

The course in translation is divided into two terms where fifteen lectures are introduced per term. They run as follows:

### 1. The First Lecture

It is entitled “Historical background of translation as a human activity”. It is concerned with introducing undergraduates to the history of translation activity since antiquity as there was heated debate among prominent Roman translation practitioners : Horace, Cicero and St. Jerome. This debate centers around whether to adopt word-for-word translation or sense for sense translation.

- Two opposing views concerning the translation of literary texts and religious holy Scripture texts where the latter should be rendered using literal translation while the former texts should be translated using sense for sense translation.
- Translation theories in the medieval ages between 5<sup>th</sup> century and 15<sup>th</sup> century
- The debate over whether to adopt word for word or sense for sense translation had persisted since antiquity.
- Abbasid period (c 750-1250 CE) had witnessed a very active movement of translation for Greek and Persian writings. The translation movement passed through two phases: the first during the reign of the second Caliph AbuJaf’r alMansur who set a translation chamber. Among the most famous translators of this phase are: Ibn al-Batriq and Ibn al-Muqaf’

- The second phase was during the reign of the seventh Caliph al-Ma'mun who built Baghdad Translation Centre (called The House of Wisdom). There were two methods of translation during his reign: word by word and transferring the whole meaning of the sentence in the mind. The first method was adopted by Ibn al-Batriq and Ibn Na'ima al-Humsi by looking for the meaning of each Greek word and find its Arabic equivalent until they had the whole text translated. Hunayn Ibn Ishaq and al-Jawahiri adopted the second method where they keep the transferred materials in fluent Arabic without violating the TL majesty.
- Al-Safadi criticized the first method for two reasons: (1) the relative difficulty in finding an equivalent Arabic word for each Greek counterpart, resulting in the infiltration of foreign words into Arabic (2) the two languages are syntactically different and in using figures of speech which might be translated literally.
- Baker argues that the second method gives priority to the TL requirements and the target readers.
- Al-Jahiz in his book *The Animal* considered translation inferior to the original i.e. it remains secondary to the original due the unattainability of “the heights of the philosophers' wisdom”. He drew attention to the importance of the translator's familiarity with original text and its subject matter.