

**Overlap of translation terms/methods implications for Arabic language and translation studies**

تداخل مسميات اساليب الترجمة واثرها في اللغة العربية ودراسات الترجمة

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**Abstract**

Some translation methods overlap to the extent that they are an unnecessary proliferation of terms. The aim of this study therefore is twofold: Firstly, it examines four methods of translation (literal translation, overt translation, semantic translation, and direct translation). The study finds that these methods overlap to different degrees. While semantic and overt methods of translation apply similar features, literal translation has subtle differences from semantic and overt methods of translation. Direct Translation has more distinctive features than the other three methods. Secondly, the study examines the names for these methods in the Arabic language and shows how the Arabic terms overlap to a large extent, which is confusing to Arab practitioners. The study therefore suggests other names for the methods to minimize their overlap and increase their practicality.

**Keywords:** Literal Translation, Semantic Translation, Overt Translation, Direct Translation, Arabic Language, Terminology Overlap.

**ملخص**

تفترض هذه الدراسة التداخل الكبير لبعض اساليب الترجمة، لدرجة انهم يشكلون توزيع غير ضروري لمسميات هذه الاساليب. ينقسم هدف هذه الدراسة الى شقين. الاول: دراسة اربع انواع من اساليب الترجمة (الترجمة الحرفية، الترجمة الظاهرة، الترجمة الدلالية، الترجمة المباشرة). وجدت الدراسة ان هذه الاساليب تتداخل بدرجات متفاوتة. حيث تنطبق على الترجمة الدلالية والظاهرة الكثير من الصفات المتشابهة. في حين هناك اختلافات حاذقة بين الترجمة الحرفية والترجمة الدلالية والواضحة. بينما للترجمة المباشرة سمات مميزة تختلف عن اساليب الترجمة الثلاثة الاخرى. ركز الشق الثاني من الدراسة على اسماء هذه الاساليب باللغة العربية. حيث ان المسميات العربية لهذه الاساليب تتداخل بشكل كبير، وتشكل مصدرا للارتباك للعديد من ممارسين المهنة. لذلك قامت هذه الدراسة باقتراح اسماء اخرى لهذه الاساليب للحد من نسبة تداخلها وزيادة عمليتها.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الترجمة الحرفية، الترجمة بالمعنى، الترجمة الظاهرة، الترجمة المباشرة، تداخل مصطلحات الترجمة.

**Introduction**

Over the last three decades or so, both theory and practice of translation have been dominated by a number of dichotomies. We have had ‘literal’ vs. ‘free’ translation, the translation of ‘form’ vs. that of ‘function’, ‘communicative’ vs. ‘semantic’ translation, etc. The different methods of translation have always been one concern of those who work in the field of translation, although, as Newmark (1981) suggests, the evidence shows that there was no clear theory about translation or about its methods in the period prior to the emergence of modern linguistics. As a result of the internationalization of written information, modern technology and cross-cultural communication, translators started to feel the necessity for greater clarity of translation terminology to control the quality of translation product. Many emerging translation theories are derived from the field of linguistics, such as cognitive pragmatics (Gutt, 1989), communication and semantics (Newmark, 1981). To distinguish their methods, these theorists apply several criteria, such as attention to the reader, faithfulness to the source text (ST) and faithfulness to the target text (TT).

Though such theories have different theoretical underpinnings and apply different criteria, they apply overlapping terminology. It is true that academia inevitably breeds a plurality of terminology and this plurality can, at times, be useful. However, we claim that there is a lot of confusion that could be limited by an academic enquiry into the overlap of these terminologies. What we believe to be unnecessary proliferation of terms is confusing to translation practitioners; thus, examining the possibility of unifying the methods and reducing the terms is necessary. We aim to increase the terms' workability in translation to help us understand the process and practice with more clarity.

What is problematic is not only the proliferation of unnecessary terminology, but also the negative impression that such many terms give when presented as a conscious choice made by the translator (Hatim 1997, 2001). Most of the terms/methods designate the same content though they name it differently. Many students and translators cannot distinguish between those terms or methods. Moreover, some of the terms are not suggestive of their content, or how they should operate in translation practice. In addition, when practitioners use the Arabic names for the English ones, they apply them differently with varying functions and implications from the original ones as we will explain below.

For space constraints, we will not be able to consider all the terminologies of translation methods in one study. This paper will consider literal translation, semantic translation, overt translation, and direct translation; they belong to the same category of strategies most faithful to SL and ST, and therefore are comparable. Thus, the current research will answer the following questions:

1. Is it possible to minimize the number of translation methods in order to maximize their practicality in the practice and understanding of translation?
2. To what extent are the similarities and differences between the English terms preserved when translated into Arabic?

3. Where do the Arabic terms of the translation types overlap? And, would it be possible to unify any of them in order to reduce their ambiguity?

The problem of this terminology overlap is addressed in this paper. It defines and clarifies concepts, relates concepts to their frameworks, and enquires into the possibility of unifying the English terms of these translation methods, particularly in Arabic language. The study also compares definitions, criteria and interpretations by different scholars. The mentioned terms are discussed separately by eliciting their features and focus. The key features in the definition of each term are extracted and applied to all terms to detect the differences and similarities between them.

After analyzing the terms, a text, translated by the researchers using the four methods, will be evaluated. The terms of the translation types mentioned above will be examined in order to figure out whether the differences between them are articulated enough in the translation of this text. To identify whether Arab translators are aware of such methods as different or not, a questionnaire will be distributed to ten translators and translation students to report their understanding of the Arabic names of these methods. For considering and contrasting the Arabic terms, the study will use the translated version of the *Dictionary of Translation Studies* by Jamal Elgezeery (2008).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Theories of translation have been developed over years and centuries (Chesterman, 1997). Starting from literal translation, it was employed for translating holy and biblical texts. For fear of committing heresy and for worship reasons, translators had to respect the authority of the source text. According to Chesterman (1997), translators of such texts prefer to over-translate rather than having the license of freedom in translation. This inspires many different contemporary theories, which argue about free versus literal translation. Therefore, many scholars were motivated to produce different theories hovering around this theme of literal versus free translation, but with different manifestations and terms and over different periods of time. That shaped the literature of translation theory, like the

theories by Newmark (1981,1988), House (1977), Nord (1991), and Gutt (1989). These theories were put to practice translation of different kinds of texts, like philosophical and scientific texts and they value the form of the ST in order to be faithful to the original work.

Chesterman (2013) argues that each theory should be tested and verified as broadly as possible. He believes that despite the development of so many hypotheses over different places, they should be assessed and evaluated according to different cultures, not only according to the place where they have been produced. For example, Nida (1960) came out with dynamic equivalence due to the American biblical concerns to spread *The Bible* in different places all over the world; the Skopos theory by Vermeer (1989/2000) was to raise the status and the academic value of translation training in German universities.

Gambier (2009) sheds light on the synonymous pairs of terms of translation studies which belong to similar conceptual domains, for example, documentary vs. instrumental, overt vs. covert, and direct vs. indirect. The scholars who introduced these methods constantly refer to each other to explain their new terms. For example, Gutt (1989) uses the term direct as a strong equivalent for overt (House, 1977). Others, such as, Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997), limit the number of terms in their dictionary to the minimum. This cross reference also appears in instrumental-covert translations, and documentary-overt translations. Others focus on the pragmatic aspects of translation. Hassan (2011), for example, sheds light on the different models of translation by different scholars. He claims that all of these models have many things in common. For example, he suggests that literal and semantic translations, and dynamic and idiomatic translations are similar. Besides, other similar terms, according to Hassan (2011) are used by Nord (1991) and House (1977), particularly documentary vs. communicative translations as parallel to covert vs. overt translation.

### **The English terms**

In the following section, we will first briefly describe the translation methods as applied in English language (literal, semantic, overt, and



individual, and personal. It is further characterized by Newmark (1988) as attentive to nuances of meaning, detailed yet concise, economic, written at the author's linguistic level, and uncompromising or dogmatic. It focuses on the message and the thoughts rather than the form.

### ***Overt translation***

House (1977), the founder of the methods of 'overt' and 'covert' translation, defines overt translation as a mode of translation which does not need to be seen as an original text in the TL. Overt translation is considered by House (2001) as a case of 'language mention' in contrast to 'language use'. According to House (1997:66), "the addressees of the translated text are quite 'overtly' not being directly addressed". The translation is very much concerned with the ST's cultural and historical context, as in the translation of literary and historical works. An overt translation seeks to preserve the characteristics and cultural bounds of the original texts. That is, the translator should achieve an equivalent at the level of language, genre and register (House, 2001). The work of the translator as such becomes more 'visible' and more important. The TT reader can evaluate the ST's function 'at a distance' or 'from outside'. The translator cannot exactly produce the same ST function in the TL since the two languages' origins and the individual function of the two texts differ significantly. Therefore, the translator is only translating the linguistic units of the ST without any attempt to find a cultural equivalent (House, 1977).

### ***Direct Translation***

Direct translation is in accordance with the notion that translation must communicate the same meaning and stylistic effect as the original text, akin to direct speech (Gutt, 1989). Direct translation is dependent on several linguistic factors in the ST. These linguistic factors include the use of syntax (word structure), semantics (meaning in language), and lexicon (vocabulary and knowledge of the language). Therefore, direct translation provides a more fixed concept of translation. Furthermore, it is a concept that is suited to sustain all linguistic features of the original form (Gutt, 1989).



- It targets the same kind of readers in the TL.
- It keeps the equivalent effect; it focuses on transferring the exact meaning by the author to the reader, rather than producing an easy text for the reader.

### **Overt translation**

- It does not aim at producing an original text in the TL.
- It is very much concerned with preserving the ST culture, historical context and discourse world.
- The translator tries to make the ST function more obvious to the target reader, by achieving second level functional equivalence at the level of language, genre, and register.
- Translators work at achieving the same dimensional scheme (language users, the language use and their linguistic equivalents) in the TT as is in the ST.
- Overt translation results in an unnecessarily detailed new text, by producing excess meaning when compared to the ST (i.e. it focuses on information rather than communication).

### **Direct translation**

- It reflects the same meaning and the same stylistic effect as the original.
- It depends on the interpretive use of the translator of the original communicative clues of the ST.
- It seeks to preserve function in accordance with the original.

If we are to apply the main concepts and characteristics of these translation approaches to unravel their similarities and differences, we should consider the following table. In this table, the concepts are used to compare the different approaches as applying/not applying the features listed above.

	<b>Feature</b>	<b>Direct</b>	<b>Literal</b>	<b>Semantic</b>	<b>Overt</b>
1.	Closer to ST meaning	+	+	+	+
2.	Interpretive/ Second level function	+	-	+	+
3.	Naturalness of the translated text	+	-	+	+
4.	Max reproduction for ST style	+	-	+	+
5.	Achieves linguistic equivalence (syntactic equivalence)	+	+	+	+
6.	Objective, very specific to ST details	+	+	+	+
7.	Likelihood of misinterpretation	-	+	+	+
8.	Explicit as rather a translation to STR	-	+	+	+
9.	TR has access to ST function	-	+	+	+
10.	Focus on ST content more than communication	+	+	+	+
11.	No cultural adaptation	+	+	+	+
12.	Preserves ST context and characteristics	-	+	+	+
13.	Loyalty is more to author	+	+	+	+
14.	Loyalty is more to SL norms	-	+	+	+
15.	Gives the reader essential connotations only	+	-	+	+
16.	Achieves equivalent effect	+	-	+	+
17.	Any deviation from SL norms should be reflected in the TT	-	+	+	+

The approaches above show far more similarities than differences. The only approach that has more differences is direct translation. At this stage, we will consider all the approaches for similarities. The table above proves the existence of overlap between the different methods mentioned. They are close to the ST meaning (feature 1), achieve linguistic equivalence (syntactic equivalence) (feature 5), Objective (very specific to ST details) (feature 6), trigger no cultural adaptation (feature 9), focus more on the ST content than communication (feature 10), and loyal to the author (features 13).

Overt and semantic translations are different from literal translation in terms of features 3, 4, 5, 15 and 16. Specifically, literal translation does not trigger the function of the ST, does not try to achieve naturalness at the level of the TT, does not try to reproduce the style of the ST, does not try to give the essential connotations of the ST term, and therefore does not always try to achieve the equivalent effect. Still overt, semantic and literal translation have much in common. They are close to the ST meaning, achieve linguistic equivalence, objective, and explicit. The TT readers have access to the ST function, content, context and characteristics, and SL norms. Applying any of the three approaches, the TL reader knows that he/she is reading a translation, since he/she only has access to the ST norms.

Semantic and overt translation however are very similar in terms of every feature. Both designate the translator's attempt to reproduce the ST content and semantic meaning since he/she has a minimal right to change the function, the fabric, and the language dimension of the ST. Sometimes translators over-translate by reflecting every single detail. In other words, they describe a process of transferring many aspects in the ST without changing them.

Direct translation is distinct from the other approaches in many features (features 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14 and 17). It is more communicative as it triggers the notions of context, naturalness, and function more often. The TT is less explicit to the TL reader as a translation; therefore, any deviation from the SL norms becomes less observable. Misinterpretation therefore becomes less likely when we apply direct translation. The reason why this

approach is different is because it tries to achieve interpretative resemblance. Equivalent effect is not maintained through the SL norms and style, but through achieving relevance of the translation to the target reader's language norms and style. It is based on Relevance Theory (RT); it tries to make the translation as relevant to the target reader as possible. Chances of misinterpretation therefore are to the minimum as the translation is closer to the TT more than the ST.

To conclude, literal translation is subtly different from semantic and overt translation. Semantic and overt translations are very similar as they apply every feature in the table above. Direct translation is different because it applies some of the features on the ground of interpretive resemblance to the TT following RT.

### **The Methods in Application**

At this point we can claim that semantic and overt translation are the same, not only in terms of their theoretical characterization, but also in terms of their operation in translation practice. Moreover, as the differences between semantic, overt, and literal methods of translation were found to be subtle, we are before one central question: To what extent do such methods constrain the translator's selections and therefore produce different translations of the same text? We will try to apply Gutt's direct translation to examine the major differences between this approach and the other three approaches. We will use the following example as suggested by Gutt (1989;93) to investigate our latter claim:

*ST: "Thus we see that the fact that Jesus is called 'Jesus of Nazareth' is no reason to be embarrassed. Rather, as we have seen, God brought him there in a number of steps, each of which he himself directed, beginning, as our belief demands, in Bethlehem, and culminating in Nazareth."*

### **Literal translation**

"ولهذا فاننا نرى ان حقيقة ان عيسى يسمى بـ "عيسى الناصرة" ليست سببا للشعور بالحرج. وانما، كما راينا، الله جلبه هناك بعدة خطوات، كل واحدة منها هو بنفسه وجهها، في البداية، كما يتطلب ايماننا، في بيت لحم، ومن ثم بلغت ذروتها في الناصرة."

### Semantic translation

"ولهذا فإننا نرى ان حقيقة ان عيسى يسمى بـ "عيسى الناصرة" ليست سببا للشعور بالخرج. وانما، كما راينا، الله جليه هناك بعدة خطوات، كل واحدة منها هو بنفسه وجهها، في البداية، كما يتطلب ايماننا، في بيت لحم، ومن ثم بلغت ذروتها في الناصرة."

### Overt translation

"ولهذا فإننا نرى ان حقيقة ان عيسى يسمى بـ "عيسى الناصرة" ليست سببا للشعور بالخرابه. وانما، كما راينا، الله جليه هناك بعدة خطوات، كل واحدة منها هو بنفسه وجهها ، في البداية، كما يتطلب ايماننا، في بيت لحم، ومن ثم بلغت ذروتها في الناصرة."

### Direct translation

"ولهذا فإننا نرى في حقيقة أن يسوع "من اهل الناصرة" ليست سببا للشعور بالاستغراب، لانه، كما راينا، الله بعثه من هناك بعدة خطوات، كل واحدة منها وجهها هو بنفسه، بداية، كما تؤمن، من بيت لحم، حتى بلغت ذروتها في الناصرة."

By applying literal, overt, and semantic translations, our translations of the example by Gutt were very similar. By translating literally, we tried to produce a text that keeps the ST syntax and word order to the degree the TL allows. The translations as such did not report any deviations from the ST. However, one problem arises from applying literal translation. The normal syntactic form of the Arabic sentence is verb-subject (VS). Still, Arabic allows subject-verb (SV) syntactic structure to communicate a degree of markedness. To apply literal translation therefore is confusing to the translator; that is, if we keep the same structure of the English text (SV), a translator cannot know if he/she has distorted the ST, and to what degree. Loyalty in literal translation goes to the source language (SL) norms and structure. Again, that is why the translation tried to stick to the SL structure as much as the TL allows. For this reason, the TT looks awkward.

Semantic and overt translations produce a very similar text by applying literal translation. The text has a second level function, that is, to inform the reader of the history and culture of Christianity in Palestine, and invite him/her to believe that though Jesus has a godly image, he is still a human who was born in Bethlehem and moved to other places just like anybody else. Arab readers who know about the geography of

Palestine may not be able to trigger the second function; that is, Jesus is a god human. To produce this function, we need to add a great deal of information. The result would be a significantly more elaborated translation through interpretive selections at the word and sentence structure levels. This risks one important feature of semantic translation, which is preserving the context of the ST context, and language norms and style. This way the translation will not be dogmatic, uncompromising, and individual or personal according to Newmark (1988). The syntax, semantics, and even the choice of words of the ST were preserved in order to preserve the author's tone. Therefore, the translation of this text using semantic translation is the same as the one by using literal translation. Applying overt translation does not change the text any further. The translator does not have the right to predict anything about the ST because its function has to be preserved and the reader has to get access to the ST. The TL reader, using overt translation, should know that the text is a translation from outside. As we were striving to keep this feature, preserving the second level functional equivalence in the translation was a challenge. To preserve the same level of informativity, we had to stick to the ST style and linguistic features. That makes the translated text using overt translation no different from the previous ones according to literal and semantic translations.

By direct translation and through applying the principle of interpretive resemblance, the translation has many differences from the previous ones. We could, through our calculation of meaning as relevant to the ST reader, produce a text that is as relevant to the TT reader. For example: Jesus of Nazareth' does not establish any relevance to TL reader's understanding of the function of the text as the term by itself is not suggestive of any similar terms in the TL culture. As the term is very specific to the ST, we make some changes to explain it to the TT reader. That Jesus is from Nazareth communicates the function that he is an ordinary man and that never contradicts with the belief that he is God (following the ST author's belief). Through the English term, the Arab reader may not be able to establish this function as relevant. We changed the form of this term to the extent Arab readers could infer the meaning themselves. Other subsequent changes

were made to make the text more natural to the Arab reader, such as explicating the referring expression 'he' and choosing words with very approximate connotations to the original.

### The Arabic terms

The following part will try to explain the Arabic terms for literal, semantic, overt, and direct translations. To begin with, **direct translation** is translated as "الترجمة المباشرة" (Al-tarjama al-mubashera). Direct translation is based on the cost-benefit trade-off by the communicator to reach the intended cognitive effect of the message (Gutt, 1989). Elgezeery (2008, 97) defines direct translation as:

"يعمل جت في اطار نظرية المطابقة لمقتضى الحال"

[Gutt works in the framework of the theory of equivalence to the state of being]

Elgezeery also contends that:

"يعتبر النص المستهدف مباشرا اذا واذا فقط كان يرمي الى ان يشبه النص الاصلي شبيها كاملا من الوجهة التأويلية في السياق المتصور في النص الاصلي"

[The TT is direct if and only if it fully resembles the ST f as interpreted in the conceived context of the ST]

The word مباشرة (mubashera) is a good equivalence for *direct*; both terms ultimately denote more faithfulness to the ST. As it appears in the Arabic dictionary "معجم لسان العرب" (m'ajmlisan al-'arab), the word (mubashera) has synonymous meanings, such as (حالي، اني، مستقيم، واضح، صريح، صادق) (immediate, straightforward, clear, honest). All of these denotations imply that translation is made at the very surface level, and that no processing of meaning is required for the translator's rendition of meaning. None of these meanings however explains direct translation as a method centered in cognitive pragmatics.

The responses in the questionnaire do not ascertain the translators' awareness of what direct translation is. According to the responses, 80% of the translators know something about direct translation; only 10% of the responses indicates that the translators are completely aware of what direct

translation is, while 10% of them know nothing about it. It appears that 88.9% of the respondents use this strategy sometimes, while 11.1% of them do not use it at all. However, does what the translators know relate to the original meaning of direct translation? The answer is no. The way translators define direct translation does not relate to its actual meaning at all. Four of them think it is a simultaneous translation; one of them thinks it is literal translation, and one of them thinks it is a kind of paraphrasing. We believe therefore that this method should be translated following its function rather than its description by Gutt (1989, 1992) as direct translation. A good translation could be (الترجمة بالشبه لتفسير الاصل) (translation of interpretive resemblance). The new translation should be able to explain the essence of this method; therefore, translators will not be in a state of confusion when they apply this method.

**Overt translation** is translated as “الترجمة المكشوفة”. The word كشف (Kashafa) as appears in the Arabic dictionary (المعجم الوسيط) (alm'ajm alwsit) means:

"رفع عنه ما يواريه ويغطيه وكشف الامر عنه واطهره"

[ To expose or uncover something]

The translated definition by Elgezeery (2008, 234) highlights the meaning of "الترجمة المكشوفة" (Al-tarjama almakshofa) as:

"وفقا لنموذج هاوس بعض النصوص لها مكانة مستقلة في الثقافة الاصلية. وتتوجه للمخاطبين في اللغة الاصلية على وجه التحديد، ولترجمة النصوص الاصلية من هذا القبيل ترجمة مناسبة لا بد من انتاج ترجمة مكشوفة او ترجمة لا تتم فيها مخاطبة المخاطبين المستهدفين مخاطبة مباشرة على نحو مكشوف."

[According to House model, some texts have an independent status in the original culture and target the SL audience more specifically. To translate such texts appropriately, the translation should be overt and should not address the TL reader directly or overtly]

نظرا لرسوخ النص الاصيلي في الثقافة الاصلية ليس بالإمكان الحفاظ على وظيفته الاصلية (بالنسبة للسياق والجمهور الخ) في النص المستهدف“

[As the ST context is important in the original culture, it is hard to keep its original function in the TT context]

This definition is confusing. The translation applies the terms *overt* (makshoufah) and *direct* (mubashera) at the same time. Now if we know that direct translation is referred to in Arabic language as (mubashera), the translator will think that both of direct and overt translations are the same. If we don't, then the definition applies very redundant terms as (makshoufah) and (mubashera) which carry very similar meanings. The results of the questionnaire confirm the state of translators' confusion when they apply overt translation. It seems that 77.8% of participants do not know anything about overt translation and the remaining 22.8% are only partially aware of it. Furthermore, not all those who are aware of overt translation use it; only 11.1% of participants say they employ this method. Six participants (out of 10 participants) do not know what overt translation is; three participants are able to identify it as the type of translation which aims to make the ST and its culture overt. One participant misunderstands overt translation to refer less to the form of the ST. The meaning of overt translation is not clear enough among the participants which indicates that this Arabic term of overt translation may need to be modified. To represent overt translation as different from direct translation, we therefore suggest the following translation (الترجمة باظهار النص الاصلي) (The translation by making the ST overt). By applying this translation, the translator becomes aware of the function of overt translation from the name of the method.

**Semantic translation** is translated as (الترجمة الدلالية) (Al-tarjama al-dalaliya) in the literature about translation. The word الدلالة in the Arabic dictionary (المعجم الوسيط) (alm'ajam alwasit) means:

"الدلالة تعني الارشاد او ما يقتديه اللفظ عند اطلاقه"

[Semantic means signaling or what the term signals when uttered.]

The definition for semantic translation is translated by Elgezeery (2008, 294) as:

"يحاول المترجم في ظل القيود التركيبية النحوية والقيود الدلالية للغة المستهدفة ان يعيد انتاج المعنى السياقي الدقيق للمؤلف"

[The translator, in light of the structural, syntactic and semantic constraints, tries to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original]

This definition reflects the main aspects of semantic translation, particularly the context and the specific meaning of the author. The Arabic term الدلالية (al-dalaliya) is expressive of semantic translation as دلالة (dalala), which is a well-established term in Arabic semantics. Still we may need to explain this term (in brackets) to communicate the implication that the translator needs to preserve the context and the specific meaning of the author. This could help the translator to communicate the text through semantic translation.

As for the questionnaire findings about translators' awareness and choice of semantic translation, a third of the participants is entirely unaware of الترجمة الدلالية (atarjama a dalaliya), and 22.2% of them think they know a lot about the subject and 44.4% say they know nothing at all. A third of participants claims that they never use the method; the other two thirds, demonstrate that they sometimes use it. Three participants do not know what it means while the other participants define it in different ways. One of the participants takes it as the opposite of literal translation where the text seems original and not translated. Another participant defines it as rendering both the form and content of the SL into its nearest equivalent in the TL, therefore allowing for its contextual value.

**Literal translation** is translated as “الترجمة الحرفية” (Al-tarjama al-harfīya). This term gives the impression of translating the ST's wording and grammar exactly. It is translated by Elgezeery (2008, 194) as follows:

"ترجمة يتم القيام بها على مستوى اقل مما يكفي لتوصيل المضمون دون تغيير عند مراعاة أعراف اللغة المستهدفة"

[It is a translation that is lower than what is needed to communicate the content without change with regard to the norms of the TT]

According to the participants, 50% of the translators know something about literal translation, while 40% know a lot about it; only 10% know nothing about it. 66.7 % use it sparingly, and 22.2% do not use it at all, and 11.1% use it a lot. It means almost the same for all of the participants who claim to understand it. Seven participants define it as translating word for word 'like Google'.

We find the term (Harfiya) (from the Arabic word حرف (harf) which means letter) problematic as the term suggests a translation that is performed at the lowest level, as low as the letter of a word. This does not fully communicate the meaning of literal translation. The unit in literal translation could vary from word to sentence following the degree allowed by the TL structure. Therefore, we believe that this translation of literal translation should be modified. As far as the definition is concerned, it does not mention clearly that literal translation translates out of context. A better translation for the term literal could be (الترجمه الموازية) (parallel translation). This translation does not focus on the unit of translation as it could vary following the level of word choice and structure of the TT.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined and highlighted the features of literal translation, overt translation, semantic translation, and direct translation. The methods were found to overlap to different levels. Semantic and overt translations were found to apply very similar features. Literal translation, however, has some differences from overt and semantic translations. Such differences however were found to be subtle and less significant. Direct translation displayed more significant differences from overt, semantic, and literal translations. The study also tried to verify such findings by applying the four translations to the same text. Overt, semantic, and literal translations do not produce different translations of the same text. Direct translation however could verify itself distinctively from the other methods. It applies different features and has its origins in relevance theory. Direct translation could keep some degree of parallelism between its interpretive aspect and its faithfulness to the ST language norms and style through its application of 'interpretive resemblance'.

The study also investigated 10 participants' translators' responses to a questionnaire about their awareness of the different translation methods and whether they apply them in translation. The questionnaire reported that in most of the cases the translators were not aware of such methods in their translation of different texts. The study therefore tried to revisit the Arabic translations of the terms 'literal', 'overt', 'semantic', and 'direct' to reduce their ambiguity and make them more useful for translators. In Arabic language, the terms 'overt' and 'direct' were found to overlap as they are synonymous. The names 'overt' and 'direct' were not suggestive of main functions of direct and overt translations. Literal translation also was found problematic. It mainly suggests a unit of translation below the word level. To rid the terms of their difficulty and reduce their confusion, some alternative names/descriptions were suggested to make them more helpful for translation practitioners.

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