Translation as cross-cultural communication

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Abstract. The present article is aimed at revealing the main role of translation in cross-cultural communication and some difficulties that translators face in this process. Ttranslation plays an important role of crossing through different cultures and communication. Therefore translation is one of the essential, fundamental, and adequate ways in transferring culture. A good translator should simultaneously be aware of the cultural factors, views and traditions in order to consciously consider historical and religious background of the source text. Finally, it is essential to evoke the same response as the source text attempted to and avoid inserting irrelevant new words into language used by people. All these factors must be taken into account in translating process.

Keywords: enculturation, acculturation, intercultural communication, exoticism, calque, cultural borrowing, cultural transplantation.

Anything that can be thought can be said, and anything that can be said can be understood, and anything that can be thought and said in one culture or language can be said and understood in another.

Translation as a type of mediation is a means not only of interlingual but also of intercultural communication. Serving as a means of communication between people of various ethnic groups, translation is a means of interlingual and intercultural communication. The cultural factor in translation is obvious and undeniable. Not only two languages interact in translation process, but also two cultures having both common features and national specificity. Revealing this specificity is crucial in studying intercultural communication and translation [1].

Translation as a process involves not just two languages, but a transfer from one culture to another. Translation, involving the transposition of thoughts expressed in one language by one social group into the appropriate expression of another group, entails a process of cultural de-coding, re-coding and en-coding. As cultures are increasingly brought into greater contact with one another, multicultural considerations are brought to bear to an everincreasing degree. Translators are faced with an alien culture that requires that its message be conveyed in anything but an alien way. That culture expresses its idiosyncrasies in a way that is culture-bound: cultural words, proverbs and of course idiomatic expressions, whose origin and use are intrinsically and uniquely bound to the culture concerned. So they are called upon to do a cross-cultural translation whose success will depend on their understanding of the culture they are working with [5].

The notion of culture is essential to considering the implications for translation. Culture refers to the relatively specialized life-style of a group of people – consisting of their values, beliefs, artifacts, ways of behaving, and ways of communicating. Also included in a culture are all that members of a social group have produced and developed – their language, modes of thinking, art, laws, and religion.

In recent years a considerable amount of valuable work has been done in the matter under discussion.

Culture is passed from one generation to another through **enculturation**, a process by which we learn the culture into which we are born (our native culture) [4]. Parents, peer groups, schools, religious institutions, and government agencies are the main teachers of culture.

A different way of learning culture is through **acculturation**, the process by which we learn the rules and norms of a culture different from our native culture. Through acculturation, our original or native culture is modified through direct contact with or exposure to a new and different culture [4].

Cross-cultural / intercultural communication is a field of study that looks at how people from different cultural backgrounds communicate, in similar and different ways among themselves, and how they endeavor to communicate across cultures [13]. Expressions like working class culture, high culture and low culture refer to such differences. Culture of a country changes over time.

The acceptance of the new culture depends on a number of factors. Immigrants who come from cultures similar to the host culture will become acculturated more quickly than do the older and less well-educated. Personality factors also play a part. Persons who are risk takers and open-minded, for example, have greater acculturation potential. Also, persons who are familiar with the host culture prior to immigration – whether through interpersonal contact or media exposure – will be acculturated more readily.

There are at least three major ways in which cultures differ that are especially important for communication. They are: collectivism and individualism, high and low context, and power distances [8].

Cultures differ in the extent to which they promote individual values (for example, power, achievement, hedonism, and stimulation) versus collectivist values (for example, benevolence, tradition, and conformity).

Most people and most cultures have a dominant orientation; they are more individually oriented or more collectively oriented in most situations, most of the time [5].

In an individualistic-oriented culture members are responsible for themselves and perhaps their immediate family. In a collectivist culture members are responsible for the entire group.

Success, in an individualistic culture, is measured by the extent to which we surpass other members of our group. In a collectivist culture success is measured by our contribution to the achievements of the group as a whole.

In an individualistic culture we are responsible to our own conscience and responsibility is largely an individual matter; in a collectivistic culture we are responsible to the rules of the social group and responsibility for an accom-

plishment or a failure is shared by all members. Competition is fostered in individualistic cultures while cooperation is promoted in collectivist cultures.

Cultures also differ in the extent to which information is made explicit, on the one hand, or is assumed to be in the context or in the persons communicating, on the other [3]. A high-context culture is one in which much of the information in communication is in the context or in the person – for example, information that was shared through previous communications, through assumptions about each other, and through shared experiences. The information is thus known by all participants but it is not explicitly stated in the verbal message.

A low-context culture is one in which most of the information is explicitly stated in the verbal message, and in many cases it would be written down (to make it even more explicit).

Members of high-context cultures spend lots of time getting to know each other interpersonally and socially before any important transactions take place. Because of this prior personal knowledge, a great deal of information is shared by the members and therefore does not have to be explicitly stated. Members of high-context cultures spend a great deal less time getting to know each other and hence do not have that shared knowledge. As a result everything has to be stated explicitly.

In some cultures power is concentrated in the hands of a few and there is a great difference in the power held by these people and by the ordinary citizen. These are called high power distance cultures; examples are Mexico, Brazil, India, and the Philippines. In low power distance cultures (examples include Denmark, New Zealand, Sweden, and to a lesser extent the United States), power is more evenly distributed throughout the citizenry. These differences impact on communication in a number of ways. For example, in high power distance cultures there is a great power distance between students and teachers; students are expected to be modest, polite, and totally respectful. In low power distance cultures students are expected to demonstrate their knowledge and command of the subject matter, participate in discussions with the teacher, and even challenge the teacher, something many high power distance culture members would not even think of doing.

Understanding the role of culture in communication is an essential foundation for understanding intercultural communication as it occurs interpersonally, in small groups, in public speaking, or in the media, and for appreciating the principles for effective intercultural communication. Discussing the problems of correspondence in translation, Nida confers equal importance to both linguistic and cultural differences between the SL and the TL [7].

Each culture has its own rules for communicating. These rules identify what is appropriate and what is inappropriate. In some cultures, people show respect by avoiding direct eye contact with the person to whom they are speaking. In other cultures this same eye avoidance would signal disinterest.

Intercultural communication scholars offer the steps by which a member of one culture adapts to, or becomes acculturated into, another: *denial* (isolation, separation); *defense* (denigration, superiority, reversal; *minimization*

(physical universalism, transcendent universalism); *acceptance* (respect for behavioral difference, respect for value difference); *adaptation* (empathy, pluralism); *integration* (contextual evaluation, constructive marginality) [3].

The first three stages, denial, defense, and minimization, Bassnett identifies as "ethnocentric"; the second three, acceptance, adaptation, and integration, as "ethnorelative" [3].

These models might usefully be expanded to include translation and interpretation [11]. For example:

1 *Ethnocentrism:* the refusal to communicate across cultural boundaries; rejection of the foreign or strange; universalization of one's own local habits and assumptions.

2 *Cross-cultural tolerance:* monolinguals communicating with foreigners who speak their language; members of different subcultures within a single national culture coming into contact and discovering and learning to appreciate and accept their differences; problems of foreign-language learning (unnoticed cultural differences, prosodic and paralinguistic features) and growing tolerance for cultural and linguistic relativism.

3 *Integration:* fluency in a foreign language and culture; the ability to adapt and acculturate and feel at home in a foreign culture, speaking its language(s) without strain, acting and feeling (more or less) like a native to that culture.

4 *Translation/interpretation:* the ability to mediate between cultures, to explain one to another; mixed loyalties; the pushes and pulls of the source and target cultures.

As it was mentioned translation is not only a linguistic act; it's also a cultural one, an act of communication across cultures. Translation always involves both language and culture simply because the two cannot be separated. Language is culturally embedded: it both expresses and shapes cultural reality, and the meaning of linguistic items can only be understood when considered together with the cultural context in which the linguistic items are used. Translators should pay great attention to differences in kind and degree of conventionalization in the source and target cultures when transferring a text from one culture to another.

Translation plays a vital role in making a culture universal and general. It acts as a bridge to communicate all kinds of languages specially those similar to each other considering their linguistic features and cultural customs in all parts of the world. So it links all units of the world in the global network. Moreover translation presumes the existence of boundaries between different cultures and the translator most probably is aware of these boundaries and the inevitability of crossing them. Without cultural similarities and universalities, there is no way for people of different cultures to communicate with each other and translation will be impossible. When speaking of two languages which are to be translated equivalently, translators must convey the same referential, pragmatic and interlinked meanings. However, due to differences between two cultures, semantic equivalence is limited to some.

Translation is a process of replacing a text in one language by a text in another language. A text is never just a sum of its parts, and when words and sentences are used

in communication, they combine to make meaning in different ways. Therefore, it is the whole text to be translated, rather than separate sentences or words. A communicative text will carry its cultural features while moving from one language to another. The translator should be familiar with SL and TL cultures, know the purpose of the communication and the audience for correct and on-time decision making to do his/her translation as effective cross-cultural communication.

In 1964, Nida discussed the problems of correspondence in translation, conferred equal importance to both linguistic and cultural differences between the SL and the TL and concluded that differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure [12]. It is further explained that parallels in culture often provide a common understanding despite significant formal shifts in the translation. According to him cultural implications for translation are thus of significant importance as well as lexical concerns.

In 2002, regarding cultural translation Hervey and Higgins believed in cultural translation rather than literal one [7]. According to them accepting literal translation means that there's no cultural translation operation. But obviously there are some obstacles bigger than linguistic ones. They are cultural obstacles and here a transposition in culture is needed.

According to Hervey and Higgins cultural transposition has a scale of degrees which are toward the choice of features indigenous to target language and culture rather than features which are rooted in source culture [7]. The result here is foreign features reduced in target text and is to some extent naturalized. The scale here is from an extreme which is mostly based on source culture (exoticism) to the other extreme which is mostly based on target culture (cultural transplantation): *Exoticism – Calque - Cultural Borrowing – Communicative Translation – Cultural transplantation.*

1. Exoticism The degree of adaptation is very low here. The translation carries the cultural features and grammar of SL to TL. It is very close to transference.

2. Calque includes TL words but in SL structure therefore while it is unidiomatic to target reader but it is familiar to a large extent.

3. Cultural Borrowing It is to transfer the ST expression verbatim into the TT. No adaptation of SL expression into TL forms. After a time they usually become a standard in TL terms. Cultural borrowing is very frequent in history, legal, social, political texts.

4. Communicative translation is usually adopted for culture specific cliches such as idioms, proverbs, fixed expression, etc. In such cases the translator substitutes SL word with an existing concept in target culture. In cultural substitution the propositional meaning is not the same but it has similar impact on target reader. The literal translation here may sound comic. The degree of using this strategy some times depends on the license which is given to the translator by commissioners and also the purpose of translation.

5. Cultural Transplantation The whole text is rewritten in target culture. The TL word is not a literal equivalent but has similar cultural connotations to some extent. It is another type of extreme but toward target culture and the whole concept is transplanted in TL. A normal translation should avoid both exoticism and cultural transplantation.

In 2009, A. Wilson in his essay "globalization and translation" stated that globalization is linked to English being a lingua franca; the language is said to be used at conferences (interpreting) and seen as the main language in the new technologies [16]. The use of English as a global language is an important trend in world communication. Globalisation is also linked to the field of Translation Studies. Furthermore, globalisation is placed in the context of changes in economics, science, technology, and society. Globalization and technology are very helpful to translators in that translators have more access to online information, such as dictionaries of lesser-known languages.

Translation brings cultures closer. He stated that at this century the process of globalization is moving faster than ever before and there is no indication that it will stall any time soon. In each translation there will be a certain distortion between cultures. The translator will have to defend the choices he/she makes, but there is currently an option for including more foreign words in target texts. According to him translator has three options for the translation of cultural elements:

- Adopting the foreign word without any explanation.
- Adopting the foreign word with extensive explanations.
- Rewriting the text to make it more comprehensible to the target-language audience.

Where standard communicative equivalents are lacking, and also a particular ST concept is alien to the target culture, preference should be given to cultural borrowing, unless there are particular reasons against it.

Translation is fraught with **compromise.** Compromise in translation means reconciling oneself to the fact that, while one would like to do full justice to the 'richness' of the ST, one's final TT inevitably suffers from various translation losses [10]. Often one allows these losses unhesitatingly. For instance, a translator of prose may without qualms sacrifice the phonic and prosodic properties of the ST in order to make its literal meaning perfectly clear, while a translator of verse may equally happily sacrifice much of the ST's literal meaning in order to achieve certain desired metric and phonic effects. These are just two examples of the many kinds of compromise translators make every day.

Compromise should be the result of deliberate decisions taken in the light not only of what latitudes are allowed by the SL and TL respectively, but also of all the factors that can play a determining role in translation: the nature of the ST, its relationship to SL audiences, the purpose of the TT, its putative audience, and so forth. Only then can the translator have a firm grasp of which aspects of the ST can be sacrificed with the least detriment to the effectiveness of the TT, both as a rendering of the ST and as a TL text in its own right.

It is when faced with apparently inevitable, yet unacceptable, compromises that translators may feel the need to resort to techniques referred to as **compensation** – that is, techniques of making up for the loss of important ST features through replicating ST effects approximately in the TT by means other than those used in the ST [14].

In conclusion, it can be pointed out that for more effective translation translators / interpreters in intercultural communication must follow such principles: prepare themselves, recognize and face fears, recognize differences between themelves and those who are culturally different, recognize differences among those who are culturally different (avoiding stereotyping), recognize meaning differences in verbal and nonverbal messages, and follow cultural rules and customs.

We recognize the value of translators / interpreters and understand that they are important links in the intercultural communication across languages.Ttranslation has important role in globalization of culture especially pop culture which causes to give advantages of the source culture, knowing the habits and customs even religious customs. Communication and quality are paramount in the translator's and interpreter's performance.

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Перевод как межкультурная коммуникация
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Аннотация. В статье расскрыта основная роль перевода в межкультурной коммуникации, выявлены трудности, с которыми сталкиваются переводчики в этом процессе. Традиционно считается, что чем больше дистанция, отделяющая друг от друга две культуры, тем сложнее процесс «трансплантации» и самого культурного факта. Перевод является новой интерпретацией оригинала и дает тексту оригинала новое измерение, вводит его в другую культурную систему; таким образом, текст можна рассматривать как одну из форм существовавния культуры. Перел переводчиком встают следующие задачи: с одной стороны, он должен сохранить авторские культурные маркеры, а с другой стороны, помочь реципиенту распознать инокультурные маркеры, часто адаптируя их, делая их приемлемыми для восприятия реципиента.
Ключевые слова: инкультурация, аккультурация, межкультурная коммуникация, экзотизм, калька, культурные заимствования, культурная трансплантация.