Book Review

Taibi, Mustapha, (Ed.) (2016). *New insights into Arabic translation and interpreting.* Bristol/Buffalo/Toronto: Multilingual Matters. 184pp. ISBN13: 978-1-78309-524-7

Reviewed by:
M. Zain Sulaiman
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi
Visiting Researcher, Monash University, Australia
zain@ukm.edu.my

Used by approximately 300 million native speakers and almost 1.2 billion non-native speakers, Arabic is one of the most widely spoken languages of the world (Abushariah, Neustein, & Hammo, 2016). It is an official language in 26 countries in three geographical regions, namely the Levant, Arabian Peninsula and Africa, and one of the six official languages of the United Nations. Despite the importance of Arabic in global communication and the increasing number of studies on translation, scholarship and research on Arabic translation in particular remain relatively limited. With the current developments in the geopolitics of the Arab world, the need for references which focus on Arabic translation is even more pressing. This volume of seven chapters edited by Mustapha Taibi makes a significant and timely contribution to address this need.

Stuart Campbell opens the volume with a brief yet highly informative introduction on the Arab world and the Arabic language in relation to translation and translation scholarship. This is followed by an overview of the seven chapters which address various topics on Arabic translation ranging from power relations to the translation of colour metaphors.

The first chapter by Said Faiq titled *Through the Master Discourse of Translation* does a great job of setting the scene for the rest of the volume. Addressing the broader questions of power relations between Arabic and Western *culguages* (the combination of culture and language), the chapter provides a global view of the current state and status of translation from Arabic and speaks of a translation culture in which stereotyping and misrepresentation are perpetuated. Focusing on the literary scene, Faiq explains how Arabic texts are translated into English through what he terms the 'master discourse', suggesting that the translation act itself is dictated, influenced, hegemonised and controlled by a dominant colonial master. The master discourse is one through which 'weak' cultures are represented by

'powerful' ones. Faiq asserts that understanding how master discourses operate can potentially empower translators and overcome the current practices of reinforcing existing (mis)representations and stereotypes of one culture by another. He stresses further that the translator as a cultural mediator should practice a translation culture that reflects the true meaning of translation and leads to a rapprochement of different cultures.

In Chapter 2, Mustapha Taibi focuses on community interpreting and translation training in the Arab world, suggesting that little has been done in this regard despite the dire need to cater for at least three major community groups: domestic language minorities, migrant workers, and pilgrims. According to Taibi, appropriate training is one of the most important prerequisites to ensure quality professional community interpreting and translation services. He goes on to mention two main deficiencies in interpreting and translation programmes in Arab institutions of higher learning. First, there is no translation or interpreting programmes with a community focus, and second, most translation or interpreting programmes remain limited to major European languages. As a result, locally needed domestic languages (such as Berber in Morocco) and emerging languages (such as those spoken by pilgrims in Saudi Arabia and migrant workers in the Gulf states) are ignored. Thus, Taibi calls for an innovative overhaul of the curricula in Arab universities by introducing community translation and interpreting and including languages that are needed locally. He states that change is already beginning to take place and goes on to describe in detail an initiative at King Saud University, Saudi Arabia, which aims to implement such a change for the first time in the Arab world. Taibi's chapter is a good example of how the Western community interpreting and translation model, as pioneered in countries such as Australia, Sweden and Canada, can be adapted to the Arab world to "improve the lives and experiences of millions of non-Arabic speaking citizens, residents and visitors" (p. 39).

Continuing with the topic of community translation, Mustapha Taibi and Ahmad Qadi extend the discussion of the previous chapter by describing a case study which focused on one of the social contexts in which community translation services are in dire need in the Arab world: translating for pilgrims visiting Saudi Arabia. Taibi and Qadi highlight the fact that, although an enormous amount of money and effort have been directed to improve the physical infrastructure and facilities, health services, transport and administration, little has been done to improve communication between Hajj (pilgrimage) authorities/service providers and non-Arabic speaking pilgrims. The qualitative research conducted by the authors on the translation of 12 Hajj-related documents to assess their quality has shown serious weaknesses at the most basic level of language competence. They found some of the translations to be hardly readable or comprehensible. Poor language skills were not only evident in flyers and brochures but -more alarmingly- also on official government websites, which indicates that not only is there inadequacy in language proficiency among translators but also in quality monitoring. Taibi and Qadi note that although the Hajj-related texts are produced with the intention to "simultaneously inform, instruct and guide the behaviour of a large number of pilgrims, in order for the Hajj to run smoothly and without casualties" (p. 57), it seems that the translations in many instances fail to carry out this critical function. The findings of Taibi and Qadi point to potential new areas of research in Translation Studies to improve cross-

cultural communication during the largest annual gathering of people in the world.

Still on the topic of community interpreting and translation, Mustapha Taibi and Mohamed El Madkouri Maataoui focus on one of the most challenging areas of Arabic interpreting in public service settings: cultural taboos. The authors lay the foundation for their discussion by highlighting the close connection between culture and language in translation and stress that cultural knowledge and intercultural sensitivity are of paramount importance in dealing with taboo language and topics. Taking the public service interpreting in Spain as a point of reference, Taibi and El Madkouri Maataoui explore the views of practising interpreters on the most appropriate way of handling sex-related taboos. They also demonstrate how gender and ethnicity combinations of participants play a crucial role in facilitating or hindering the process of interpreting. Two main findings of the chapter are: Firstly, taboo boundaries and the implications of obscenity and profanity differ from one culture to another. Secondly, community interpreters are divided as to how taboo language and topics should be dealt with, making it rather difficult to formulate standard rules which can apply to different settings and cultural groups. Given the cultural differences and complexities, Taibi and El Madkouri Maataoui suggest that community interpreters should deal with taboo language and topics with "reasoned caution and sound professional judgement" (p. 88).

Focusing on a key area of specialisation in Translation Studies, Ilhami and Way explore the importance of terminology in translation and interpreting undergraduate programs - in particular for students who have Arabic as their first foreign language. They address this topic in a methodical way, providing a solid background on the specificities of terminology for the Arabic language, particularly the shortcomings it presents and the challenges it faces. They then demonstrate the different aspects of terminology between Spanish and Modern Standard Arabic before commenting on the history of terminology as a component in the curricula of translation and interpreting programmes in Spain. After contextualising their study, Ilhami and Way address the extent to which the teaching of terminology is adequate for students who have Arabic as their B language. The results of the survey conducted at their university indicate that a terminology module adapted to the students' needs in Arabic is lacking. Based on this finding, Ilhami and Way propose a number of practical changes and solutions to enhance current teaching practices at their university in order to meet the real training needs of B language Arabic translation and interpreting students.

Chapter 6 deals with yet another area of specialisation in Translation Studies, to wit legal texts. In this chapter, Mohamed Mediouni, a practisearcher, calls for a more communicative and functional approach to Arabic-English legal translation. Drawing on functional theories in Translation Studies and his own experience as a professional legal translator, he proposes a three-phase communicative and functional method for teaching Arabic-English legal translation. A key feature of this method is the use of parallel and comparable texts, the relevance of which have been widely recognised in Translation Studies (Schäffner, 1998). These texts are used to discover regular, typical text-typological conventions in the target language and to subsequently formulate effective translation strategies. To test the effectiveness of this method, Mediouni carried out an experiment with students at the King Fahd School of Translation in Tangier, Morocco. The

results showed that parallel and comparable corpora are exceptionally useful in improving the effectiveness of students' translations of legal texts.

The final chapter by Sami Chatti concerns the translation of colour metaphors. Drawing on the cultural approach to translation and conceptual blending theory, he develops a cognitive model which integrates the notions of symbolism and cultural filtering. These notions, which operate over source and target domains, create a novel 'blending space' in which different cultural perceptions can be adequately dealt with. To illustrate the model, Chatti provides practical examples from the Arabic-English language combination. The final chapter is followed by Said Faiq's concluding remarks in which he reiterates the need for increased attention to Arabic translation and interpreting which remains largely under-reported and under-researched in mainstream Translation Studies despite the vital role played by the Arabic language and Arabic translation in the global arena today.

In general, this is a very engaging and useful volume that addresses a range of topical issues by providing sound theoretical frameworks and practical solutions. Not only scholars and practitioners working in the field of Arabic-English translation and interpreting, but also those working within the framework of other language combinations will most certainly benefit from this volume. The contributions to this volume intersect many inter-disciplinary perspectives, covering a range of topics including the politics of translation, community translation and interpreting, translation pedagogy and training, terminology, legal texts and the use of metaphors, and will provide Translation Studies scholars of different (sub) disciplines with -as the title of the volume suggests - a wealth of new insights to consider within their own research context.

References

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