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A Semantic Approach to Translating

the English Cultural Encounters into Arabic

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مدخل دلالي لترجمة العقبات الثقافية الإنكليزية إلى اللغة العربية

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Abstract

It goes undeniable that translation is a cultural activity. The current paper, in consequence, tackles the translation of the cultural aspects which are represented by the lexical items and phraseological units. The paper also lays great stress on the effective technique of cultural filtering which points out to replacement of cultural features from the source language to the target one. Thus, these items and phraseological units must be filtered culturally to be accessible easily by the target readership. As a result, translators can, by means of this most effective technique, render the texts with the cultural implications successfully. It is also to be noted that most translators attempt to translate the cultural issue without filtering them culturally. They must take the process of cultural filtering into consideration so as not to distort the intended message. Thus, the paper sheds some light on the technique of cultural filtering because it is more convenient and it is not considered a traditional literal translation, but it is more similar to the adaptation and free translation. So, it is of the utmost significance for translators to utilize such technique before beginning the process of the translation to make their renderings equivalent with the target language in order not to make the target readership exert all energy to arrive at the intended meaning.

الخلاصة:

الورقة البحثية الحالية تتناول ترجمة الجوانب الثقافية المتمثلة بالمفردة والعبارة والجملة ولكن عن طريق استخدام تقنية ما يسمى بمفهوم التقنية الثقافية والذي يعرف على انه استبدال للتفاصيل الثقافية المبثوثة في لغة الاصل واعادة صياغتها ونقلها الى لغة الهدف والتي تعد بدورها من اكثر وسائل النقل الثقافي فاعلية وذلك عند نقل النصوص الادبية ذات المضامين الثقافية. ومما يستدعي مزيدا من الاهتمام والانتباه هو ان اغلب المترجمين يحاولون ترجمة هذه الجوانب الثقافية دون تمحيصها والنظر فيما اذ اكانت تتلاءم ولغة الهدف او لا. ومن هذا المنطلق اخذت الدراسة تسلط الضوء على التقنية الثقافية على انها تقنية قابلة للنجاح ولا تعد ترجمة حرفية تقليدية ولكنها اقرب بكثير الى التكييف الترجمي والترجمة الحرة. ومن هنا كان من الاهمية بمكان ان يُفعّل المترجمون هذه التقنية   قبل الشروع في عملية الترجمة ليتمكنوا من جعل تراجمهم تتساوق مع لغة الهدف حتى لا تستدعي من القارئ الهدف ان يبذل قصارى جهده ليصل الى المعنى المقصود.

Introduction

The present paper is an attempt to tackle the idea of how translators can properly capture the difference in culture in the source and target communities. At the same time, the paper tends to make wide use of the cultural filter which is considered an effective means in order to filter the hidden sense of culture. If the translator achieves a better understanding of such differences, they will certainly have the ability to communicate the message to the target audience. Here, the main means through which the translators can arrive at the intended message of the cultural filter. The concept of this means, i.e. cultural filter, is used to lay great focus on the urgent need for empirical bases regarding any adaptations on the original texts conducted by the translators. After all that, the translator will be able to accommodate the intended special function of the subject matter of the source text in the target one. The current study aims at making use of the means of cultural filtering during the process of rendering the cultural aspects in the Arabic texts into English, raising the translators' awareness concerning the most effective means during the translation of cultural areas and showing that the linguistic aspects cannot convey the intended message without the assisting of the cultural means.
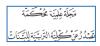
1. Statement of the Problem

The major problem lies in how the translators deal with the phenomenon of cultural filter in the Arabic texts. The study conducted tries to activate the means of cultural filter in order to refine the texts before embarking on rendering the source text into the target one. The main task of the translator, here, is in the techniques that s/he must utilize to provide most communicative renderings which enable the target readers to feel as they something original not something translated. The translator must remove the imprints or fingerprints of the original author and produce an original one.

2. Aims of the Study

The present paper aims at:

1. specifying the culture-specific lexical items which are the most challenging task on the part of translators to render them culturally.

2. identifying the intercultural awareness are far more complicated to solve the translation dilemmas concerning equivalence and other aspects of translation.

3. shedding some light on the cultural as well as linguistic aspects since they both complement each other in providing the appropriate renderings.

2. Hypotheses

The study hypothesizes the following:

a. rendering cultural aspects will be much easier through the utility of the cultural filtering.

b. capturing the cultural gaps between the source language as well as the target one can result in the most appropriate renderings.

c. the mechanism of translation takes place between two cultures not just two languages, thus translators will be in urgent need for what enables them to ender properly.

3. Translation and Culture

First of all, it is essential to define the concept of translation in an illustrative way. Then, the other concept, i.e. culture, also needs to clearer regarding its relationship with the translation. It would be more convenient to state that translation and culture are closely associated since translation is regarded as a means of transporting culture throughout the world. "A text to be rendered was basically written for individuals and readership who live in one country. The rendered text is properly anchored in the receiving culture and, in transferring the source text, the translator is going to be faced with culture-bound forms or issues" (Riccardi, 2003: 86).

Translators also must have appropriate 'cultural capital' which refers to education and knowledge (Munday, 2013: 234). Culture is the way of life and its realizations which are restricted to a society which employs a certain language as its vehicle of expression (Newmark, 1988: 94).

4. Core Elements of Translation

a. written texts.

b. transfer or mediation.

c. from one natural language to another (Colina, 2015: 3)

5. Definitions of Cultural Translation (CT)

There are some main principles to give a suitable definition to cultural translation. Firstly, let us take the following interesting definition so as to clarify such concept to a certain extent. Cultural method (cultural rendition). A term utilized in an informal way to point out to kinds of rendition that work as a means for cross-cultural or anthropological research, or really to any rendition that is sensitive to cultural and linguistic features (Shuttleworth, 1997: 35).
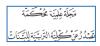
6. Dimensions of the Process of Cultural Translation

The process of cultural translation consists of five main dimensions which can be listed as follows:

a. the explanation of a plurivacuolar discourse to be grasped.

b. an action of reading through a temporal and special distance.

c. the incorporation of the discourse inside the sociocultural context of the interpreter.

d. the transference of sense for an aim.

e. the emancipation of the translators as target readership (Maitland, 2017: 10). In fact, Maitland states that her approach to cultural translation is imagined as critical- in the sense that it seeks both to identify the limits of human understanding and to uncover and oppose domination, exploitation.

7. The Concept of Realia

Realia (Russian Realia) can be defined as the textual elements which convey local and historical colors. One of the most recalcitrantly untranslatable characteristics of an ST, realia are in general restricted to literary translation instead of the technical one. Valkhove & Florin define

realia as in: "vocabulary (and collocations) of a local language that refer to objects, concepts and phenomena characteristic of the geographical environment, culture (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997: 139).

Consider the following Iraqi realia which are totally different from one geographical region to another.

The realia can be listed as in:

8. Cultural Filter

The translator, before processing the text to be translated, must filter the cultural aspects comprehensively so as to provide the most appropriate rendering. "The concept of a 'cultural filtering' clearly is an effective tool of grasping socio-cultural gaps in expectations, criteria and stylistic norms between the source and target linguistic-cultural societies" (House, 2015: 68).

9. Cultural Translation

As Sturge observes in the Routledge Encyclopedia, the term is used in many different ways and in diverse circumstances as in:

a. It is a metaphor that challenges received conceptualizations of the 'translation' paradigm (that 'source' and 'target' languages and cultures exist as discreet and mutually coherent categories).

b. It refers to the work of intercultural mediation and representation at the heart of literary translation. Cultural translation, in this context, is not a rendition technique per se, but instead, a point of view on renditions which highlights their appearance and effect as elements in the ideological traffic among language societies. Thus, CT signals not the interlingual transfer o meaning between cultural and linguistic monads but the transformation of the very fabric of culture itself (Baker and Saldanha, 2013: 67).

10. Pym's Survey of Cultural Translation

Cultural translation in the non-linguistic, non-grammatical sense differs from its textual counterpart because it assumes no fixed source from which to translate and no clear target audience to whom the translation is directed.

At base, cultural translation implies something other than linguistic or cultural production and instead of the more general process of communication between different cultural groups. As bearers of culture, in this sense, cultural translation is something that we simply do.

11. Invocation of Cultural Translation

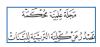Invocations of the term 'cultural translation' falls largely into one of two camps:

1. Those that see rendition as a method of writing (of an anthropological, symbolic or cultural society), and

2. those that see it as a way of 'transposition' (in which foreign interpretive horizons, artifacts, texts and people are moved into a new locale.

12 . Translator's Job

All in all, translator's job is to understand this text and write it in yet another language, for another audience, in another time and in another place. But the text does not speak. The translator must read at remove, for the text-for-translation has been written by an author now deceased or inaccessible. The author's intention for the text now no longer animates its meaning in the here and now reading. Thus, translation is built mainly on a translator's cognitive understanding with a piece of writing, on the one hand, and with the demands, competences, wishes, and perceptual lacunae of an audience who will get the rendition, on the other hand.

13. Communication

Communication is not the transference of sense, in such way, but it is real novelty. To grasp each another is to go into formula of dialogue which creates some ways of satisfactory acceptance as to sense of what is uttered. To recognize that people construct the globe in different ways is to recognize the availability on gap in others and in myself. When each human being constructs the globe depending on their own experiment of it, after

that in mixing with the other individuals of the globe we could not claim that communication is going to create in our seeing the globe in exactly the same way. In other words, we understand the world not directly but through our understanding of other people, because we exit not in separate contexts.

14. Languages and Cultural Communities

Languages and cultural societies are inseparable. People travel and migrate and the technique we activate and exchange with each other develops in a continuous way. As it is usually said, cultural rendition may only give us a tool of thinking critically about the many techniques through which gap works all over the world. Rather than ask why the term translation should be applied in other domains- as young shows, this has been taking place since the fourteen century and translation 'proper' seems to have thrived this long- one must instead wonder why cultural translation is found as a different terminology which is used widely. The question more precisely is not how we must go about restricting cultural rendition's usage of the interlingual model but to wonder the reason why the interlingual model must be utilized as the basis for cultural rendition for the first time.

15. Different Sense of Cultural Translation

1. CT is a metaphor that challenges received conceptualizations of the 'translation' paradigm (that 'source' and 'target' languages and cultures exist as discreet and mutually coherent categories).

2. CT refers to the work of intercultural mediation and representation at the heart of literary translation.

3. CT, In the non-linguistic, non-grammatical sense differs from its textual counterpart because it assumes no fixed source from which to translate and no clear target audience to whom is directed.

16. Types of Equivalence

Equivalence, generally speaking, can be classified into two main types as follows:

1. Formal Equivalence

It highlights attention on the message itself, in both form and meaning. One is interested that the intended meaning in the target language must be equivalent as exactly as possible the various components in the original language.

2. Dynamic Equivalence

It is built on what Nida terms 'the principle of equivalent impact', in the place of ;the relationship between receptor and message must be the same as thet which found between the original receptors and the message (Munday, 2012: 66-7).

17. Cultural Ambiguity

Cultural vagueness is recognized by Newmark (1988) as one of the seven ambiguities of rendition. Such ambiguity might create a difference in translation. This difference may be syntactic, lexical, or linguistic. Gaps among languages in relation with cultures result what are termed to as 'culturally bound expressions'.
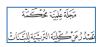
18. Domestication and Foreignization

Here, it is quite evident that these two main techniques have been utilized in the field of culture widely. They both play a great role in making translator invisible or visible.

(1) Domesticating translation

A term utilized by Venuti (1995) to point out the rendition technique through which a clear, fluent style is employed so as to lessen the effectiveness of the foreign text for TL readership. Venuti pursues the essence of the terminology back to Schleiermacher's well-known concept of the rendition that "leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and move the author towards him". Venuti goes on arguing the domestication is the widely used rendition technique in Anglo-American culture, and which this goes well with the asymmetrical literally links that, all in all, exist between this and other cultures. (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 2014: 44).

Consider the following example:

He took his <u>mobile</u> to send a <u>message</u> to his father to buy him a <u>computer</u>.

Proposed rendering:

<div dir="rtl">

أخذ هاتفه وأرسل رسالة لوالده ليشتري له حاسوباً

</div>

It is quite apparent that the translator tends to make use of the strategy of domestication. Here, the translator intends to make the reader in peace, because he domesticated the words: *mobile*, *message*, and *computer* in a very sensible way.

(2) Foreignization Translation

A term also utilized by Venuti (1995) to designate the kind of rendition through which a TT is created that intentionally divides target conventions by retaining something of the foreignization of the source language. Venuti sees the origin of such a concept in Schleiermacher, who discusses the type of translation in which "the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him" (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 2014: 59).

Consider the following illustrative example:

Jack went by <u>bus</u> to the <u>supermarket</u> to buy a <u>radio</u> and <u>headphones</u>.

Proposed rendering:

<div dir="rtl">

ذهب جاك بالباص الى السوبر ماركت ليشتري راديو و هيدفونز.

</div>

It is crystal clear that the translator utilized the Foreignization technique when he rendered the words: *bus*, *supermarket*, *radio*, and *headphones*. The task of the reader is to do his best to understand the intended meaning.

19. Cultural Context

Cultural context must be represented before rendering the text to provide appropriate rendering.

I have no words; my voice is I my sword.

(Shakespeare: 185)

ما في جعبتي من كلمات اوجهها لكم فصوتي في سيفي (امين)

الا ان سيفي في التحاور مقول ومن حده يأتيك قولي مبينا (محمد عفيت)

اعييت عن الكلام لكن سيفي افصح مني (مطران خليل مطران).

It is crystal clear that it is quite better, on the part of translators, to take the cultural context into account. So, the most appropriate rendering is as follows:

السيف اصدق انباء من الكتب   في حده الحد بين الجد واللعب

(Hussein and Mohammad, 2016: 66-68)

20. Cultural Loss on Proper Noun

In Arabic, some proper nouns have cultural dimensions, therefore, it is essential to be taken into account during the process of translation. It is quite inappropriate to be rendered literally.

هذا الرجل اكرم من <u>حاتم الطائي</u>

If the translator literally renders the above-mentioned proper noun as;

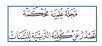This man is more generous than <u>Hatim Attae</u>,

the intended meaning will be considerably lost. The rendering could be done communicatively.

Proposed rendering:

This man is quite generous.

SL Text (1)

Why don't you mind your own business and quit <u>keeping up with the Joneses</u>? You are just wasting your time.

Interpretation and Discussion

It is quite evident that the underlined phraseological unit, depending only on its literal meaning, cannot produce culturally a communicative meaning with the whole text. In consequence, it is essential to look carefully for the appropriate equivalent so as to render the well-delivered message properly. The phraseological unit "keeping up with the Joneses" means "try to equal your neighbors' lifestyle".

Proposed Rendering

لماذا لا تهتم بشؤونك الخاصة وتكف عن محاولة مجاراة الاخرين؟ انك تهدر وقتك ليس الا.

SL Text (2)

She is a whistleblower and she rats on others in her department.

Interpretation and Discussion

It is crystal clear that the lexical item "whistleblower" literally means " نافخة الصافرة", depending only on its literal meaning, cannot produce culturally a communicative meaning with the whole text. In consequence, it is essential to look carefully for the appropriate equivalent so as to render the well-delivered message properly. The lexical item "whistleblower" means "a person who tells someone in authority about what is happening".

Proposed Rendering

إنها مخبرة سرية تشي بالآخرين في محل عملها.

SL Text (3)

You women are all cut from the same cloth.

Interpretation and Discussion

Obviously, the underlined phraseological unit "cut from the same cloth" may express an odd meaning if it is rendered literally into Arabic since. Arabic culture does not imply such phraseological unit. Thus, translators must delve into the cultural capital of English so as to find out the most

convenient equivalent. The cultural meaning of the phraseological unit "cut from the same cloth" is "of the same nature; similar".

Proposed Rendering

<div dir="rtl" align="center">

أنتن أيتها النساء خُلِقتن من طينة واحدة.

</div>

SL Text (4)

I am just in no mood to <u>lift a finger</u>. I just feel lonely and this is a hard pill to swallow.

Interpretation and Discussion

English users usually utilize the phraseological unit above "lift a finger" to indicate that they are fully exhausted that they cannot do anything at all. On the contrary, Arabic users do not prefer and even recognize such cultural and anomalous use. On top of that, the text recipients may express a great deal of astonishment when they read such weird cultural selection. The phraseological unit "lift a finger" means " make the slightest effort to do something".

Proposed Rendering

<div dir="rtl" align="center">

ليس عندي مزاج أن أحرك ساكنا وانني اشعر بالوحدة وذلك مرار لا أستطيع أن أستسيغه.
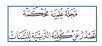
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SL Text (5)

I am <u>racking my brains</u> to find a way to get the work done before noon.

Interpretation and Discussion

It is indeed odd to pluralize the lexical item "brain" when it indicates to a singular person. Here, the text producer tends to activate a certain meaning which is not included literally in the underlined phraseological unit. In reality, translators cannot render the phraseological unit properly into a well-delivered message unless they take the cultural aspects of the unit under investigation into consideration.

Proposed Rendering

<div dir="rtl" align="center">

اجهدت عقلي لإيجاد طريقة اكمل بها العمل قبل الظهيرة.

</div>

Conclusions

The present paper has arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Cultural dimension, in translating, must be taken into consideration in every lexical item so as to maintain the cultural flavour in the target text.

2. If translators believe that translation is a mere linguistic activity, they certainly commit many horrible mistakes during the process of translation.

3. Since language is being exercised in social community, translators must not neglect the cultural perspectives when they intend to render any stretch of communication.

4. The losses of culture can be deduced via a comparative study between the source language and target one.

5. Manipulating the culture-specific concepts is the most challenging task on the part of translators.

6. Culture and intercultural awareness are far more complicated than it may be imagined. For translator, awareness of the difficulties between cultures is the main aim for solving translation dilemmas concerning equivalence and other aspects of translation.

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