Coinage in Arabic and English; A cultural approach and Implications for translation theory
By Antar Solhy Abdellah
A Proposal for a PhD thesis

The study will investigate the methods of coining new words in English and Arabic. This will be done through adopting a cultural approach to the reasons for coining new words, the processes involved, and the wash-back gained in response to the new coined words in both languages. This cultural approach will review old coined words in Arabic particularly and will try to link them to the features of the Arabic community at the time of coining these sample words. The study will also explore the conditions that govern the coinage of new words in languages in general and in English and Arabic in particular. Eventually the study will attempt to build a theory of translation to overcome problems of unequivalence triggered by the process of coining words, and will suggest methods and strategies for translators when facing coined words.

Coining words is a very old process which users of languages have developed in order to overcome certain notional gaps or because of the need for a new term that gathers the qualities shared by two or more other words. Every language has its own principles for inventing new words, however the process used differ from language to language and the inventors of these new words differ as well. Whereas normal English People used to coin words and use them in their every day life, Arabs were prevented from doing so by Early Arab linguists who monopolized this right for themselves only, perhaps out of care for the language not to be spoiled by the attempts of people who know little about the linguistic system of the language. In the present time, the task of coining new words is formally carried out by Arabic Language Academies in Cairo, Baghdad or Amman, but the actual practices show that contemporary Arabs do coin new words for themselves without waiting for the Academies or even without following the terms laid out by the linguists in the Academies. One reason for this is the rapid developments and events that are taking place in the world and that need an urgent equivalent at the spot. Transliteration is not always recommended as a straightforward strategy for finding the equivalents, so people try their linguistic abilities and invent new words that represent, to a satisfying degree, the original foreign term. The invented words by normal people sometimes become so powerful that the Academies accept them and add them to their occasional lists of new words.

Although most people encounter new technological, scientific and political terms everyday, it the translators who face the problem of rendering these terms into accepted linguists forms in Arabic when translating them to the common folk. Most translators use this strategy without referring back to the Arabic dictionaries or Academies’ lists simply because of the short time allocated for them to translate a big amount of information and because they trust their intuition about accepting the new words. This part of the translators’ work need more theoretical studies to explore the linguistic as well as the psycholinguistic processes involved in the process of coining words. By such studies, some principles for inventing words can be laid out and some strategies for overcoming problems of untranslateability can be overcome. Although, as mentioned above, every language has its own principles for coining words, there are some universal principles that may apply to all languages, including the following:
1. Conformity to the rules of the language
2. Simplicity and brevity.
3. Conservation of existing terms, unless they are wrong, or more appropriate terms can replace them.
4. Preservation of terms that can be considered international.

The procedures that will be carried out in the study include the following:

1. An introduction, that includes:
   a. Surveying the morphology of languages in general.
   b. Over viewing the terms morpheme, lexeme, and word.
   c. Investigating the methods through which languages develop their vocabulary.
   d. Exploring the relationship between culture and vocabulary development.

2. Chapter One: Coining words in English.
   a. Cultural Reasons for coining words.
   b. principles for coining words.
   c. Methods used for coining words.
   d. The case of coined words in the Mass media; newspapers, TV and wall advertisements.

3. Chapter Two: Coining words in Arabic.
   a. Cultural Reasons for coining words.
   b. principles for coining words.
   c. Methods used for coining words in Standard Arabic.
   d. Methods used for coining words in the colloquial Arabic of Egypt.

4. Chapter Three: Translation from English to Arabic.
   a. problems of nonequivalence.
   b. Pragmatic equivalence and the processes of interpretation.
   c. A functional perspective for dealing with coined words interpretation.
   d. Strategies used by translators for overcoming these problems.

5. Chapter Four: Concluding remarks.
   a. results
   b. summary
   c. suggestions for further research.

Bibliography
Appendices:
   a. a list of sample coined words in English and their translations.
   b. a list of sample coined words in Arabic and their translations.
   c. materials used in the study; advertisements, newspapers reports, handouts of Arabic translation.

As shown from this general table of contents, the study seeks a functional and cultural approach for both interpreting and translating coined terms. This integrated approach is what the study proposes as a theoretical perspective based on understanding and analyzing the function of the term and understanding the cultural backgrounds embedded in the new lexicon.