

was not achieved for two main reasons. First, many Arab Americans opposed the US occupation of Iraq and, consequently, they have been unwilling to support the invading forces, and, second, many positions required top secret clearance that was difficult for US citizens of Arab descent to obtain. (Baldawi, 2010)

The low salary paid to Iraqi translators, in comparison to the salaries of American and other nationalities interpreters, invites us to ask about the qualifications of the Iraqi interpreters who has hired by mentioned above US companies. However, the majority of them were from various specialties and far from interpretation, some of them doctors, engineers, and technicians, furthermore, many of them were unemployed people who have humble English skills in writing, reading, listening, and speaking. So, the available job opportunities at that critical and difficult time encouraged them to go forward to the field of interpretation. However, the most exciting thing is that there are those who do not read or write, or those

who considered themselves illiterate, but they convinced the Americans of their speaking abilities and English proficiency; those who first worked in the field of services at US military bases and camps and later upgraded to become interpreters to accompany US soldiers in their combat missions. Their work was limited to convey speech only between Arabic and English. They are fluent linguists, but they do not master writing, reading, analyzing, abbreviating, clarifying, or processing in other ways.

The division of the categories of translators relates Iraqi interpreters into the category of combat field translation, depriving them of the opportunity to interpret conferences and interviews with commanders and ministers while the evaluation trusts US interpreters and the third nationalities interpreters. This is an indicator that most Iraqi interpreters who worked with the US troops have benefited only in speech and they were far from acquiring modern techniques of professional interpretation.

The conclusion

1. The Iraqi interpreter has subjected to a premonition of inferiority and he used to hide his profession or declare that he is an interpreter or translator.
2. The occupation of Iraq in 2003 created a new, unorganized emergence in translation.
3. The benefit of the post-2003 era is not present.
4. Interpretation in Iraq suffered from a lack of government support and a failure to keep pace with the development of modern translation science.
5. The adoption of electronic translation methods was not fruitful, difficult to apply, and created a lot of problems.
6. A limited number of translation departments in Iraqi universities and the lack of specialized faculties in translation.
7. The presence of native speakers of foreign languages is accompanied by a weakness in professional interpretation.
8. The interpreter's lack of culture and analysis obstructed his steps to overcome the most difficult moments of interpretation.

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is shown by the limited number of translators who accompanied the 140,000 American troops; there were only 42 translators who understand classical Arabic. We can imagine the lack of interest or ignorance by the part of Americans to the subject of interpretation. Poor communication with the people of the occupied country marred the preparation of US troops for such a military campaign aimed at occupying a country inhabited by 30 million citizens at that time. Dr. Mari Maeda, a researcher at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) says the government has spent \$15 to \$20 million a year over the past five years developing the mobile translator technology, because there aren't enough human translators to go around. Critics say the Defense Department should instead spend its dollars training troops how to speak Arabic or other languages. (Jardin, 2006)

This declaration from a US researcher *refers to* the fact that the US State Department or the Pentagon didn't think of the Iraqi translator to be their colleague on the

ground, but they were later surprised that their electronic devices would not be a suitable alternative for the Iraqi translator.

interpretation and the use of technology by the Pentagon in Iraq

Pentagon was believing that the latest technological applications in the field of simultaneous translation would solve the problem of communicating with the people of the occupied country. As a result, it signed contracts with US companies to provide US armed forces with electronic translation devices to be used in the Iraqi environment. The prices for those devices had reached imaginary figures, for instance, the price of the (Phraselator) device, from which the Pentagon brought 5000 devices, reached 3000 US dollars for each, and also brought more than 1000 video radio translators. These devices failed to perform the mission of interpretation, therefore, the Pentagon was compelled to contract with companies such as Titan, Vienel, Hulbarton, to hire many Iraqi interpreters to work with US troops in Iraq, as

well as other companies and institutions.

The reasons of the failure were numerous. In this regard, were the difference in the environment of Iraq to the environments designed for these devices, and the difference in Iraqi dialects from the language used by the above-mentioned devices, where caused serious problems for soldiers in the field. One of the problems is one of those devices called VRT, as Xenij criticized it by saying "Hundreds of phrases can be loaded into the Voice Response Translator (VRT) and programmed by translators to give commands in 16 languages -- but it can't yet translate Arabic back into English. That technology is still a decade away" (Jardin, 2006).

Categories of interpreters working in Iraq after 2003

The interpreters who were working in Iraq with the US armed forces have been classified into three categories: Iraqi interpreters, American interpreters, and interpreters of third nationalities, and they were divided according to tasks. US in-

terpreters were working in sensitive places and received very high salaries of up to \$200,000, or two hundred thousand dollars a year, and interpreters from other nationalities received 2,000 thousand dollars monthly, which is slightly higher than the salaries of Iraqi translators. Baldawi in his thesis explained the categories of interpreters who has been working in Iraq according to the nationality and loyalty as he says "*The number of Cat2 interpreters, accordingly, should have ranged between 300 and 500 to meet the needs of 150,000 US combat troops in Iraq. As to Cat3 interpreters, US citizens with a top-secret clearance, there has been no source of their exact number. However, they were seldom and apparently fewer than other categories. Cat3 worked for the highest level of the US military, intelligence, and diplomatic missions. As I have noted earlier in this chapter, the linguistic contracting companies planned to hire about 1,000 interpreters with US citizenship. It is well documented, however, that the targeted number*

their points of view, which the local interpreter has been fed them. Furthermore, many Iraqi or foreign translators have written about their experiences in Iraq as translators; therefore, we need their opinions as observers, as they were watching that surge of interpretation.

Objectives of the study

1. Developing the profession of the interpreters in Iraq by legislating laws define their work and ensure their rights.

2. Classification of interpreters according to their abilities.

3. Encouraging institutional performance in the field of interpretation.

4: Urging universities to develop translation departments in their faculties and open new departments related to interpretation.

5: Developing a national translation strategy that seeks translating what has been written about Iraq during and after the occupation era.

Classification of Interpreters

Due to the attention given to the

issue of the translator as a person and translation in general as a science that emerged widely in Iraq after 2003, we noticed for the first time that ordinary people, intellectuals, and interested people are talking, analyzing, and criticizing translation and translators in Iraq. In the minds of many people in Iraq, the reputation of the translator became inherent and identical to that of the agent who betrayed the homeland. After 2003, many who dreamed of working as translators were surprised to be branded traitors by society and threatened with death by extremist groups. However, the era was full of interpreters who suddenly found themselves in the field, and whatever a field that was? It was not a headquarter of a construction company, a public hospital, a scientific institution, or a university; it was a field of war, and the interpreter was riding and escorting Marines and Navy on the backs of Humvees, Abrams, and Hummers.

The local Iraqi interpreters were paid disparately according to security conditions and the region of work. In the initial stages of the in-

vasion, the local Iraqi interpreters were paid on a daily basis. Kamal, an Iraqi interpreter who worked with the US Army for six years from the initial weeks of the US occupation in 2003 until his immigration to America in 2009, explained that at the beginning, it was more volunteering than real work. I offered to help the Forward Operating Base in my neighborhood communicate with local people. They paid me \$5 a day from what they called the unit's pocket money."According to Kamal, when Titan started its linguistic contract a few months later, the interpreter's salary was \$450 a month in what were classified as safe regions, such as the Shia Southern provinces and the Kurdish areas. For more insecure provinces, like the Sunni provinces, Titan paid \$600 a month. In addition, there was a \$150 bonus for interpreters who operated in risky tasks such as patrolling and raids. This range of salaries continued from 2003 until 2005, when there was relative availability of interpreters. The deterioration of security con-

ditions in Iraq by the end of 2004 affected interpreters' market drastically. Many interpreters quit their work and the number of potential applicants for the job greatly decreased. Therefore, Titan and other recruiting companies started to pay its Iraqi interpreters \$1200 a month in most regions from 2006-2009. (Baldawi, 2010)

This quotation shows the real description of the Iraqi translator conditions, which was witnessed by one of the Iraqi translators worked with the Americans as a translator for a long time, and also shows how the American companies that accompanied the American troops had employed translators and paid them low salaries in their early days. when the situation worsened and the resistance operations against the occupying forces intensified, salaries began to increase gradually. Any follower of the US occupation of Iraq in all its details understands that the American Defense Languages Institution DLS was not interested in the subject of translation into Arabic, and this

tation, which is often used in conferences and interviews. Second, there is consecutive translation between two people, in which the interpreter can divide the time between himself and the two people to be translated. (ويكيبيديا، 2023)

Before 2003, the profession of interpretation in Iraq was limited to the diplomatic and media missions, translators of presidents and kings, furthermore translators working in courts, NGOs, and foreign companies that have been operating in Iraq since the establishment of the Iraqi state in 1921. They practiced as interpreters from and to various languages, the most important of which are English, French, German, Russian, Chinese, Turkish, Persian, Japanese, and others.

The subject of our study will focus on an important era in the history of Iraq, namely the era which came after the American occupation of Iraq in 2003, when the coalition forces had to hire hundreds of translators to accompany the coalition forces in all their military, civilian, and diplomatic duties. We can as-

sume that majority of Iraqi translators who had worked with coalition forces in Iraq never planned in past to work translators, they either were unemployed doctors or engineers who had good English language, difficult life circumstances forced them to work as translators, or they may be young, uneducated people worked within the US army bases and took their tongue and hearing quickly to pronounce and assimilate English, therefor they were joined and upgraded to work as linguists or interpreters. Many questions emerge and need answers, the most important are the following:

- How did the occupying forces start, and how did they deal with the process of recruitment of such numerous translators?
- Have the translators taken the suitable experience throughout the period of their work as interpreters with the Americans in Iraq?
- What are the results obtained by the translation process with the Americans in Iraq?
- Did the Iraqi translators get rid

of the bad reputation created by the conditions of the American occupation of Iraq?

Motives of the study

The most important motives that prompted me to shed light on this topic are the following:

1. Although of passing more than 13 years of coalition forces withdrawal, researchers are not interested in those interpreters' missions in Iraq,

2. There are a lot of lessons learned that can serve the interpretation movement in Iraq.

3. There is a huge amount of war legacy and occupation written by USA and UK army generals and political and economic leaders who had worked in Iraq. These heirlooms need professional translators to convey them to the Arabic language and study them scientifically in order for current and future generations to benefit from them.

4. Encouraging Universities and educational institutions to pay more attention to this era and extract from it Iraqi translational lessons, which

can be used in the process of theory and applications.

The importance of the post-2003 era

The importance lies in the fact that the post-2003 era resulted an emergence phenomenon of unorganized and codified translation, due to the absence of planning for such a huge emergence of the translational activity. There is a need to shed a lot of light on the activities of interpreters in various fields and study their experiences, even if it is required to contact them in their homes of the immigration and urge them to write down their experiences.

The importance also lies in the fact that this stage led many individuals of the occupying forces who were working in Iraq to compose and write biographies, books, and articles in their mother languages; hence, the need arises to study and analyze what was written and eventually crystallize a translation strategy based on what they wrote about their days in Iraq from

era of the Abbasid state, especially during the time of Caliph Harun al-Rashid and his son Al-Mamun; both of them contributed to encourage and hire translators to transfer Greek, Persian, Indian, and Syriac sciences to the Arabic language. As a result, they founded the House of Wisdom (Bit al-Hikamah) for translation in Baghdad, where they gathered translators and gave them high compensation to translate very important Greek, Indian, Persian, and Syriac books. Not only the Abbasid state was interested in the translation, but also the Amoyah state which preceded the Abbasid state in translating the Greek, Indian, and Persian documents and scripts by Syriac translators.

In the age of the Ottoman Empire, translators were employed to communicate with the three Iraqi provinces (Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra). In 1917, when the British Army occupied Iraq, they were in a dire need of Arab translators of all kinds, including interpreters, so they relied on Arab translators from other Arab nationalities, including Egyptians, Lebanese, and Palestinians, in addition to Iraqis.

The most important era in the history of Iraq in the field of interpretation began after the American occupation of Iraq in 2003. A huge number of American, British, and Australian troops deployed in Iraq. As a result, thousands of individuals started working in companies, institutions, diplomatic missions, and the American Civil Administration of Iraq. In fact, most of them were not able to speak or write the Arabic language at all; their mission in Iraq required direct communications with Iraqis everywhere. According to that, there was an urgent need for numerous translators to communicate with Iraqis.

In Iraq, more focus appeared on the topic of translators who were working with the coalition forces, and they were classified or described with degrading descriptions, so the translator's reputation was discredited by those who have been understanding that the profession of translation was limited to the work with the invading forces. Therefore, translators faced threats of murder and persecution from extremist groups throughout Iraq, and many of them immigrated to Amer-

ica, England, Sweden, and Finland to seek asylum.

During this study, we will explain the emergence and evolving the work of translators in Iraq, especially interpreters, whose number after 2003 increased in an unprecedented way. Furthermore, we will explain our attitude about the performance and development of translation work in Iraq.

Statement of the problem

If we compare the process of translation education during the twentieth century with the rest of the English language departments that were given in the golden decades (seventies, eighties, and nineties) of the twentieth century, we would discover that translation in Iraqi universities did not receive much attention and didn't obtain on its deserved share. Most Iraqi universities, especially the faculties of arts and education did not have departments for translation, except the University of Mosul and the University of Mustansirayah; colleges of arts in those two universities had independent departments

for translation, while other colleges of arts and languages were teaching a translation lesson within the English literature curriculum as a single subject. As it seems that didn't be coping with the real need of Iraqi institutions which were trying to join the global development.

The most distinctive factor about translation in Iraq was the presence and functioning of those cultural and scientific institutions that were interested in translation during the second half of the twentieth century. The most important institutions were the Iraqi Translators Association, DAR Al-Mamun and Al-Hakma, the magazine of Aqlaam and the magazine of Foreign Culture; for translators have been employed to translate articles and literary studies from foreign languages to Arabic and vice versa.

Regarding our topic of interpretation, it is completely different from other branches of translation due to its importance, which emerged after 2003. Interpretation, as divided and classified by scholars, *is divided in principle into two parts: first, simultaneous interpre-*

tions, courts, and companies.

The real widespread of interpretation began after 2003. Exactly, after the occupation of Iraq by the international coalition forces led by the United States of America, which led to the deployment of more than 150,000 individuals in Iraq, those who were not able to speak Arabic, while their mission supposed to be in direct contact with Iraqis. They thought that their task in interpretation and communication with Iraqis would be solved by modern technology, but they were surprised that high-cost modern translation devices were unfunctional. Therefore, they had forwarded to the Iraqi citizens to be their mediator; they had contracted with large, numerous and local interpreters. However, they couldn't deal with this issue easily, due to its sensitive relationship among many Iraqis who were rejecting and resisting the American occupation. During that period, the profession of translators was subjected to the sense of sovereignty, betrayal, and patriotism in Iraq.

In spite of the difficulties, the experience was productive. There are many lessons that can be studied and learned from it, the most important of which are the birth of a new generation of young interpreters, as well as the attention among young people to learn languages and practice professional translation. Therefore, many of those who worked as translators continued their studies and obtained the highest educational grades in translation and other language topics.

Key words: The history of translation in Iraq.

الملخص

يبرز تاريخ الترجمة في العراق من جذوره العميقة، التي أعطت مساحة واسعة للترجمة خلال هذا التاريخ ولعبت دوراً كبيراً في إبراز هوية العراق العلمية والمعرفية. كان أبرز تلك الفترات في زمن الدولة العباسية. ثم غابت قروناً لتعود من جديد مع بداية تأسيس الدولة العراقية الحديثة عام ١٩٢١، لتزدهر الترجمة على مستوى النخبة في الجامعات وفي الوزارات والمؤسسات والمحاكم والشركات.

بدأت الانطلاقة الواسعة للترجمة الفورية، بعد عام ٢٠٠٣، مع احتلال العراق من قبل قوات التحالف الدولي بقيادة الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، ودخول أكثر من ١٥٠,٠٠٠ الف فرد، معظمهم لا يتكلم اللغة العربية. هؤلاء كانوا على تماس مباشر مع العراقيين، اعتقدوا إن مهمتهم في التواصل والترجمة ستحلها التكنولوجيا الحديثة، لكنهم تفاجئوا بأن أجهزة الترجمة الحديثة رغم كلفتها المادية العالية غير مجدية. وأخيراً التجأوا الى المواطن العراقي ليكون وسيطهم وترجمانهم، فتعاقدوا مع أعداد كبيرة من المترجمين. رغم ذلك وجدوا صعوبة كبيرة في التعامل مع هذا الملف، وذلك لارتباطه بموضوع السيادة والخيانة والوطنية عند الكثير من العراقيين الراضين للاحتلال الأمريكي.

التجربة بكل عيوبها لم تخلوا من فائدة، ففيها الكثير من الدروس التي يمكن دراستها والتعلم منها، أهمها ظهور جيل جديد من الشباب يهتم بموضوع الترجمة، وزيادة الرغبة في تعلم اللغات لممارسة الترجمة الشفوية الاحترافية. مواصلة الكثير ممن عملوا كمتترجمين دراستهم وتحصيلهم أعلى الدرجات العلمية في الترجمة وغيرها من مواضيع اللغات.

كلمات مفتاحية: تاريخ الترجمة في العراق.

Introduction

The history of translation in Iraq dates back to ancient times, whereas most ancient civilizations such as the Sumerians, Babylonians, and Assyrians depended upon translators in one way or another to communicate with other communities speaking different languages. The evidence for the existence of ancient roots of translation was discovered in Egypt in 1799, when French soldiers of the Napoleonic Army accidentally discovered the Rosetta Stone (Rasheed stone) which has been included a text written in three languages: Hieroglyphs, Demotics and Ancient Greeks.

In fact, translation flourished throughout the history of Iraq, during the

INTERPRETATION IN POST-2003 IRAQ

الترجمة الفورية في العراق بعد عام ٢٠٠٣

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Abstract

The history of translation in Iraq arises of its deep roots. It started strongly twelve hundred years ago and has been participated in showing the scientific and thinking identity of Iraq. The most thriving period was during the time of the Abbasid state, when translation helped spreading knowledge and science around the world. Later, it has been disappeared for centuries, in a period has called dark ages, during which Iraq and other Arab states were suffering of cultural deterioration. Eventually, Iraq has returned back to be an independent state after the declaring of the modern Iraqi kingdom in 1921, where assisted in appearing the translation at the elite level in universities, ministries, institu-

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