

Translating Cultural Specific Terms and Concepts

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Abstract

This research talks about the relationship between culture and translation shedding lights on translating culture specific terms and concepts and how difficult it can be for the translator to accomplish a translation that is as close as possible to the source language. As a starter, the paper focuses on the culture and how it is defined according to some linguists, then the lights turn to the terms and concepts that are bounded to a specific culture and the ways to translate them properly. Some strategies were presented and explained to help translator find an applicable way to come up with a translation as precise as possible. Conclusions were found after focusing on the problem of conveying cultural terms from one language into another and presenting some strategies to accomplish that in order to enable translators and researchers acquire whatever they look for regarding this issue.

Keywords: culture, translation, literature,

Introduction

Translating a language into another allows speakers of one language to comprehend speakers of another. It serves as a sort of Communication Bridge between individuals. Although translation aids in communication, it can be difficult for a translator to make a translation that accurately conveys the meaning of the source text (ST) to the intended audience (TR), He or she will need to go through a number of stages to make the translation clear for the reader and sound as much like the ST as feasible. The translator's first concern should be to accurately convey the ST's meaning in the TT so that the reader won't notice a difference.

In literary translation and specialty poetry, both message and form must be taken into consideration by the translator. And as a result, he or she will experience certain linguistic and cultural difficulties. As we will show in the current study, culture has a significant impact on communication. Culture is a multifaceted concept that encompasses all of the skills and routines that a person develops over the course of his or her life as a member of a society. Patterns of conduct that are both explicit and implicit that are learned and passed down through symbols make up culture, which is what makes human communities unique.

The translator must be able to assess the significance of each sentence's cultural context, determine what the phrase actually means—not just what it literally says—and then transmit that meaning in a way that makes sense both in the target language and in the context of the target culture. There are numerous sayings and principles that are unique to one culture and do not apply to other civilizations. Even how different cultures approach the aforementioned factors and deeply held beliefs varies. Each of these culturally specific psychological concepts is linked to words that have meanings unique to that language and that are not shared by other languages. How might certain cultural traits be translated? Only translators who are conversant in both the source and target cultures can produce accurate interpretations.

Language has various contexts depending on culture. We can observe that words that are passed down from one culture to another acquire various meanings. Sometimes those meaning variations reflect little or significant value variations that could affect the accuracy *of translations*.

The Concept of Culture

To fully comprehend the meaning of culture, we must return to its definition when discussing it. As Adam Muller said:

"the culture of any society consist of the total some of ideas, conditioned emotional response, and patterns of habitual behavior which the members of that society have acquired through instruction or imitation and which they share to a greater or less degree" (Adam Muller, 2005, p.35).

According to the passage above, culture is a distinct set of people's ideas, feelings, behaviors, and other non-material things that they acquired throughout the course of their lives by residing in that society. By non-material, we mean that culture cannot be touched or seen. As Hoebel said "there is no such thing as material culture, those who define culture in terms of ideas, or as an abstraction or as a behavior, find themselves obliged logically to declare that material objects are not and cannot be cultures (Hoebel, 1956, p.176).

As per William Sewell, culture is where meaning comes from. As he explained "culture has been treated as an institutional sphere devoted to the making of meaning, and social life itself is seen as concerned with the pursuit of meaning, rather than interests or material gain. Indeed, under the impact of cultural anthropology, culture came to be understood as a system of symbols and meanings, operating as a determinative structure of human behavior. (Sewell, 2006, p.76).

Additionally, he made remarks about the distinctions and variations in how people define or view culture. "the distinction between culture as a theoretical category and culture as a determinate body of beliefs and practices is crucial for rethinking the place that culture as a category of social life and determinant of history and it's displacement of social history as the focus of historical analysis" (Sewell, 2006, p.76).

The fact that culture has been a very popular and alluring topic for linguists to discuss has already been mentioned and addressed. It is described in a plethora of ways and viewed from a variety of angles.

Triandis further adds: "Culture is a set of human-made objective and subjective elements that in the past have increased the probability of survival and resulted in satisfaction for the participants in an ecological niche, and thus became shared among those who could communicate with each other because they had a common language and they lived in the same time and place". (Triandis,2009, p.23)

Just as language is seen as a mobile system with different glosses and meanings built up over time, so culture can also be interpreted as something on the move. That simply shows how culture is playing a very important role in developing society. Here, as said by Street "culture is a verb" (Street,1993, p.94) he wanted to point out the effectiveness of culture on the world.

Cultures vary from one person to another, from one location to another, and over time. Each culture has its own laws, yet all cultures share certain features, such as history, religion,

morals, social structure, and language. One of these five elements may set one civilization apart from another.

One must start at the beginning and comprehend the concept of culture if they wish to delve even farther into the study of culture. Let's return to where the term "culture" first appeared.

Michael Minkov said "the origin of the Latin word culture is clear". It is a derivative of the verb *colo*, infinitive: *colere* meaning to tend, to cultivate and to till (Michael Minkov, 2013, p.33).

Wolf talked about the same thing and said, "The root of the word "culture" is "cultus". The past participle of the Latin verb *colere*" means "till" or "cultivate" the soil" (Wolf, 1999, p.31).

Wanger stated what he believed to be the definition of culture: "A process of progressive refinement and breeding in the domestication of some particulate crop, or even the result or increment of such a process. Thus, the focus here is on agriculture, apiculture, the 'culture of the vine', or of a bacterial culture" (Wanger, 1975, p.21).

Kroeber and Kluckhohn also provided an anthropological definition of culture. They said "culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups". (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p.43).

They also added " Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p.357).

Huxley proposed a definition of culture in the same anthropology discipline. "the applications by which anthropologists denote this central subject of their science" (Huxley, 1955, p.140).

By comparing the definitions listed above, we can see that they are all rather similar and that they all concur that culture is a characteristic that has to do with how people behave, think, and so on.

The analysis of "culture" is rather straightforward, but in the field of anthropology, it might be more difficult. Depending on the viewpoint and style of thinking, we can discover both simple and complex explanations for "culture," making it more understandable.

Kroeber and Parsons put it a complex form when they said "transmitted and created contents of values, ideas and other symbolic meaningful system as factors of shaping a human behavior" (Kroeber and Parsons, 1958).

Concept of culture can be classified into a number of categories, and when we say classification, we don't mean to say that some concepts are good and others are bad, and we are not trying to say that some concepts are true and other are false, but it all depends on perspectives, the person who is looking for a specific concept should decide what suits him or

his audience and choose what perspective he wants to work with. There are two types of culture, residing inside individuals and outside them as Singelis, Bond, Sharkey and Lai said (1999). The first type is what generates in a human's mind, the subjective culture, or what Hofstede described: the software of a human mind (2001). The second type is the man-made type, it's what people have created like art and so.

There are other classifications for the concepts of culture, as Rohner explained "there's a contrast between cultures as a system of behaviors versus culture as set of meanings (Rohner, 1984).

To summarize, there are now four different categories of cultural conceptions. Subjective culture is the first category and is defined as the culture that exists inside a human brain and functions similarly to software for the person.

The second is the objective culture, which exists outside of the human brain; it is the setting that people create, such as through art, clothing, and all other outwardly visible items.

The third form of culture is culture as a set of meanings, in which case meanings are fundamental to the idea of culture, and the fourth type is culture as a set of behaviors, in which case culture is a collection of thinking and behavior patterns that are passed down from one generation to the next.

Culture Specific Terms and Concepts

In addition to their manners, conduct, beliefs, and customs, a group of people's culture also describes how they think, interact with others, and use language. It also reveals how they eat, dance, and enjoy themselves. There are many different cultures in the world, and each of them has terms and words that can only be used in that culture. Because of this, it can be difficult for people from other cultures to understand one another, and even when it is possible, it can be challenging for those who were born into and raised in a particular culture.

Culture is something tied to those people and the things they do rather than something tangible, something we can see or touch, or even something that is a person or object, as Goodenough said:

"Culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behavior or emotions. It's rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating and otherwise interpreting them" (Goodenough, 1964, p.36).

The quotation below explains how understanding another culture involves a great deal of knowledge, as we stated above, because there are so many distinct cultures in the globe:

"If culture is learned, then much of it can be thought of in terms of knowledge of the world. This does not only mean that members of a culture must know certain facts or be able to recognize objects, places, and people. It also means that they must share certain patterns of thought, ways of understanding the world, making inferences and predictions" (Alessandro Duranti, 1997, p.25).

Duranti made it quite evident that members of a particular culture must have similar worldviews and methods of thinking.

We have many diverse cultures, and each one has its own laws and customs in addition to its own words. What we refer to as "culture bound expression" is the inability of one culture's terminology to be employed or even understood in another culture.

It's also crucial to note that expressions that are culturally connected fall under a variety of headings, including: arts and culture, pop culture, lifestyles, everyday items, history, politics, ideologies, religion, institutions, geography, the economy, well-known and significant figures, etc.

Strategies to Translate Cultural Specific Terms and Concepts

By outlining all the problems with translating terms and concepts that are culturally particular, we can see that when a translator attempts to translate such phrases or concepts, a cultural gap may be created. The issue of translating words and terms that are culturally specific has always been difficult. When translating these terminology and concepts, some linguists have supplied methods and approaches to aid the translator.

Graedler is one of those linguists (2000, p. 3), and he has provided four techniques to aid in resolving this problem:

1. To make a new word that fits the target culture
2. Explaining the meaning of the SL expression instead of translating it.
3. Keeping the SL term as it is without change.
4. Looking for a word in the TL that seems similar to or has the same "relevance" as the SL term.

CSTs can also be translated using the following four methods, which Harvey offered in his definition of CSCs as "the terminology which "speaks to concepts, institutions, and persons which are distinctive to the SL culture" (Harvey, 2000, p.2):

1. Functional Equivalence: It means using a referent in the TL culture whose function is similar to that of the source language (SL) referent.
2. Formal Equivalence which means a 'word-for-word' translation.
3. Transcription or 'borrowing': It stands at the far end of SL-oriented strategies. If the term is formally transparent or is explained in the context, it may be used alone. In other cases, particularly where no knowledge of the SL by the reader is presumed, transcription is accompanied by an explanation or a translator's note.
4. Descriptive translation: It uses generic terms to convey the meaning. It is used in a wide variety of contexts where formal equivalence is considered insufficiently clear.

An Over View Of Translation Cultural Differences

Due to the many cultural variances, translating culture can be difficult in various ways. The difficulty in translating between two cultures is actually due to the fact that each culture has unique phrases and expressions that other civilizations might not have or comprehend.

Due to the many cultural variances, translating culture can be difficult in various ways. The difficulty in translating between two cultures is actually due to the fact that each culture has unique phrases and expressions that other civilizations might not have or comprehend. As Eugene Nida explains:

"The person who is engaged in translating from one language into another ought to be constantly aware of the contrast in the entire range of culture represented by the two languages"(Nida, 1964, p.90).

The translator, who is in charge of translating from one language into another, must have a thorough understanding of both the source and target languages' cultures, as Nida makes apparent in the aforementioned quotation.

Peter Newmark, also gave his opinion on the role of translation in translating between cultures when he said " Translation is the most economical method of explaining one cultures way to another" (Newmark, 1995).

In addition to outlining the value of translation, he also provided a new definition by using the word "economic," which may refer to the simplest means of communicating between different cultural groups.

As time goes by and everyday so many changes happen all around the world and specifically in language, each day many words are vanishing and others are appearing to the floor, some are more used than others and as technology develops, the world is now more open, people have the curiosity to know more about what is happening out of their culture.

Mona baker stated that "Translating across cultures and culture proficiency have become buzz words in translation and interpreting" (baker, 1996, p.17), the words translation and interpreting become of much importance when people realized how closed to the world they could be without the help of the translation. And as Newmark stated "translation mediates cultures" (Newmark, 1995),

Translation has become like a mediator not only among languages, but cultures as well.

As we mentioned above, the world is more open now, and easy access to the internet has given those who want to know more about other cultures a very valuable opportunity. All the movies, TV shows, and documentaries are a very good source to be familiar with other cultures. For me, as a translator, the best way to overcome cultural differences in translating is to be engaged with the target culture.

Eugene Nida gave her opinion when she said " If the translator is to produce an acceptable translation, he must have an excellent background of the source language, and at the same time, must have control over the resources of the language into which he is translating, he cannot simply match words from a dictionary, he must in a real sense create a new linguistic form to carry the concept expressed in the source language" (Nida, 1964, p.145).

The more cultural differences a translator must interpret, the more opportunities he has to demonstrate his skill. We must also remember that some cultural differences are more difficult to translate than others. It is more difficult to translate the distinctions between source and target cultures the further apart they are from one another. For instance, a translator will encounter several variances and elements that may seem strange to the recipient when working with an anime animation from Japan., There are several activities, foods, and locations, and the translator must figure out how to handle this challenging situation. The most typical solution is to write a note explaining the concept, which is where the translator's expertise in the target culture comes into play.

Conclusions

The following will be stated as the study's findings:

1. Translation, in general, and literary translation in particular, can be difficult and deceptive at times. Considering the gaps and contrasts between languages, particularly when the two languages come from separate families, the more similar the two languages were, the easier it was for the translator to come up with a precise production.
2. Many linguists have studied translation extensively, and they all concur that no matter how comparable the source text and the target text were, a translation could never be perfect. Even a flawless translation wouldn't fully capture the meaning of the original text. And that may be clear when translating between different cultural contexts.
3. Because of the disparities in cultural practices throughout the world, a gap is established, which makes the translator's job more challenging, especially if the text contains terminology and concepts that are difficult to translate accurately without risking translation loss.
4. There are a number of guidelines and tactics that may be used by the translator to get beyond this obstacle and produce a more desirable end result that will please the intended audience.

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