

*Strategies for Overcoming Cultural Barriers in  
Translation*

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*Abstract*

The present paper will investigate the cultural categories, mainly, ecology, material, social and religious culture; and the strategies available for overcoming the cultural barriers in translation from English into Arabic and vice versa. These strategies have been chosen according to a number of factors such as cultural context and the linguistic system.

It is found that there is no blanket decision for a particular text type nor a unique solution existing for a given cultural element. Instead, the translator chooses from the possible strategies by considering the nature of the term to be translated, i.e., its semantic content and linguistic expression in the source language and its contrastive relationship to the possible correspondents in the target language.

**1. Introduction:**

Translation as an art and a skill is an integrated process which involves the comprehending, analysis, reformulation, and retextualization of texts by incorporating the contextual, semantic, and sociocultural aspect of source language (henceforth SL) and target language (henceforth TL) texts.

While the translator is concerned with rendering the meaning of the SL text, he/she is careful to preserve equivalence in tone and style, among other things. This condition requires a full

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understanding of the linguistic and cultural details of the two language systems in order to maintain the intelligibility of the translated texts for the intended readers. It also presupposes that translation is a way of establishing contacts between cultures. When a translator faces trouble in comprehending or contacting a certain culture, then, it is called cultural barrier.

Culture, on the other hand, may be broadly defined as a set of beliefs which governs the behaviour patterns of a society (Aziz and Lataiwish, 2000:85). These beliefs include religion, economy, politics, literature and language (ibid.).

One might even claim that cultural contact as such presupposes translation and that the exchange of goods of material and spiritual culture is not possible without translation. The reason for this is that language and culture are inextricably interwoven and that the integration of element into a culture cannot be said to have been achieved unless and until the linguistic expression of that element has been integrated into the language of that culture (Ivir,1987:34). Integration means that the parts of a culture fit together in some significant way and that cultures should therefore be viewed as system (Shapiro:n.d.).

Culture has at least two distinct senses, and translators, like linguistics, tend to think of it as the same of a people's customs, products and ways of thinking (Newmark, 1982:184).

In an attempt to overcome these barriers, two hypotheses have been suggested. The first one is that: Translation is never that easy as target words for source words. The second one is that the translated material cannot read smoothly and be accepted unless the translator overcomes the SL.linguistic and cultural conventions.

## **2. Categories of culture:**

Words are fundamentally symbols for features of the culture. Accordingly, the culture situation in both languages must be known in translating, and the words which designate the closest equivalence must be employed.

Nida (1964) and Newmark (1988), present some cultural categories as follows: Ecology, material culture, social culture and religious culture. In

what follows each of these categories will be explained in some detail.

### **2.1. Ecology:**

The extremity of ecological variation from territory to territory is seldom anticipated, and is often considerable difficulty in finding some equivalence in terms which designate such ecological features.

Geographical elements are also part of one's culture. Ecological variations from one territory to another are seldom anticipated and there is often a considerable difficulty in finding equivalence which designate such ecological features (Nida,1964:91).

Geographical features can be normally distinguished from other cultural terms in that they are usually value-free, politically and commercially (Newmark, 1988:96).Nevertheless, their diffusion depends on the importance of their country of origin as well as their degree of specificity. For instance in English, it is influenced by cold wet climate of the British Isles, whereas in Arabic is greatly influenced by the hot dry climate of the Arab land. The influence of these climate conditions is reflected in the vocabularies of the two languages. A translator of English -Arabic text may come across some problematic ecological-based idioms and expressions in both

languages. What may be a connotatively favourable expression in Arabic could have a pejorative sense in English, and vice versa.

For instance in Arabic it is said:

استقبال حار

Whereas in English, it is usually said:

Portia received Bassanio *warmly* in her place (Shakespeare :  
Merchant of Venice)

It is not only necessary to examine ecological features, but also to determine how the natives interpret such environmental matters.

## **2.2 Material Culture:**

Food, means of transport and other objects have broad sense as love, used by people in their everyday life. Terms coming under this category are further complicated due to the "foreign" elements present. Highly advanced industrial countries would deal with various material things which may not be found in less advanced or, as they are called nowadays, developing countries. Thus one hears *www* which is one of material aspect of life that has no counterpart in some Arabic speaking countries and would not be easily comprehended there (Aziz and Lataiwish,2000:95).

Loyns (1981: 310) points out that "not only that some things are more highly codable in some languages than they are in others, but that there are certain things that cannot be said at all in particular languages, simply because the vocabulary with which to say does not exist".

Triveni (2002:3) on his part maintains that very flavour behind food or its significance is also untranslatable to an audience who has never heard of it. For instance, certain foods are prepared by Arabs during certain religious festivals, which are not experienced by an audience of different culture.

Some aspects of material culture which concern daily life, like food is sometimes problematic. In Arabic there is "كبه" whereas in English, there is *hotdogs*. Both are peculiar to the culture they belong to.

That is, as Catford (1965: 99) concludes, cultural untranslatability takes place when a situational feature is functionally relevant to the SL text and full absent from the TL.

### **2.3. Social Culture:**

Regarding social culture one has to distinguish between denotative and connotative problems in translation (Newmark, 1988 : 98). Thus, social ideologies raise a number of problems. These include the attitudes of various communities towards love, marriage and concept of decency. Arabic makes use of different lexical terms in addressing someone as calling him "حاج، عمي، خالي، شيخ" (Ilyas, 1989:126). Agha (1994:294) claims that "the use of honorifics in all communities is governed by the social status of persons to whom deference is paid, but also sensitive to interactional variables".

Accordingly, Brislin (1976:34) says it is clear that the type of behaviour that fits well into the S.L. culture does not work as well in the T.L. culture leading to cultural shock. T.L. readers usually tends to look at the features of the S.L. social culture and apprehend their nature through the features of the social culture with which they are familiar and thus causing confusion and misunderstanding of the translated text.

Differences in the social culture are numerous including kinship, social institutions, rules for behaviour (what and how to eat, wear, drink, and talk) as well as attitudes toward other societies. For example : in Arab countries, there are three meals a day ; the morning meal, the middy meal, and the evening meal. Each meal is a one – course meal made up of one or more dishes served at the

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same time . Hence, Arabic may have no equivalents denoting English items except for breakfast, which is translated as *futur* (Aziz, 1982:27).

#### **2.4. Religious Culture:**

Religion is deep - rooted in various cultures and it is reflected in how people speak and behave. Starting from the point that language and culture are inseparable, it is not possible to translate the subtle cultural nuances of language (Sharyan, 2003:1). Islam and Christianity have certain features in common, yet Christianity has many features and items which are not familiar to Muslim readers and thus should be explained to them to avoid confusion .This category may be illustrated by the following examples from English and Arabic:

Some English writers use the item 'Mahometan' or 'Mahomedan' to refer to a Moslem as in the following examples:

' Yusef humbugged you, eh, Tallit, you young rogue ? Not so smart, eh? You a Catholic humbugged by a Mahomedan '

(Green: The Heart of The Matter 1971, cited in Muhammad,1986:82) In this case, it will not be acceptable to render the item 'Mahomedan' as محمدى.

On the other hand, Virgin Mary may constitute a problem if we rendered

'God's mother ' into Arabic as 'الرب أم' and this will, certainly, be unacceptable to Muslim readers.

As for Arabic, there are many terms and concepts which does not exist in English; therefore, we need nil- equivalence :

ألقارعة، أواقعة ، أخطمة ، الخلافة،مخالعه،سبط،ظهار

#### **3. Language, Culture and Translation :**

The notion of culture is essential to consider the implications for translation and despite the difference in opinion as to whether language is part of culture or not, the two notions appear to be inseparable. Nida confers equal importance to both linguistic and cultural differences between SL. and the TL. and he concludes, "differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure" (1964: 130).

Regarding language and translation, Newmark (1988: 94) defines culture as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language and its means of expression "; thus acknowledging that each language group has its own culturally specific features. He further clearly states that operationally he does "not regard language as a component or feature of culture" (ibid.: 95). Indirect opposition to the view is taken by Vermeer (1989: 222) who maintains that "language is part of culture".

Mc Guire (1980: 14) states that Language is a modeling system and declares as firmly as Sapir and Whorf that no language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture and no culture can exist unless it has at its centre the structure of natural language . Therefore, the introduction of culture as an important factor in the process of translation becomes one of the most recent development in translation theory (Aziz and Lataiwish, 2000: 85).

Aziz (1998: 207) points out that translation means rewriting the original text and such rewriting involves a number of shifts in the ideology of the SL especially if the ST and TT belong to two different cultures. These ideological shifts involve any types of beliefs, viz., religious and social field.

Aziz and Lataiwish (2000: 85) on their part maintain, "The problem raised by the dimension of culture in the process of

translation is how far should the translated text integrate in target culture and how much should it retain of the source culture"? They suggest three general trends resulting from the process of translation: integration, alienation and source translation. However, the limit between these three trends is not absolute; a translated text may include all the three types:

1. **Integration:** the translation may result in shift towards the target culture and the translated text may or may not merge completely in the culture.
2. **Alienation:** translation may be defined as a shift away from both the target culture and the source culture.
3. **Source Translation:** this type of translation favours preserving the source culture.

Alienation and integration, according to Aziz (1998: 207), may involve the form of adding, deletion or substituting certain elements of the message. Adding information may range from explicit comments inserted in the TT to subtle interpretation of ideas. Deletion may be explicit or implicit. Substitution is regarded as a form of deletion followed by addition. In a sense, the informationally weak linguistic sign in the ST is replaced by an informationally strong linguistic sign in the TT, or vice versa.

#### **4. Strategies:**

Tourny (1978: 200) states, "Translation is a kind of activity which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions. Venuti (1995: 18) defines translation as the forcible replacement of linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target language reader. As these statements imply, translators are permanently faced with the problem of how to treat the cultural aspects implicit in (ST) and of finding the most appropriate techniques of successfully conveying



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these aspects in the (TL). The problem may vary in accordance with the cultural and linguistic gap between two (or more) languages concerned (see Nida, 1964: 130). The cultural strategies for overcoming cultural barriers may take several forms ranging from lexical context and syntax to ideologies and ways of life in a given culture. The translator has to decide on the importance of certain cultural aspects and to what extent it is necessary or desirable to render them into TL.

Translators have to seek always to bridge up such possible gaps and therefore ensure a smooth translation. If the translator is faced with differences in the extralinguistic reality of the two cultures or its lexical mapping, he tries to reconcile them by relying on the following strategies: borrowing, definition, literal translation, substitution, lexical creation, omission and addition .Each of which will be explained as follows:

#### **4.1. Borrowing :**

This strategy involves taking over some linguistic forms by one language or dialect from another; such borrowing is usually known as

' loan word ' (Crystal, 1991: 41) . For instance the term ' دبلوماسي ' has come into Arabic from English .

As for its effectiveness as a vehicle for the transmission of cultural information, the borrowed expression is neither better nor worse than the native – language expression, the result depending on the user's familiarity with the extralinguistic reality (Iver, 1987: 38). For instance, the borrowed word ' بروتستانت ' with some appropriate explanation will inform much a bout this part of English culture.

The translator uses this strategy only if there is sufficient

need for it in the text being translated or in the target culture generally – to insure its more than once use . To facilitate its success, receivers of translation must be given an opportunity through repetitions to its cultural content (ibid).

Another reason to facilitate this strategy is that the form of the SL expressions must be easily integrated into the TL language phonologically and morphologically. Therefore, the borrowing of complex expressions is more difficult than the borrowing of simple expressions. Similarly, borrowing is easier from a language from which a lot of borrowing has already been done than from one which borrowing is rare. In other words, it is easier for Arabic to borrow from English than the other languages. Moreover, the amount of borrowing should be enough for the need of the occasion, but not many of them at the same time, since this will obstruct communication. For example:

The Arabic religious term 'Sunna' means the Moslems who follow Mohammed (peace been upon him) traditions. It flows from the above example, all languages have the capacity to express all range of experience of the natural communities of which they are part ; and resources of particular languages expand to cater for new experience via borrowing (Hatim and Mason,1990:27).

#### **4.2. Definition:**

Defining the elements of culture that are to be transmitted is a procedure that relies on what numbers of the target culture know in an attempt to make them aware of what they do not know . Defining the means reducing the unknown to the known and the unshared to the shared . A culture may not have a common low, but it will easily grasp it through a definition using concepts that it does possess (Ivir, 1987:39). It is of quite importance to transmit accurately the necessary cultural information, but it is important to

realize, first, that no definition can give all information and, second, in order to attain the goal of overcoming the cultural gap- the translator's definition must be systematized so as to focus on the information relevant for the act of communication at hand.

Definition is a complementary procedure rather than on its own. It can be combined with borrowing procedure: the definition being given, in the body of the text or as footnote, when the borrowed term is first introduced. Definition is also communicatively too heavy, resulting in overtranslating . To be more specific, this strategy means to invent a new word or phrase or sentence for something that does not exist in the TL. To achieve a successful conveyance, a translator shall add an explanation to the definition. For example Muslims have the religious term. For example:

Red Cross: An organization which  
is concerned with relief of the suffering  
caused by war or disasters .

#### **4.3. Literal Translation:**

Literal translation as the strategy of filling the cultural and lexical gaps in translation and, together with borrowing, is the commonest method of cultural transference and spread of influence from one culture to another (ibid.).

Newmark (1988:96) mentions that literal translation range from one word to one word, through group to group, collocation to collocation, clause to clause, and sentence to sentence .

The best candidates for literal translation are these terms which, while referring to the potentially shared extralinguistic reality, are due to the differences in the lexical mapping of that reality and are linguistically expressed in the SL in a way that is

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easily copied in the TL. However, the conditions for literal translation are not always so favourable . When the extralinguistic realities of the two cultures differ at a particular point, the literal translation of an expression will not in itself be sufficiently transparent to fill the gap (Iver,1987: 40).

Literal translation is a strategy that is faithful to the SL expression .Therefore, various degrees of unidiomaticity or unnaturalness resulting from literal translation depends on the communicative function of the cultural element in question as well as language interference .

The English idiom ' To adopt the idea ' is translated into Arabic as:

يتبنى الفكرة

It is easy to understand by speakers of the TL .

Many English idioms have been transferred to Arabic as a result of literal translation which led to collocationally abnormal Arabic idioms:

To kill the time يقتل الوقت

In Arabic يقتل does not collocate with الوقت ;  
it should rather be rendered as يقضي الوقت

Another point needs to be made in connection with the literal filling of cultural gaps is that culture must be understood from the inside on their own terms and not just from the outside in the cultural terms of a foreign observer (Shapiro,N.D.:5).

#### **4.4. Substitution:**

This strategy involves replacing a cultural-specific item or expression with a TL item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader (Ivir, 1987:41). He maintains that substitution is available to the translator in cases in which the two cultures display

a particular overlap rather than a clear –cut presence, viz., absence of a particular element of culture (Ivir, 1987:42). Shi (N.D:1) mentions that substitution gives the reader a concept with which she/he can identify something familiar and appealing. The translator is then tempted to exploit that similarity and use the corresponding TL expression as a full equivalent- the ease with which he makes the decision depends on the cultural closeness of the two elements.

Nord (cited in shi, N.D.:4) provides a pair of concepts that are of great importance: documentary translation (preserve the original exotizing setting) and instrumental translation (adaptation of the sitting to the target culture). Whether a translation ought to be instrumental or documentary when cultural and historical elements are involved is therefore the translator's decision. If the translator focuses on the transmission of the original flavour for reader's reference, documentary translation is preferred ; if she/he mainly intends to convey the information for basic communication, instrumental translation is sufficient . Moreover if the purpose of a translation is to achieve a particular function for the target addressee, anything that abstracts the achievement of this purpose is a translator failure (ibid.).

Example:

Love me Love my dog  
أحبها و تحبني  
ويحب ناقتها بعيري

The translator's decision to use this strategy will largely depend on (a) how much license is given to him/her by those who commission the translator and (b) the purpose of the translator (Baker, 1999:31). On a more general level, the decision will also reflect to some extent, the norms of translation prevailing in a given community (ibid).

#### **4.5. Lexical Creation:**

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This strategy means to invent a new word or phrase for something which does not exist in the TL. A newly coined word is established in the language. A word thus has sprung up naturally in response to the communicative needs of the linguistic community of members of the native culture (Iver, 1987:43).

Newmark (1988:117) writes some English words like 'quaint', 'gawky', 'murky'....etc, which may appear to show lexical gap in the TL. These words tend to be etymologically obscure or at least untranslated to any corresponding words in other languages.

There are many SL words that can profitably be analysed componentially in relation to their TL cognates, but only in context (ibid.). For example the word 'protocol' can be distinguished contextually.

In other cases, the SL words share a common component with a noncognate TL word, whilst the sense of the TL's cognate word may provide an SL distinctive component.

e.g. 'present day' (actual or topical)

The reason behind the translator's reluctance to create lexical word in the TL is that he can not be sure whether his contribution to the native speaker is convenient or not.

The most frequent form of lexical creativity involves new collocations – one or other component in translation depends on the importance of the word in the text. The contributions of words are often descriptively or semi-definitional to new elements of culture:

Hallal (Islamic Way of Slaying)

Lexical creation is attempt by the translator when the communication situation rules out a definition or literal translation, when the borrowing is sociolinguistically discovered and substitution is not available for communicative reasons (Ivir,

1987:43).

#### **4.6. Omission:**

This strategy is important not only to the cultural situation of a text but to the nature of the communication situation in which some elements appear. As a translator this strategy may cost him more communicatively than it could contribute to the faithfulness of the translation. The reason for this general lack of concern for 'faithfulness' to the ST, Tourny (1980:137) concluded, was not the translators were different to the textual relations within the ST, but that their main goal was to achieve acceptable translations in the Target culture.

For example he could translate the Arab word 'هنينا' into English as 'have an enjoyable meal' or he could leave it out as English do not wish each other good appetite. The translator decisions were thus a natural outcome of a preference for the translators' initial teleological goal; the changes were dictated by the cultural conditions of the receiving system.

The translator is justified in pruning or eliminating redundancy in poorly written informational texts, in particular jargon, provided it is not used for emphasis (Newmark, 1982:149).

In fact it does no harm to omit a translating word or expression in some contexts. If the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthily explanations, translators can and often do simply omit translating the word or expression in question (Baker, 1999:40).

The following English joke can be considered a good example of omission strategy:

Did you hear about the little moron who took a ruler to

bed, so he could tell how long he had slept ?

If we translated this joke as

هل سمعت بالأبله الصغير الذي أخذ مسطرة إلى سريره لكي يعرف كم استغرق في النوم؟

The translator has walked into the trap of the following SL stylistic variation in that he opens the Arabic one liner with the English rhetorical question. In other words, he has translated the English joke opening ' Did he you hear about ... ' semantically into Arabic .So, we suggest the following rendering

أحدهم أخذ مسطرة معه الى الفراش حتى يعرف كم استغرق في النوم

This expression أحدهم has a common ring to Arabs ears since an Arab usually hears or reads certain words :

واحد ، أحدهم

Moreover, we believe that one of the factors that maintain the same effectiveness of a translated joke, is that it should sound like any Arabic joke.

#### **4.7. Addition:**

This strategy involves adding some cultural information in case of there is any cultural implicit in the original text. The addition of the cultural information is made to make manifest what may be implicit in the text.

قال رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم):  
في الركاز الخمس (متفق عليه)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) says:

In treasure – trove (or minerals) one – fifth (shall be taken by the state).

#### **Data Analysis:**



This research is based on actual data selected for the purpose of translation <sup>1</sup>. Five translators, University of Mosul, College of Arts, Dep of Translation, have been asked to translate both the Arabic and English texts (see the Appendix), and allowed to use bilingual dictionaries of their choice at the time of testing . There were no time restrictions on performing the task, which was considered a take – home assignment.

The data consist of ten texts five of which are Arabic and the other five texts are English (as shown in the appendix).

The texts are thought to be very culture specific. Some of the ten texts belong to Islamic, Christianity and Judaism religious (especially text No.2, 3, 6 and 9). Other texts are based on other cultural aspects.

The data were canalized in accordance with the cultural categories and the strategies that the translators have adopted:

1- سأذهب بصحبه عمي لزيارة خالي المريض

Text (1) belongs to social culture category (see the Appendix).

Among the six translators only translator (1) has achieved a successful rendition. The remaining translators have been unsuccessful for various reasons. Translators (2) has used (uncle) which does not convey the social meaning of the TL leaving the statement obscure. Translator (3 and 5) have used the phrase (mother's brother) as a translation for خالي in Arabic but failed to render عمي successfully . Translator (4) has employed two different expressions to refer to the cultural specific term (uncle) namely, on my father's side and mother's brother. He could have unified them to use either (on my father's side) and (on my mother's side) or (parental uncle) and (maternal uncle) at a time .

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(1) The data have been taken from varied English books, papers and articles

The proposed translation is:

**I shall go with paternal uncle to pay a visit to my sick maternal uncle.**

To maintain the same effect of the SL we have used additional information, i.e., strategy of addition (see 4.7). Thus we have added some words to clarify the intended meaning of the SL.

2- أعتاد الناس على استخدام العبارات التالية في حالات التعزية:  
( (عظم الله أجركم

This expression contains both social and religious category (see the appendix).

None of the translators except translator (3) has arrived at a successful rendering. Translators (1,2 and 5) have used the strategy of substitution by replacing the SL expression *عظم الله أجركم* by " God Be With You ", "Allah Bless You " and " May Your Life Be Longer" consequently, which are not appropriate semantically and contextually .They should have been subjected to a more in –depth understanding of sociocultural implications rather than simply producing equivalents.Translator (4) has to some extent succeeded in conveying the SL meaning except for the word " work" which is not a good equivalent for *أجر* .

The proposed renditions are:

"May God raise your status" (lexical creation) (see 4.5) and

"May this be the last of your sorrows" (substitution)

Two purposes have been achieved by the two strategies. The first one is concerned with transferring the meaning of the SL .Whereas the second one assigns to maintain the equivalent meaning of the SL.

3 - لا يتم عقد الزواج إلا بحضور القاضي الشرعي

This text is of religious category (see the appendix).

All translators except (5) have been unsuccessful in rendering the Arabic cultural specific "القاضي الشرعي". For example translator (1 and 2) have translated it as 'marriage official', translator (2) has translated it as "marriage religious man" and translator (4) has translated it as "official man ". Translator (5) has achieved a successful rendition to some extent because he has resorted to the strategy of definition to convey the SL cultural term 'القاضي الشرعي'

The proposed rendition is

**The marriage contract can be completed only when an authorized Qadi (marriage official) is present.**

Here we have used two strategies namely, borrowing and definition. Employing both strategies are very important in such text to attain the effectiveness of the cultural information contained in the SL, as definition alone can not explain the intended meaning. {see (4.1) and (4.2)}

4 - هذا الرجل صاحب قلب أبيض

This text is of social category (see the appendix).

Arabs were used to say such statement to the kind-hearted man.

All translators except translator (4) have succeeded in rendering the Arabic idiom (قلب أبيض). He used literal translation strategy to transfer the meaning of the SL idiomatic expression.

The proposed rendering is:

**This man has a kind heart.**

To fulfill such rendering the translator is required to resort to the strategy of substitution. That is to replace the Arabic idiom ( قلب ) (أبيض) with the appropriate English idiom (Kind heart).

أستقبل جلاله أملك الحسين أخيه جلاله الملك فهد بن عبد العزيز خادم الحرمين 5 -  
أشريفين

Two categories are employed here namely, social and religious (see the appendix).

The English do not use the social relation such أخوك in addressing someone else.

All translators except (5) have failed to render this text for various reasons. Translator (1) has translated the lexical term أخيه into (his brother) which is culturally and contextually unaccepted in the English community. Translator (2) was unsuccessful to opt (peer) as an equivalence of (أخيه). Moreover, he has resorted to a wrong strategy when he omitted the phrase ( خادم الحرمين الشريفين ). The strategy of omission is not the suitable one here. as the omitted phrase is plying a vital role in the text; and this is what we called undertranslation process (see 4.6). translators (3) and (4) have chosen (sanctuary) to render the religious term (ألمرمين) and (noble) is not the appropriate translation of (أشريفين) .

The proposed rendering is:

**His Majesty king Al-Husien received His Majesty king Fahad Bin Abdel-Aziz the Servant of the two Holy Mosques.**

Two strategies have adopted here. The first one is employed to omit cultural specific term أخيه. The strategy of

omission is necessary in this text as أخيه may cause an ambiguity for the TL readers.

The second one is the strategy of literal. We employed this strategy to maintain the same effect of the phrase خادم الحرمين الشريفين. No other strategy can serve such phrase as literal does, though literal translation is rare employed in the cultural texts.

#### 6- She is a lady

This text is of social category (see the appendix).

All translators have failed to render this text in various degrees. Translator (1) has rendered the text by resorting to literal translation strategy which is an inappropriate one. He failed to convey the pragmatic and semantic effects of the SL term (Lady). On the other hand, translators (2) and (3) have adopted the strategy of addition. they add the word جميله to transfer the meaning of the word (lady) which is not an attribute associated with the word (lady). The attributes of (lady) with respect to the dictionary meaning are those related to a woman of a High – Class in the community. Translator (4) has added an unnecessary Arabic exclamation particle يالها . Translator (5) has gone so far when he used فتاة ناضجة which is an inadequate rendition for (lady).

The proposed translation:

إنها سيده محترمه

The strategy of addition has adopted here to maintain the social category of the SL and to obtain the same responses as that of the SL hearer.

#### 7- Jim has a date with Alice

This text is of social and religious categories (see the appendix)

All translators except translator (5) have rendered the text

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successfully. He has resorted to literal translation to deal with the text. Literal translation on the above the level of a word may cause serious problems. Literal translation of the English word ' date ' may result in a cultural shock in Arabic.

The proposed translation:

جيم لديه موعد مع أليس

The strategy of omission is adopted here to manage a successful rendering. We have omitted the word عاطفي from the phrase موعد عاطفي for the sake of transferring the contextual meaning of SL text (see 4.6) .

**8-**We will be having a brunch at the Shiraton

This text is of material and social culture. (see the appendix)

None of the translators except translator (5) have succeeded in rendering it. None has managed to preserve the contextual meaning of the text. Translator (1) has left it without rendering. Translator (2) has rendered it by using the strategy of substitution when he rendered the culture specific term ' brunch' into (وجبه في وقت الضحى). He substituted the English term ' brunch ' by the Arabic term ' الضحى ' . Since Arabs do not have such a kind of meal, the text will be ambiguous .Translators (3) and (4) have mistranslated the text by adding wrong information as وجبه الفطور and غداء مبكر . The absence of total responding to such a word and the misconception were the reasons behind to find a related term in their language and society.

The proposed translation:

سنتناول ألبر نچ(وجبه بين الفطور والغداء) في الشيراتون

The use of borrowing with an explanation to transfer the English expression is the most convenient one (see 4.1).

**9- The children of the bridechamber (Matt.9:15; Mark 2:19; Luke 5:34) A Jewish marriage- customs.**

This idiomatic expression belongs to social and religious categories.(see the appendix)

All translators have failed to render the text in one way or another. Translator (1) has not been able to render such an idiom. Translators (2), (3) and (5) have resorted to the strategy of literal translation by rendering them as ' أطفال غرفة العرس ' and ' أطفال ' respectively.

Hence they have not been successful in finding the appropriate equivalent for the English expression. They have thought that the children were in some way related to the bridegroom chamber. Translator (4) has employed the strategy of substitution when he replaced the ' children ' by خادم أو حاجب to maintain the intended meaning of the SL.

**The proposed rendition: ضيوف العرسان**

The immediate importance of proper ethnological background of the translator can be seen in these errors that the translators have made. Of course, one of these was the bad consequences of literalness. The translators were not aware of the Jewish marriage-customs nor the idiom "children of the bridechamber," which designated either the guests who participated in the celebration, or, the friends of the bridegroom. The strategy of cultural substitution is employed here (see 4.4).

**10- A leopard can not change his spots.**

All translators have been unsuccessful in rendering this proverb.

They all have employed literal strategy in this text. They all have tried to maintain the form rather than the content .Literal translation strategy can not achieve the accepted figurative meaning

of proverb, though it is not a highly idiomatic expression in its own. So we resorted to the strategy of substitution to find the equivalent proverb from our own culture. Hence, the interpretation of the SL proverb helps us to choose the appropriate equivalent in Arabic.

The proposed translation:

من شب على شيء... شاب عليه

### **Conclusion:**

Languages are basically a part of culture, and words can not be understood correctly apart from the original cultural phenomena for which they are symbols. Culture is translation and translation is culture. Hence, translation is a transfer of language. Accordingly, the translator is permanently faced with the problems of how to treat cultural aspects implicit in an SL and of finding the most appropriate strategy of successful conveying of these aspects into TL.

In this paper we have forwarded some strategies to overcome the problematic cultural texts expected to constitute a challenge for translators. These strategies are: borrowing, definition, literal translation, substitution, lexical creation, addition and omission.

The strategies have provided the translator with some means of catering for such problematic texts. Borrowing, lexical creation, literal translation and definition will explicitly draw the receiver's attention to the specific source- cultural context, while substitution and omission will mask it, addition makes the information that was explicit implicit in the SL texts.

However, there is no unified treatment that can be applied to all unmatched elements of culture in translation and there is no unified decision for a particular text type or individual text.

The strategies used by the translators have demonstrated that the linguistic expression is largely subservient to cultural



understanding and the success in rendering an acceptable target text has a positive correlation to the strategy he/ she used.

It is found that the flaws or gaps in knowledge of the cultural context will keep the translator a way from a successful translation .Many of translators who participate in this study were not adequately equipped with those characteristics,and hence their translation / adaptive strategies were mainly limited to the literal translation and had less resort definition, borrowing and substitution. Besides, the most successful strategies used by translators are in the main borrowing plus definition and literal translation, although the latter may have adverse effect in some situations like translation of idioms and proverbs.

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### **Appendix**

This appendix consists of 10 texts falling into two tests of 5 items: Test 1 (translating Arabic texts into English) and Test 2 (translating English texts into Arabic).

Test (1)

Translate the following texts into English:

١- سأذهب بصحبة عمي لزيارة خالي المريض

- 1- I will go with my sick maternal uncle with my paternal uncle.
- 2- I will go with my uncle to visit my sick uncle.
- 3- I will go with my uncle to visit my uncle (mother's brother).
- 4- I will go with my uncle (on my father's side) to visit my sick uncle (mother's brother).
- 5- I shall be going with my uncle to visit my sick mother's brother.

٢- أعتاد الناس على استخدام العبارات التالية في حالات التعزية: (عظم الله أجركم)

- 1- People are used to say the following phrase in the cases of consolation God be With You).
- 2- People get used to say such expression in consolation :(Allah Bless You).
- 3- The people custom to use the following words in consolation

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cases: (God Glorify Your Reward).

4- The people accustomed to use this phrase in consolation conditions:

(God Glorify Your Work)

5- People used to say phrases in the bereavement cases: (May Your Life be Longer).

6- People used to say phrases in the bereavement cases: (May Your Life be Longer).

٣- لا يتم عقد الزواج إلا بحضور القاضي الشرعي

1- The marriage contract can not be done without the marriage official.

2- Marriage can not be completed without the presence of the marriage religious man .

3- The contract of marriage does not complete unless the marriage official is presence.

4- The marriage does not finish unless the man is presence.

5- The marriage contract will not be done unless the authorized religious official man is presence.

٤- هذا الرجل صاحب قلب أبيض

1- This man has good- hearted.

2- This is a good man.

3- This man has a pure heart.

4- This man has a white heart.

5- This man is very kind.

٥- أستقبل جلالة الملك عبد الله بن الحسين أخيه جلالة الملك عبد الله بن عبد العزيز خادم الحرمين الشريفين

1- The king Al- Hussein has received his brother the king Abdul Aziz the custodian of the two Holy Mosques.

2-Al Hussein king received his peer Abdul Aziz king of Saudi Aribia.

3-His majesty the king Al Hussein received His majesty the king

Abdul Al Aziz the servant of the noble sanctuary.

- 4- His majesty the king Al husein received His majesty the king Abdulah Bin Abid AL Aziz the servant of the two Holy sanctuaries.
- 5- King Husien received his counterpart king Abidullah Bin Abid Al Aziz the servant of the two Holy Mosques.

### **Test 2**

Translate the Following idioms and statements into Arabic:

#### **6- She is a lady.**

- ١ - أنها سيّدة
- ٢ - أنها سيّدة جميلة
- ٣ - هي سيّدة جميلة
- ٤ - يالها من سيّدة!
- ٥ - أنها فتاة ناضجة

#### **7- Jim has a date with Alice.**

- ١ - جيم لديه موعد مع أليس
- ٢ - جيم على موعد مع أليس
- ٣ - جيم حدد موعد مع أليس
- ٤ - إن جم لديه موعد مع أليس
- ٥ - ان جيم لديه موعد عاطفي مع أليس

#### **8- We ' ll be having a brunch at the shiraton .**

- ١ - سوف نتناول وجبه في وقت الظحى في الشيراتون
- ٢ - نحن سنتناول وجبة ألفطور في الشيراتون
- ٣ - سنتناول غداء مبكر في الشيراتون
- ٤ - سنتناول وجبة (ما بين الصباح و الظهر) في الشيراتون

#### **9- The children of the bridechamber (Matt.9:15; Mark 2:19; Luke 5:34) Jewish marriage-customs.**

- ١ - أنهم أطفال غرفة العرس (عادة الزواج اليهودي)
- ٢ - أن أطفال غرفة العرس (مات ٩.١٥ . مارك ٢.١٩ . لوك ٥.٣٤) عادة الزواج اليهودي

٣- أنهم حاجبي (خدم) العروس سيأتون

٤- أنهم أطفال غرفة العريس (عادة الأزواج عند اليهود)

**10- A leopard can not change his place.**

١- لا يغير النمر مكانه أبدا

٢- لا يتحرك النمر مهما حصل

٣- لا يتأثر النمر بأي شيء

٤- لا يأبه النمر شيئا

٥- يستقر النمر في مكانه لا يغادره أبداً