

Problems of Translating Cultural Signs with Reference to English and Arabic

Abdali H. Al-Saidi

Department of English Language/ College of Education for Human Sciences/ Thi-Qar University

Abstract

This study investigates the translation problems caused by cultural gaps, the reasons of mistranslating cultural signs and the workable translation strategies that fit for best rendering of the intended meaning. For the purpose of analysis, sample examples will be extensively have been selected to reflect the problem under discussion. Prior to the analysis, a theoretical background including some definitions of culture and translation is presented. The study ends up with some concluding remarks.

Key words: translating cultural signs, strategies of translation, translation analysis.

1. Introduction

It is plain that as far as intercultural translation is concerned, there is always a gap that is difficult to be bridged in the TC, i.e. the problem of *untranslatability*. Fortunately, in the light of the recent studies on social linguistics, intercultural translation has been dealt with as a hermeneutic issue rather than as a problem of faithfulness. Thus, the issue of untranslatability no longer exists since a highly experienced translator can translate the untranslatable. S/he can skillfully provide the possible TL corresponding equivalents even to the culturally most problematic texts. It is hoped that the more cross-cultural translation challenging area are surveyed, the more insightful remarks that can help people understand the alien cultural elements better, are arrived at.

As a matter of fact, Arabic and English belong to two different settings and different language families. The former is a Semitic language whereas the latter is Indo-European. They are different syntactically, prosodically, phonologically and even semantically. Therefore; they are culturally unrelated and alien. In addition, non-linguistic factors, namely, cultural and geographical, among other things, have to be taken into consideration. This study investigates the cultural differences between Arabic and English in an attempt to facilitate the development of translation procedures to overcome these hindrances caused by such differences.

2. Culture and translation

2.1 Culture

Bahmeed (2008:3) states that there is no commonly agreed-upon definition of culture. However, culture (Latin: *cultura*, lit. "cultivation") is a modern concept based on a term first used in classical antiquity by the Roman orator, Cicero: "cultura animi". Specifically, the term

"culture" in American anthropology had two meanings: (1) the evolved human capacity to classify and represent experiences with symbols, and to act imaginatively and creatively; and (2) the distinct ways that people living in different parts of the world classified and represented their experiences, and acted creatively. (Wikipedia.org)

Culture is surely the main core of language since it is the main source of all the changes and developments in the growth of all natural languages. Language and culture are closely interrelated. This is a fact generally accepted because language reflects various aspects of culture (Larson 1984:432). Since culture is simply a way of life of a particular people living together in one place, speaking the same language, it means thinking and feeling, and having emotions, rather differently from people who use a different language¹. According to Rohner (1984), culture is "*a system of symbolic meanings that shape one's way of thinking*".

In the light of the above definitions of culture, we cannot understand the way people think and then use language without understanding their culture, and we cannot understand their cultural background unless we have a good knowledge of their various kinds of beliefs that formulate the inner form of their linguistic competence.²

2.2. Translation

Translation is undoubtedly not just a replacement of words or expressions from one language (SL) to another (TL) but rather a communication of the meaning of a source-language text (ST) by means of an equivalent target-language text (TT).

On the one hand, Bell (1991:5) defines translation as the *expression in another language (or target language) of what has been expressed the source one, preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences*. On the other hand, Larson (1984:431) states that *translation is not merely rewriting a text in a different language; it is also reproducing the ideologies behind the language of the source text*. Thus a translator should be well equipped with knowledge of the SL and the TL structure and culture. Knowledge of the SL and the TL cultures is necessary, for each language community will interpret a message in terms of its own culture and experience

Nida (1994:161) believes that the *main source of translation difficulties and problems are mainly caused by cultural differences rather than linguistic differences* between the SL and the TL.

3. Problems of translating culture

As stated above, language and culture are closely interrelated since the former reflects various aspects of the latter (Larson 1984:432). Additionally; culture plays the major role in the course of the translation. Unless a translator has a solid foundation of the culture of both the source and the target language, S/he is most likely to fail in grasping the implied meaning. Thus, translators' cross-cultural awareness and open-minded understanding of how languages

¹. See Eliot (1962:120).

². See Dawson (1948:50).

work across cultures are necessarily required. Cultural roots, however, play a major part in the translation process. Al-Shawi (2012:141) points out that *words which have various connotations in one language may not have the same emotive associations in another. Different languages frequently reflect different connotations and associations of feeling because of the differences in cultural roots.*

Moreover, problems of translation lie not only in the linguistic and stylistic features but also in the cultural differences between SL and TL. Cultural problematic factors can be divided into two main groups:

- (a) Difficulties associated with a translator's limits
- (b) Difficulties lie in the nature of the culture/language-specific expressions themselves, be they idioms, collocations, sayings, proverbs and phrasal verbs...etc.

As far as (a) above is concerned and for a translator not to be trapped by literalism, s/he should have a good mastery of culture-dependent/bound expressions in terms of both meaning and cultural associations. Having a good cultural background enables translators not only to find the true intended meaning but also to provide the equivalent functional counterpart in the TL.³ Translators are also required to be well-updated so as not to miss the nonstop shower of newly-coined expression particularly by modern media and journalism.

Concerning (b) the difficulties attributed to the cultural signs themselves are the much more problematic and therefore require special attention and too much care. The translation challenges related to the said expressions are as follows:

1. **The non-literality of meanings.** Expressions of this type can never be understood literally, i.e. their individual constituents tell nothing about the meaning of the whole expression. For instance, **Coca-cola culture** can not be translated literally as "ثقافة الكوكا كولا" since it makes no sense but rather as "الثقافة الأمريكية" that is based upon enhancing coca-cola business all over the world.⁴ Similarly, the expression **Holy Offices** in a medieval religious context should not be rendered as such. It culturally connotes a meaning specific to that cultural context which corresponds to "محاكم التفتيش" in Arabic⁵. Such a figurative extension of the original situation is often unknown to the majority of foreign language learners and even inexperienced translators.
2. **The rigid and odd word grouping** of some of the cultural expressions especially idioms and collocations. There is no logical reason to explain why we can say "a **heavy smoker**" but we cannot use "an **addictive smoker**" although 'addictive' and 'heavy' are close in meaning in this particular context of describing a person who becomes unusually unable to give up smoking or taking drugs. Therefore, 'heavy smoker' meaning "مُدخِّن مُدمن" is the right choice. Similarly, the strictness of

³. see Sadiq(2008:50)

⁴.see توفيق (2008:19)

⁵. (ibid:100)

culture-bound expression word order is clearly indicated in the fact that it is unacceptable to say, for instance, " **It is raining dogs and cats**" instead of " **It is raining cats and dogs**"⁶

Therefore, translation between culturally unrelated languages poses a great deal of real challenges.⁷ In conclusion, a translator is required to be well acquainted and well-equipped with the required translation strategies.

4. Strategies of Translating Culture

The translation strategies that are often adopted for translating culture are those proposed by Baker (1992/2011:76-88). She mentions *five* main strategies for translating the culturally bound expressions namely: (a) *Full equivalent* (using an expression of similar meaning and form), (b) *Partial equivalent* (using an expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form), (c) translation by *borrowing the SC cultural sign*, (d) translation by *paraphrase* and (C) *compensation* strategy.

4.1. Cultural Equivalent

4.1.1 Total cultural equivalent (same form+ same meaning)

Baker (1992/2011:76) affirms that finding an equivalent in TC similar in form and meaning to the SC expression seems to be the ideal choice and solution "but it is not necessarily always the case"(ibid.). In this regard, fixed/culture bound expressions have their own cultural associations that constitute their peculiarity. Since Arabic and English are culturally remote languages, full(total) equivalent is not always advisable because the cultural significance and implications of the SL and TL may be different.

- According to this strategy, a TL cultural sign translates a SL cultural sign. The process of translating by providing a cultural equivalent is not a faithful process, but it provides a pragmatic impact on the TL reader.(Newmark, 1988:83) . For instance, the Arabic expression (رأساً على عقب) is culturally rendered into English as " **Head over heels**".⁸ Consider the following examples from English into Arabic :⁹

English expression	Meaning	TE translation
Light-handed	Well-experienced thief	هو خفيف اليد
Having someone in the palm of one's hand	Having influence over someone	إنه في قبضة يده
To ask for her hand	Willing to marry her	يطلب يدها (للزواج)
Bury one's head in the sand	Refuse obstinately to accept or face fact	يدفن رأسه بالرمال

⁶. See غزالة (2004: 1-31)

⁷. See <http://www.wata.cc/forums/showthread.php?53636>- retrieved in September 2011.

⁸. See Baker(1992/2011:76-7)

⁹. See AlSaidi(2010:17)

Also, the following Arabic idiomatic hand-related expressions may be informative:¹⁰

Arabic Expression	Meaning	TE translation
يمد يد العون	Help someone physically	Give / lend someone a hand
يطلق يد فلان (يطلق له العنان)	Give someone a permission to do as he wishes	Give someone a free hand (in sth.)
له يد في الأمر (له ضلع...)	be involved in something	have a hand in something
تحت اليد (تحت السيطرة)	Under control	In hand
ما في اليد حيلة (خارج السيطرة)	Out of control	Out of hand

4.1.2 Partial equivalent (same meaning but different form)

As far as translation is concerned, it often possible to find a TL expression that carries the same meaning of the SL expression but which consists of dissimilar lexical items. For instance, the English idiom " *a pain in the neck* " has its almost-the same Arabic idiom but with different form, namely: " *سكينة في الخاصرة* ". The meaning of both idioms are the same since the two expressions refer to an *annoying person*.

Consider the following examples:

A dead loss	صرخة في واد
Heart and soul	قلبا وقالبا
بيت القصيد	The core point/ the bottom line
سبق السيف العذل	No use crying over the spilt milk
كل القصة وما فيها	The long and the short of it

4.2 Borrowing the Source Language Expression.

It is of too much importance to note that translators sometimes find it appropriate to borrow the original idiomatic SL expression and use it as such in the SL in some contexts. In this context, Khalil(n.d.:7)states that "*many English idioms have got currency in the Arabic language through translation, and have been used to a great deal in the daily journalistic register or present – day writing. In fact, such a phenomenon has become so common in modern Arabic that it might be thought, at times, that such expressions are originally Arabic. This is due to the fact that Arabic has a unique ability to digest the foreign terms and make them look like the genuine ones in it.*"

She cited the following examples to illustrate the fact mentioned above:

To shed crocodile tears	يبكي بدموع التماسيح
To fish in troubled water	يصطاد في الماء العكر
To digest ideas	يهضم الأفكار
The man of hour	رجل الساعة

¹⁰. ibid.

Literary currents	التيارات الأدبية
To throw light on	يسلط الضوء (على)
Lion's share	حصة الأسد

It is worth noting that the above Arabic idiomatic expression mentioned by Khalil as *total equivalents* to the English counterparts are really not equivalents but rather SL borrowed expressions.¹¹

4.3 Compensation Strategy (CS)

Baker (1992/2011:86) mentions one more strategy to her four already proposed strategies by stating that: "*One strategy which can not be adequately illustrated, simply because it would take up a considerable amount of space, is the strategy of compensation*". CS, we think, is one of the most proper procedures to best functionally interpret some culturally bound expression and minimize the loss as much as possible. For instance, when translating the word "owl" from English into Arabic, we find that it does not symbolize the same in both cultures. In English, it symbolizes *wisdom and good omen*; on the contrary, in Arabic it has a very negative connotation, as it represents *pessimism and bad omen*. According to CS, a translator can bridge this gap and compensate for this cultural loss via substituting 'owl' by another bird that symbolizes wisdom in Arabic, viz. "هدد" *hoopoe*". Moreover, the 'moon' is used in Arabic to indicate beauty but it never does the same in the Western culture. Therefore, translating the following English sentence:

- *She looks like the moon*, into "هي جميلة كالقمر" would be so odd since the intended message is that: "*She is as changeable as the moon*".¹² Additionally, translating "*a summer's day*" in the Shakespearian description of his beloved in the following line:
- *Shall compare thee to a Summer's day*, into Arabic as "يوم قانض" will surely fail the intended message. A creative translator should intervene and look for what matches such a mismatched image since "a summer's day" of Britain is unusually beautiful while the same day in most of the Arab countries is really awful. One of professional translators has rendered the above line so beautifully as:

- من ذا يقارن حسنك الأبهي بفجرٍ قد تجلى

Therefore, using a '*breaking dawn*' instead of 'a summer's day' is actually some sort of compensation.

4.4 Paraphrasing Strategy (PS)

PS requires a translator to use explanation and amplification of the meaning of the ST via conveying the content without the form; it is sometimes advisable when the translator

¹¹. See Khalil (n.d.:7)

¹². See توفيق (2007:12)

encounters a culture-specific expression that cannot be lexicalized in the TC. For instance, the Arabic "الطواف" at-tawaf has no cultural equivalence in English, therefore; PS will be the last resort for a translator. The following examples may be illustrative:¹³

- الطواف is translated as "going round al-Kaaba".
- السعي is rendered as "running between Safa and Marwa during Haj(pilgrimage).
- استخارة Istikhara as "supplication for seeking Allah's guidance"¹⁴.

In spite the fact that PS is longer than the original and then violating the principle of economy, it is adopted just to provide the target reader with all possible information. particularly when the text is highly specialized. At times, using PS is insufficient particularly when the text is highly specialized. Consider the following example: (Theodory, 1959: 26)

- إذا حضر الماء بطل التيمم

-If water is present for ablution, the *use of earth*(tayyammum) is discontinued. Rendering التيمم at-tayyammum as "the use of earth" is considered odd and less informative since it is a religious term referring to using clean sand for ablution when water is not there.

5.1. Intercultural translation analysis: Areas of challenge

5.1.1. The religious culture

It is unanimously agreed upon that religion assumes a central position in shaping cultures. T.S. Eliot (1962:27) states that " *no culture can appear or develop except in relation to religion...so, while we believe that the same religion may inform a variety of cultures, we may ask whether any culture could come into being, or maintain itself, without a religious basis* ". In the same context, Dawson(1948:50) asserts that " *in all ages the first creative works of a culture are due to a religious inspiration and dedicated to a religious end.*" It is beyond dispute that Arab culture is basically reshaped by Islamic religion, while English speaking world is dominated by Christianity. This difference in culture has its impact on the peoples' spoken as well as written language. Consequently, vocabulary used in Arabic and English will be affected according to the principles of culture and religion in these two languages. Thus, religious culture-specific words and expressions are used to express feelings and moral tradition that manifest the socio-religious system of the Arab and English culture.¹⁵

Larson (1984:180) states that, "*terms which deal with the religious aspects of a culture are usually the most difficult, both in analysis of the source vocabulary and in finding the best receptor language equivalence. The reason in that these words are intangible and many of the practices are so automatic that the speakers of the language are not as conscious of the various aspects of meaning involved*".

Therefore, the translator will encounter too much difficulties in translating terms and expressions which are not used or practiced in the TL (target language). To illustrate this point, let us discuss some idioms that are peculiar to Arabic and English:

¹³. See As-Safi(n.d.:10)

¹⁴. Sirriyya(1998:33)

¹⁵. See Al-Shawi2012:45-46)

Arabic expression	English literal meaning	English equivalent meaning
لا يلدغ المؤمن من جحر مرتين	A true believer cannot be bitten twice in the same burrow	A fox is not taken twice in the same sanre
أم الخبائث	The mother of all vice	wine
البيت الحرام/ البيت العتيق/ بيت الله	The forbidden/the old/ God's home	The Ka'ba

The above cited examples are all idiomatically used to indicate some cultural connotation. The first one is translated accurately and skillfully despite the face value contrast between the two cultural images of the fox and the religious term, (المؤمن) (the true believer) since the intended meaning is brilliantly portrayed in both languages.¹⁶The same applies to the other two examples. Some other examples may be more illustrative:

Arabic expression	English literal meaning	English equivalent meaning
موائد الرحمن ¹⁷	Breaking the fast in togetherness	Ramadan Charity Feasts
إمرأة مُحَصَّنَة ¹⁸	Woman under <i>Ihsan</i>	A legally-married woman

In most of the Arab and Muslim countries, موائد الرحمن are so familiar during Ramadan where the poor and the rich have Iftar(breaking fast) together in open public feasts. Therefore, 'Ramadhan Charity feasts' would best suit the intended meaning. In the second example, the word '*Ihsan*' in Arabic is derived from 'حصن' high wall' to describe marriage for both men and women as if they are protected against all evils related to illegal man-woman affairs .Let's consider some examples from English.

English expression	Arabic literal meaning	Arabic equivalent meaning
lift horn	يرفع البوق	يتحدى الله
You will go to your fathers	ستذهب الى آبائك	سترحل للأخرة/ ستلحق بأبائك (ستموت)
Good Friday	الجمعة العظيمة	جمعة الألام (الجمعة التي صلب فيها المسيح)

It is worth noting that all the three examples cited above are biblical expressions that tend to convey some spiritual or theological meanings. '*Good Friday*', for instance, has nothing to do with good or happy occasion as rather referring to the day on which Jesus Christ had

¹⁶. See Ghazala (95:196)

¹⁷. توفيق (2008: 60)

¹⁸. (ibid.)

been crucified. Such kinds of discourse should be paid the due attention and have never to be translated literally.

5.1.2 The historical culture

Historical culture refers to social heritage that has been formulated throughout the course of history related to human actions and developments. As a result, different societies will definitely have different historical cultural and linguistic resources. Such a difference poses varying degrees of difficulty in the face of translators. Consider the following examples:

English expression	Arabic literal meaning	Arabic equivalent meaning
Achilles' heel	كاحل أخيليس	موطن الضعف الإنساني
Adam's apple	تفاحة آدم	تفاحة آدم

The first example: "**Achilles' heel**" refers metaphorically to a fatal weakness leading to a downfall in spite of overall strength, whereas the Greek mythological origin refers to a physical vulnerability¹⁹. The second example, "**Adam's apple**" is rendered as "تفاحة آدم" in Arabic. This term dated back to the biblical story of Adam and Eve and their eating of the forbidden fruit. Consequently, God punished Adam by letting the fruit stuck in his throat.²⁰ The following examples from Arabic may be illustrative:

Arabic expression	English literal meaning	English equivalent meaning
(1) شعرة معاوية	Muawiya's (single) hair	Muawiya's policy
(2) قميص عثمان	Othman's rope (shirt)	Man's usual pretext (a pretended reason for doing something via hiding the real reason).
(3) لقد ولى زمن العنتريات	The time of Antar's fighting tactics is over	No place for rashness and false courage.
ولقد كنتُ أمرتكم في هذه (4) الحكومة امري ²¹	I had given you in this government an order	I had given you in this case an order (Cited in Anani 1999:35)
وكانت ليلاه هذه المرة فتاة من البدو (5)	His "Lila" this time was a young girl from among the Bedouin	His <i>beloved</i> this time was a young girl... ²²

"شعرة معاوية" in Arabic refers not to an ordinary 'single hair' and it thus can not be translated literally. Unless the translator is fully aware of the historical context of the situation during which the said expression has been coined, he/she will never be able to guess the intended

¹⁹. See (<http://www.wata.cc/forums/showthread.php?53636>).

²⁰. see (ibid.)

²¹. Said by Imam *Ali bin Abi Talib* to his disloyal supporters cited in *Syyab Translation Journal*, vol.1,2008, p.42.(Italic is mine).

²². (<http://www.saaaid.net/Doat/hasn/55.htm>)

meaning. The same is applied to " قميص عثمان " which refers neither to third Moslem caliph (Othman) nor to his' rope' as rather with Muawiya and how he makes use of Othman's blooded rope to take revenge of those who killed him.

It is very important for a translator to know more about semantics and etymology so as to be able to render the SL text so accurately and effectively. The word "حكومة" in forth example above has nothing to do with its present meaning, that is, *government* as it rather conveys a meaning that fits the context in which it has been used as stated in the table above

5.1.3 The ecological culture

The ecological culture is one of the major areas of challenge in translation since SC words may have different meanings form those of the TC words because of different ecological environments. The same word in both cultures might have totally different meanings and thus ecology-related concepts are mostly too challenging to translators who are unfamiliar with the two cultures. In this regard, Ilyas (1989: 128) states that:

A translator of English-Arabic texts may come across some problematic ecological-based idioms and expressions. Some such items acquire different connotations in both languages. What may be a connotatively favorable expression in Arabic could have a pejorative sense in English, and vice versa.

It is worth noting that Arabic belongs to a culture where *hot* and *dry* climate is dominating, whereas English belongs to an area where the dominating climate is both *cold* and *wet*. Therefore, when a translator is required to translate some climate-related Arabic expressions into English, s/he has to be fully aware of the TC functional ecological equivalent. The following examples may be illustrative:²³

Arabic expression	English literal meaning	English equivalent meaning
(1) قرة العين	Coolness of eye	<i>Warmth(Pleasure) of eye</i>
(2) خبر يتلج الصدر	News that freezes the heart	news that <i>warms(pleases) the cockles of heart</i>
(3) إنه ليتلج صدري أن أراك	It snows my heart to see you	<i>The happiness would be mine to see you</i>

Bearing in mind the above examples, one can easily understand the shift in the use of climate words, i.e. *cold* and *warm* here. "Arabs are people mostly live in desert where تلج (snow, cold) is something everybody likes. In contrast, English is the language of people mostly living under storms and snow for a great part of the year, so, warmth is something so desirable. "While الثلج (snow) is a reference to happiness for an Arab, warmth is another

²³. See (<http://www.wata.cc/forums/showthread.php?53636->) and *Syyab Translation Journal*, vol.1,2008, pp.48-9.

reference to happiness of an English-speaking person."²⁴ If the above examples are translated by an inexperienced translator , the resultant translations will be a very bad situation since '*freezing the heart*' in English is unacceptable.

5.1.4 Psychological(emotive) Culture(PC)

As far as PC is concerned, it is significant to remember that comprehending a given meaning sometimes requires much more than knowing what the words refer to in reality. For instance, the word '*white*' in the following two examples convey absolutely different meanings:

- (1) **The *white House***
- (2) **The Iranian *white revolution***

The meaning of '*white*' in (1) is a denotative lexical one that is easily predictable, whereas in (2) it conveys a rather psychological emotive meaning, i.e. *apeaceful bloodless revolution* (ثورة بيضاء). Therefore, emotiveness is the other cultural hindrance associated with speaker's emotive intention hidden in the text ²⁵. In this context, Stevenson (1963:21-22) states that:

The emotive meaning of a word or phrase is a strong and persistent tendency, built up in the course of linguistic history, to give direct expression to certain of the speaker's feelings or emotions or attitudes; and it is also a tendency to evoke corresponding feelings, emotions or attitudes in those to whom the speaker's remarks are addressed.

Surprisingly, the color "*white*" in almost all cultures is the color of happy occasions such as weddings, whereas in the Indian Culture Hindus wear white clothes at the funerals. Thus, translating the following Hindi sentence: "*The girl was dressed in white*",²⁶ into English or Arabic might be too problematic to a translator and might lead to poor or even wrong translation if s/he has no idea about such culture-specific emotive use of language. Similarly, "*black ice*" in English is used to unusually indicates a far-fetched image associated with no black colour at all since there is no such a kind of ice. It rather refers to the nature of that ice which is usually found on the roads and causes much troubles to drivers.

Consider the following Arabic examples:

Arabic expression	English equivalent meaning
ياصفراء يا بيضاء غري غيري	<i>Oh gold, oh silver, do not deceive me.</i>
أرض السواد	<i>Iraq</i>
ليلة حمراء	<i>Trip the light fantastic</i>

²⁴.(ibid.)

²⁵.see Shunnaq (1993: 37)

²⁶. <http://www.wata.cc/forums/showthread.php?53636>.

5.1.5 The material culture

Cultural references are language/culture-specific. Some cultural expressions, however, can be linguistically tamed and naturalised into the target language, such as the Arabic expression "بخو" 'bukhuur', which can be rendered into English as (air freshener), or the English expression (*cupboard love*) which could have been translated as (حب كاذب) in Arabic.

Let's consider the following Qur'anic cultural expressions:

- "كأنهم خشبٌ مُسندة...." (المنافقون : 4)

- They are as worthless as *hollow pieces of timber propped up*, unable to stand on their own. (Ali, 1983)

وإذا خلوا عضوا عليكم الأنامل من الغيظ " (العمران : 119)

- but when they are alone, *they bite off the very tips of their fingers* at you in their rage. (Ali, 1983:153)

The expression (خشبٌ مسندة) refers to the hypocrites. It is rendered through a periphrastic translation (*worthless as hollow pieces of timber propped up, unable to stand on their own*). Culturally, the Arabs used to put planks of timber against the wall at the back of their houses when they were not needed, and as such the planks of wood were useless most of the time. This expression reflects a metonymy for the person who is useless and worthless in the community. Also, the cultural expression (عضوا عليكم الأنامل) which is also provided with a periphrastic rendering '*to bite off the very tips of their fingers*'. This is a cultural habit among some Arabs who express their anger or envy through biting the side of their index. To culturally transplant the two expressions into English, may suggest rendering them as *being useless as an old rag* and *to stamp their feet out of rage*, or *to gnash their teeth*, respectively.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, cultural gaps between SL and TL pose serious problems which consequently have their dramatic influence on all aspects of communication all over the world. As a result of investigating the major problems of intercultural translation, this study has come to the following conclusions:

1. The nature and the types of the existing problems related to the cultural gaps between the SL and TL should be clearly identified. This enables the translator to better understand the areas of challenge and attempt the most suitable translation strategies.
2. Since they are basically culture-dependent, it is found that culture bound words, idioms and proverbs and collocations are usually the main source of cultural gaps. Therefore, a translator should not only be a bilingual but also a bicultural.
3. The linguistic method of communication and the culture gap problems related to it should be particularly analyzed, with reference to examples from both the English and Arabic languages.

4. The results of this study reveal the fact that in order to overcome such cultural gaps in linguistic communication, translators, of SL culture, are required to be aware, as much as possible, of the various types of culture, namely, religious, historical, traditional and even geographical to find the nearest equivalents to them in the TL Arabic culture.
5. Since, according to Winter (1969: 478), there is no completely exact translation; *compensation* is the translation strategy which may be the proper one in translating some culturally bound expressions. In this strategy the translator has to intervene and provide the information required to make the processing of the idiom or other similar phrases possible in the TL. Otherwise, cross-cultural communication purpose will not be respected, and the TR not get the message expressed intended in the ST.

Note: The emphasis and the words in brackets are all mine.

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مشاكل ترجمة الإشارات (الخصائص) الثقافية

عبدعلي حمود السعيد

قسم اللغة الانكليزية/ كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية/ جامعة ذي قار

الخلاصة

يتناول هذا البحث المشاكل الناجمة عن الفجوات الثقافية والأسباب المؤدية إلى الخلل في ترجمة تلك الخصائص وإستراتيجيات الترجمة الأكثر فاعلية في سد تلك الفجوات وترجمة المعنى المقصود بشكل دقيق. وتماشيا مع أهداف هذه البحث فقد تمت دراسة مجموعة مختارة من الأمثلة التي تعتبر نماذج ذات دلالة واضحة على الخصائص الثقافية. تتم خلال هذا البحث دراسة تلك الأمثلة بشكل دقيق ومكثف لكشف الفجوات الناجمة عن الاختلاف الثقافي بين اللغتين المصدر والهدف. وقيل الولوج في عملية تحليل الأمثلة يبدأ البحث بمقدمة نظرية تتضمن بعض التعريفات المتعلقة بكل من مفهومي الثقافة والترجمة وينتهي البحث ببعض الاستنتاجات.