

Techniques of translation : Modulation

Definition :

Modulation is one of the indirect techniques of translation, it is defined by Gerard Hardin & Gynthia picot (1990) as “*a change in point of view that allows us to express the same phenomenon in a different way*”. Which means shedding light on the idea to be translated from another different part/ angle, without altering the meaning. Modulation is usually referred to when the translation looks like unnatural in the target language.

We can distinguish two types of modulation:

1-Recorded/standard modulation: which is used in bilingual dictionaries, it is conventionally established and is considered to be a ready-made procedure.

Example: No way! C'est pas vrai! مستحيل
Shut up! ta gueule! اصمت/اخرس

2-Free modulation: this type is more practical in cases where “the target language rejects literal translation”, as it shows the competence of the translator to express things differently while keeping the same meaning.

Free modulation can be practiced in several manners according to the point of view of the translator to the idea to be translated:

a- abstract for concrete modulation & vice versa: example: they **lost their lives** in a car crash = ils **ont trouvé la mort** dans un accident de voiture. لقوا حتفهم في حادث سيارة (مميت)

b- contrary negative modulation & vice versa: example: **it's not difficult** to be a good translator = il **est facile de** devenir un bon traducteur
من السهل أن تصبح مترجماً جيداً.

c- part of whole modulation & vice versa: example: il passé des heures et des heures en sommeil = he sleeps most of his day = ينام طوال اليوم

d- passive for active modulation & vice versa: example : **on dit** qu'il est sérieux = **he is said** to be serious = جدّيًا/يقال عنه صارماً

PS: there are many other types of free modulation that can be used, like time for space, cause for effect, means for the result & vice versa, they still uncommon but always useful.

Task: find in the following sentences and their translation the type of modulation, propose a translation into Arabic by using modulation if any.

- 1- Do it by the book = faites ça dans les règles. -----
- 2- Do you have a health insurance = avez-vous une assurances maladies. -----

- 3- You have to wear your life jacket = mets un gilet de sauvetage. -----
- 4- Put yourself in my shoes = mets-toi dans ma place. -----
- 5- The houses were all dark = pas une maison n'avait de lumière. -----
- 6- He was knee-deep in water = l'eau lui arrivait jusqu'aux genoux. -----
- 7- How grave he was! = il était d'un sérieux. -----
- 8- Keep this to yourself = n'en parles à personne. -----
- 9- Lost property = objets trouvés. -----
- 10- He had goose pimples = il avait la chair de poule. -----