

Translating as a Cognitive Activity– a Cognitive approach

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Building on linguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives, Bell (1991: 20) states that the translation process mainly happens within ‘memory’ in the sense that the transformation process involves two main phases, namely:

- 1– semantic, syntactic and pragmatic “analysis of one language–specific text (the source language text...) into a universal (non–language–specific) semantic representation”;** and
- 2– the synthesis of that semantic representation into the second language–specific text (the target language text)”** (Bell 1991: 20).

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Bell's approach accounts for translation in terms of information processing and requires both short-term and long-term memories for the decoding of SL input and the encoding of TL output . Like Nida's (1964) three-stage system of translation, Bell's approach takes a U-shaped movement, albeit using different terminologies.

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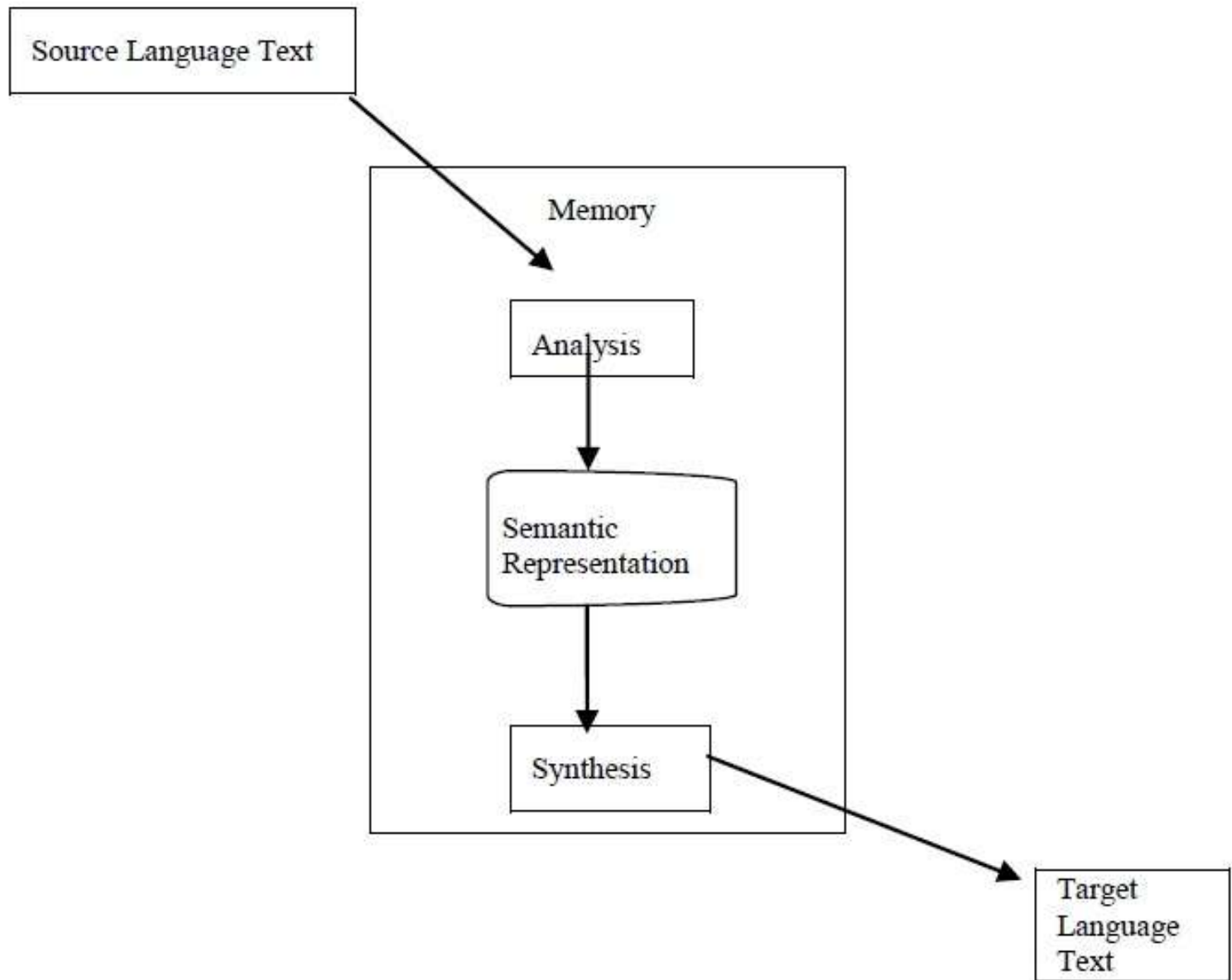
To put this differently, it follows a top-down/bottom-up structure as follows:

- 1– it starts with the visual recognition of the lexical items of the ST;
- 2– then it undergoes syntactic parsing in combination with mechanisms of lexical search processed by a frequent structure analyzer;
- 3– this is followed by semantic and pragmatic processing to generate a semantic representation supported by an idea organizer and a planner.

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Once the decision to translate is taken at the level of semantic representation, the input is reprocessed by synthesizers distributed in pragmatic, semantic and lexico-grammatical levels to be encoded in a new writing system, thus producing a TT.

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By way of illustration, let us consider the following example quoted from Mahfouz's novel 'Midaq Alley' (1947: 105):

فقلت ضاحكة وكأنها وثقت من امتلاكه للأبد:
أحطك في عيني وأكل عليك!

- 1 -visual recognition of the lexical items;
- 2– syntactic parsing: subject (+ (هي main verb (+ (قالadverb of manner (+ (ضاحكة clause of manner (+ (quotation وكأنها وثقت من امتلاكه إلى الأبد) (+ (أحطك في عيني وأكل عليك) (;

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3– mechanisms of lexical search: implicit ‘هي *she*’

+ ‘قالت *said*’ +

‘ضاحكة *laughing*’ + ‘وكانها وثقت من امتلاكه للأبد’ + ‘*as if she had him forever*’ + “أحطك في عيني وأكحل عليك!” + “*I’ll put you in my eyes and close them*”;

4– semantic and pragmatic processing: *While laughing she said as if she was certain of possessing him forever: “I’ll put you in my heart”.*

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5– encoding the input (the draft) semantically, pragmatically and lexico-grammatically in the TL: *As if she were certain of possessing him forever, she said while laughing: “I’ll put you in my heart and lock it up on you”.*

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It is worth noting that although the input should be processed at the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels, “no fixed order is established a priori and there is always the possibility of regression, which allows for constant online revision and changes in previous decisions” (Albir and Alves 2009: 56).

The End

