



Writing Skills BA (JMC) 109 UNIT 4

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Syllabus- Unit 4

Translation

1. Translation Practice: Translation, Transliteration, and Trans-creation: Concept, forms, and manifestations
2. The location, scope and significance of translation in Indian media
3. Process of translation from English to Hindi and vice-versa

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Translation Practice: Translation, Transliteration, and Trans-creation: Concept, forms, and manifestations

What is Translation?


- As per Oxford Dictionary, translation is "the process of changing words or text from one language to another where grammatical correctness and accuracy holds significance".
- **Translation** is the communication of the meaning of a source-language text by means of an equivalent target language text.
- The English word translation has been derived from the Latin word translation, which itself comes from **trans- and latum-** together meaning "**a carrying across**" or "**a bringing across**".
- So, it is the business of carrying across a message/written content from one text to another, from one person to another and from one language (source language) to a different language (target language).

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- It is an interpretative process and depends on nature of document
- Translation of a technical or promotional document is easier and requires less skill and expertise than the translation of a text of literature


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Need of Translation

- If you are a journalist working in a multilingual society, you may have to work in more than one language. Whether you gather the information in one language and write the story in another, or whether you write a story first in one language and then rewrite in another language, you face the task of translation.
- However, if you have a good command of both languages and follow a few simple rules, translation should not be difficult.

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Principles of Translation

1. Beware of false friends


- These are words or phrases from original source language which are retained in the translation, often because the correct translation cannot be thought of. But if you can't, how will the reader understand?
- Remember, you are translating meaning, not words
- If can't think of a word in language of target audience, then you can use phrases.

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- If can't think of a word in language of target audience, then use phrases.
- Refer colleagues or consult experts if you are facing problem to translate.
- If a journalist is working in a small language community, then the word use can become standard usage.
- Some foreign words like '**computer**' can creep into other languages and eventually be understood by all.
- Problem arises in time between when the foreign word is first introduces and is being understood by all.

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- In this case, use the word untranslated and explain it later.
- For example: The provincial government is to buy computers for each of its local offices. The computers are machines which will help office staff to keep accounts, write letters and do other jobs.

2. Careful use of dictionaries

- Don't use words in isolation, refer to the context, understand meaning and do contextual translation
- Use a bilingual dictionary, but be careful with translating individual words as there is more than one translation of a word
- Ex- 'skip' has several meanings, to move lightly, especially by

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jumping from one foot to another; to omit or leave something out; to deal with something quickly and without much thought; a large container for transporting building materials, especially waste. It can even be short for "skipper", the captain of a ship or sports team.

- You can see that using the wrong translation of 'skip' could have some unfortunate results.

3. Writing style


- No need to be an expert in linguistic to be able to translate well
- Hear the sentence in target language in your head and you'll see if the sentences sound correct.
- Don't try to copy the word order or grammar from source language. See if it fits in the target language also or not.

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- Not mandatory to use all the words from your source language if not required in the target language
- For ex-The ship sank lower in the water. But in some other language, words like lower in the water may be unnecessary as the idea of water is there with other words.
- Also, don't be afraid to use more words in translation that in source language.
- Although, it is recommended to keep it crisp, but the ideas should be communicated with utmost clarity.

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4. Accuracy


- Some languages are more accurate than others.

-Language groups in Papua New Guinea have more than 10 different words for varieties of sweet potato.

-In Canada, people have different words for 20 different things, which we in English just call 'snow'.

- The vagueness of some words in English may not be acceptable in other languages. For ex: in English we can write 'Doctor Smith', but in Chinese we need to know about the gender too to translate 'Doctor'.


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5. Names and titles

- There is still a debate whether names and titles should be translated or not. For ex. 'English Department' should be translated to 'office for schools'?
- In this case, the organization should have a policy, as it depends how the rest of the community uses the term.
- A large, hard-bound book for news desk can be provided thumb indexed a-z down the side, can be called Translation Style Guide.
- Media houses can get hard bound book for usage of such words.

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- Can deal with it by being aware of how the same language is being used in different areas, the usage can even change in motherland. Eg. French.
- So, constantly refresh your understanding and keep yourself up-to-date to understand the language.

6. Translation during news gathering


- Your work may involve interviewing in one language and writing story in another language.
- Ex- you may have to interview a villager for an English newspaper.
- The best way is to conduct the interview in villager's language and make your notes in that language too. This will help you make changes or clear your doubts in villager's language.

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- If you don't know to write the source language, then you can **listen to it and translate in your own language** when taking notes itself. It is better to write even tiny things in that case.
- Reporters for print as well as electronic media should take tape recorders with them and cross check later with notes to avoid any discrepancy. Can ask villager to slow down too.
- When having to translate the story twice, refer to original notes only.

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Types of Translations

1. Word to word or factual translation

- TL tries to meet SL as closely as possible as true word for word translation is very difficult.
- Often has chances of mistranslation. Eg. Google translator.

2. Literal translation

- Translating text from one language to another, with or without conveying the sense of original.
- Involves translating each word separately.
- No addition or deletion of words, word to word

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- A literal English translation of the German word "Kindergarten" would be "children garden," but in English the expression refers to the school year between pre-school and first grade.

3. Summarized translation

- It allows the readers to understand the key points of the original document. Ex. to merger and acquisition transactions, or litigation discoveries.
- Often used for large volumes of material that is examined for relevance, and hence only the summary is translated as it is cost-effective.

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- Also useful where turn around time is very tight
- A professional translator reads a document to assess important points, then summarize and translate it to target language.
- It helps the reader get essential understanding of the text.

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4. Free translation

- A free translation is a translation that preserves the **meaning of original but uses natural form of target language**, includes normal word order.
- It is idiomatic translation (specific to particular style)
- **Can add or delete words too.**

Ex. French idiom "Chercher midi à quatorze heures"
Word-to-word meaning is "to look for midday at 2pm,"
Free translation-"**to over complicate things**".

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5. Translation based on appropriate reference

- Translators should pay special attention to differences between two cultures in their languages.
- Should include words in target language that contain important cultural references. A few techniques to do so are:

-Adaptation: Words from source language can be used such as *chai* instead of tea, as internationally, tea refers to milk-less black tea and not the milk-based sweet concoction available in India.

-Substitution: Here the source words can be replaced with similar meaning words.

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(The target expression must not be borrowed from any other language)


-Definition: Instead of using a word with different meaning, you can use a definition of the word in target language.

-Omission: This is the least desirable option and can be done when you believe that the translation would confuse the reader.

6. Translating according to pronunciation

- Translator can simply form a new word copying the pronunciation of a specific word in a source language.

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- Like the word *rendezvous* remains *rendezvous*. It is not translated as its meaning is acceptable. Same for words like *cliché*, *amour*, *touché* etc.

7. Paraphrasing translation (using synonyms)

- Paraphrasing is a restatement of the **meaning** of a text or passage using other words.
- It is different from translation as translation is done in a different language, but paraphrasing is clarifying the meaning in the **same language**.


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• For example: Synonyms for 'say'-'utter', 'articulate', 'voice', 'state', 'mention', 'murmur', and 'whisper'.

-One day, when I paid a visit to John, he **said** that I should have gone more often to his house. I ignored what he had **uttered** because whenever I wanted to **voice** my opinion against, we will be engaging in verbal war. Thus, I usually **mention** this to my wife in the hope that she will excuse me for not visiting her cousin. My better half loves to **whisper** to me when we talk in public and sometimes I miss most of what she has **murmured**. She will feel offended and give me her cold shoulder there and then until I offer my apologies to her.


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Transliteration

- Transliteration means representation of words and phrases of one language by the alphabets of another keeping their pronunciation intact.
- In simple words, transliteration is to represent or spell in the characters of another alphabet.
- The language, grammar, and sense of original text remains intact in the new characters.
- Common in social media

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Comparison between translation and transliteration

Both have a source language and target language.

Translation: It means transferring meaning between different languages


Ex- मैं जा रहा हूँ-I am going.

Transliteration: It means converting characters between scripts

Ex: Main jaa raha hu.

Ex: This is the Hebrew word for the Festival of Lights holiday: חנוכה. The English transliteration of the Hebrew word is *Hanukkah*. In Spanish, the transliteration is *Janucá* or *Jánuka*.


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Activity for translation and transliteration:

1. Sentence-उसने मुझे जाने नहीं दिया।
2. Sentence-एक नयी शुरुआत


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When is transliteration used?

- Restaurant menus also use transliteration.
- Additional places include libraries where transliteration allows people to perform searches for content in different writing systems; the academic world especially in research papers; and in our everyday language.
- Words like karate (Japanese) and pajamas (Urdu) were borrowed by the English language and transliterated from their original text into the Latin alphabet.


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Transcreation

- Transcreation is especially a transformation of a global message including the written content, images and visual designs. As a result of transcreation, the new audience feel similar to original audience.
- It is a term used chiefly by advertising and marketing professionals to refer to the process of adapting a message from one language to another, while maintaining its intent, style, tone, and context.
- A successfully transcreated message evokes the same emotions and carries the same implications in the target language as it does in the source language.


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Increasingly, transcreation is used in global marketing and advertising campaigns as advertisers seek to transcend the boundaries of culture and language.

- It also takes account of images which are used within a creative message, ensuring that they are suitable for the target local market.
- Trans-creation is a relatively new term and its precise meaning is still being defined.


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Examples of transcreation

- Red Bull
 - Why do people buy it?- It is selling an image of being extraordinary.
 - In China, it made several adjustments to packaging+product
 - not carbonated, sells in red, gold, and black, signifying luck, wealth and good fortune there.
- McDonalds
 - Adjusted its North American slogan from "I'm lovin' it" to "I just like it" in China as love is extremely serious in the language and rarely said aloud.


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The location, scope and significance of translation in Indian media

- 'Indian literature', 'Indian culture', 'Indian philosophy' and 'Indian knowledge systems' would have been **impossible** in the absence of translations.
- India is a **multilingual** country with many languages and scripts, hence translation is very important here.
- Everyday communications are now **bilingual** if not multilingual.
- We keep translating almost unconsciously** from our mother-tongues when we converse with people who use a language different from ours.
- Our first writers were also translators. Ex. Ramayana and Mahabharata. Indian literature is founded on free translations.
- Up to 19th century, literature was only translations, adaptations, retellings and interpretations.


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Role and scope of translation

1. **Translation has helped knit India together as a nation throughout history:** Introduces us to diverse modes & various regional cultures thus linking land and communities together.
2. **Role in extending scope of language:** You don't only learn foreign literature, but philosophies like computer science, nano-technology.
3. **It strengthens democracy:** By establishing equality between different languages by showing that text can be translated in any language that is widely spoken and understood.

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- **Promotes growth of literature and knowledge:** By translating masterpieces from other languages (Indian or foreign), thereby enriching our own literatures.
- We also raise our writing standards especially when translating great masters of world literature like Shakespeare, Valmiki, etc.

Scope of translation

Translation and avenues of translators are constantly expanding.


- Many institutions across the world are dedicated to **literary translation** like Sahitya Akademi, National Book Trust, regional literary associations and publishing houses, which translate foreign literature into Indian and vice versa and need translators.
- As there is new interest of Indian literature abroad. Eg. Literature festivals from Berlin to Jaipur.

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- Govt. of India has also launched a new mission Indian Literature Abroad (ILA). Big publishing houses like Penguin, Macmillan are also promoting translated works.
- National Translation Mission is a GOI initiative to make knowledge texts accessible to all. translates textbooks and classical works in areas like history, sociology, medicine, geography, etc. (**knowledge translation**)
- The GOI offers grants and fellowship to translators


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Media translation

- The **print, electronic, visual and auditory media-newspapers, magazines, radio, television, cinema etc.** need plenty of translators from one language into another.
- Many media houses publish papers and journals or run television channels in several languages at the same time and they need quick yet communicative translations of news, serials, film scripts and programmes. Dubbing and subtitling are other areas.
- In this constantly changing world, it has become important to keep up with latest trend and that's why translation is important in media to formulate effective strategy.
- Multilingualism is something that should be seriously considered


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these days in business because it paves the accurate direction to companies in foreign economy. Besides, it ensures that you are passing on accurate message from one end to another.

- Media could be promotional, ad, informational, online and offline content, social media posts, mass media campaign, etc. increase capability to reach more customers.


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Importance of translation in journalism

- News and journalism translation from one language to another is important for various journals, publications, websites, and other media that specialize in both general and specific topics.
- Publishers of medical journals often need translators with specific knowledge or general medical terminology knowledge, to provide medical journal translation from global sources.
- Likewise with science, information technology, art and even fashion and design. Whether topics and niches are

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specific or broad, news and journalism translation in any industry is important in order to stay informed and relay industry news to professionals as well as the general public.


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Significance of translation in media

- **To keep the brand valuable:** Important because there's is no room for any mistake when going global.
- In absence of translation, customers will either misunderstand or translate from free tools. It may pass on incomplete information, lead to bad impression, etc.
- **Influencing the customers:** Huge cost involved in marketing and ads. Translation ensures efforts don't go waste. Many brands have failed as they couldn't influence people in their native language. (Nokia Lumia)
- More presence among domestic players in other countries.

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- Vital for multinationals
- External affairs of nation: Diplomacy is important when presenting ideas on situations arising in different parts of world.
- Cultural interchange: Translated films on poverty in Brazilian states, plight of Palestine refugees, increases recognition on world stage. Other translated forms can be music, literature, etc.
- To boost tourism

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• Transfer of news: World events can only be transmitted accurately when correct information is received by agencies. Eg. China ban international news agencies in local regions.

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Process of Translation

The simplest form of translation - The one where you already have a story written down in one language (the source) and you want to translate it into another language (the target).

1. Read the whole of the original source story through from beginning to end: It ensures that you can **understand** it. Otherwise you won't be able to translate it. If there are words or phrases that you do not understand, clarify them first. You may decide that the ideas they express are too difficult to translate or not worth translating, but you need to know what they are before you can judge.


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2. Do a **first draft** translation, trying to translate all the source material. But do not translate word-for-word. Remember that you are translating the meaning. When you have finished the first translation, you will now have a draft story in the target language.

3. Go back over the whole of your draft translation and **polish it** without looking at the source original. (do not cheat). Make sure that your translation reads well in the target language.

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4. **Compare the final version** of your translation with the source original to make sure that you have translated it accurately. This is when you can make any detailed adjustments in individual words or phrases.

Problems faced in translation process


- Translation is a difficult activity. Translators can face additional problems :
- Problems with the source text:
 - Changes made to the text during the translation process
 - Illegible text
 - Misspelled or misprinted text

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- Incomplete text
- Poorly written text
- Missing references in the text (for example the translator is to translate captions to missing photos)
- The source text contains a translation of a quotation that was originally made in the target language, and the original text is unavailable, making word-for-word quoting nearly impossible
- Obvious inaccuracies in the source text (for example "prehistoric Buddhist ruins", when Buddhism was not founded during prehistoric times)
- Language problems
 - Dialect terms and neologisms (new coined terms)

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- Unexplained acronyms and abbreviations
- Jargon
- Other
 - Rhymes, puns, etc.
 - Highly specific cultural references
 - Subtle but important properties of language such as euphony


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Points to be kept in mind while doing translation:

- 1. Don't Opinionate:** We should never be opinionate while translation, means whenever you are translation something just writes it as it is saying. Do not put your opinion about the matter or topic.
- 2. KISS Rule:** KISS stands for keep it simple and short. While translation we should keep the content simple and short so that reader can easily read and understand.
- 3. Maintaining Originality:** When we write a piece or do translation, we should always remember about originality of content. Never avoid the originality of issue. Either it belongs to the person, place, thing or a related to the any subject, just put down as it is.


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Responsibilities of a good translator

- 1. Faithfulness to the original text and the author**
- 2. Good research skills:** Should have thorough knowledge of the subject that s/he is dealing with; should be an excellent writer with good research and language skills
- 3. Using the right tools:** Good monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, encyclopedias, e-dictionaries, glossaries of technical and standard works, etc.
- 4. Focus on creativity:** Write content in a new and attractive way to make it acceptable.

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- Focus on reading as an important pre-requisite:** Read materials in both the languages thoroughly
- Giving a finishing touch:** Go through the document a few times, make changes if any, check if the message is as per the audience.

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