

ALTARABIN, MAHMOUD. THE ROUTLEDGE COURSE IN ARABIC BUSINESS TRANSLATION. NEW YORK, ROUTLEDGE, 2022, 198 PP., ISBN 9780367773335.

In contemporary Arabic translation studies much attention has been paid to legal, literary, and religious texts, with researchers detailing the best ways to create natural-sounding translations that target different groups of readers. In *The Routledge Course in Arabic Business Translation*, however, Altarabin focuses on a less-studied typology of texts: business documents. Following a very systematic structure throughout his book, he includes up to 21 different kinds of texts classified thematically. They come along with a good number of exercises to help students grasp new terminology and start translating authentic business texts in an effective way. This work is the second book of a Routledge series on Arabic translation, the first one being *The Routledge Course on Media, Legal and Technical Translation*, also authored by Altarabin (2020).

The Routledge Course in Arabic Business Translation is a much-needed manual following previous works such as *Translating Business English into Arabic* (Khuddro, 2019), which remains more theoretical and less comprehensive with no hands-on translation exercises. A chapter is also devoted to Islamic finance texts in *Thinking Arabic Translation. A Course in Translation Method: Arabic to English* (Dickins, Hervev and Higgins, 2016). Similarly, *Advanced English-Arabic Translation: A Practical Guide* (Lahlali and Hatab, 2022) includes a chapter on economic texts with explanations on neologisms, metaphors and marketing, investment, banking, and accounting terminology. The interest that this topic inspires among researchers is also evident in the far from negligible number of scientific articles on Arabic business translation. For example, in the last five years works have been authored by Halimah and Aljaroudi (2019), Giaber et al. (2020) and Shehab and Nazzal (2020, 2022).

The book is divided into six chapters. The first one is entitled "Business Translation: Basic Concepts" and deals with the most recognisable characteristics of business texts in terms of lexis and syntax. References are made to translation tools and techniques. The rest of the chapters are devoted to a single category of business text each and are subdivided into smaller sections. Economic texts are covered in Chapter 2 (business cycle, employment, corporate social responsibility, international trade); management texts in Chapter 3 (management, company and organization structure); production texts in Chapter 4 (economy sectors, production, logistics, quality); finance texts in Chapter 5 (accounting and financial statements, banking,

Islamic banking and finance, corporate financing and bonds, futures and derivatives, market competition, microfinance); and marketing texts in Chapter 6 (products and brands, marketing, advertising, e-commerce). Each section follows the same structure and is split into two parts to cover both translation out of Arabic into English and vice versa. In both parts, there are always two main texts with a glossary and six exercises each. The first exercise normally consists of translating a short fragment of the presented text, and the second one has sentences to translate. Then, there is an exercise to identify and correct mistakes in ready-made translations. Finally, the reader is also asked to match or translate vocabulary pairs and to translate a few last sentences and whole paragraphs.

To offer a more detailed description of what this book looks like, I will analyse the English-into-Arabic part of the first section of Chapter 5.3. (Islamic banking and finance). To begin with, there is a text from 2011 that is 158 words long. Its core terminology is displayed in a table with 18 terms. All the drills that follow are related to the content of this first text and are thought to develop vocabulary knowledge and translation strategies. The first exercise consists of reading a long sentence in Arabic and choosing which passage of the first text matches the translation. The second exercise prompts the reader to translate five sentences into Arabic. In the third one, the student needs to correct the mistakes found in three sentences in Arabic. The fourth exercise consists of a terminology table that is to be completed with some more core vocabulary. Exercise five consists of translating five sentences into Arabic, whereas the last one requests a translation into Arabic of an 83-word text from 2007 where the reader can apply everything that they have learned from the previous exercises.

All the references to the complete texts are provided in the References section. The literature used by the author comprises works published in the last twenty years or so. More specifically, 18% of the cited works dated from up to five years before the publication date of his book, around 24% up to ten years before, and 58% over ten years before, including 20 works published before the turn of the century. Even though the literature could be more recent, most of the works are from prestigious editorials and institutions, authored by leading specialists. At the end of the book there is a bilingual index including some of the most common terms encountered in the work. The book is formatted flawlessly except for a couple of typos: on page 12, the letters in the words *شراء* and *بيع* are written from left to right and, on page 35, *Arabi* should have been *Arabic*.

Both the variety of texts and the author's overall objectivity constitute the book's unique selling points. There are no tautological explanations about

grammar or translation techniques; instead, the focus is put on texts and exercises. This is the reason why this book can be a great asset for Arabic Translation teachers and students alike. I would posit that it needs to be combined with solid knowledge of Arabic language, but also an understanding of business texts and translation strategies. The weakest point of the book is perhaps its first chapter, which seems incomplete for the learning of business translation. When discussing the features of business texts, the chapter falls short of examples to illustrate how each characteristic materialises both in Arabic and English. For example, although passive structures are mentioned, the discussion does not delve into their frequency in both languages, or in the possible ways they could be rendered to avoid producing rough translations. Likewise, in the section “Translation Tools and Technology”, the discussion on CAT tools is limited to Google Translate and the Almaany dictionary. Mention of specialist software and trustworthy sources of information, such as terminology databases and glossaries, would have been welcomed here. For instance, readers could be guided on consulting UNTERM (United Nations, n. d.), the English-Arabic glossary by the International Monetary Fund (2016) or ILOTERM, the International Labour Organization (n. d.) terminology database.

All in all, and despite the flaws of this first chapter, the quality of the book is patently high. What students and teachers are provided in *The Routledge Course in Arabic Business Translation* is a refreshing and up-to-date selection of business documents that is beautifully blended with guided translation exercises. All things considered, this is a comprehensive manual that is very easy to navigate and that holds great potential to be used in advanced-level Arabic translation courses.

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