلمة If I ask the utterer of the English sentence whether the (teacher) was male or female, my question may be judged irrelevant or indiscreet, whereas in the Arabic version of this sentence an answer to this question is obligatory.

Conclusion.

It is easy to compare such a gradual loss with a circular series of unfavourable currency transactions. But evidently the richer the context of a message, the smaller the loss of information.