

# THE CHARACTERISTICS AND STRATEGIES OF TRANSLATING CULTURE-BOUND TERMS.

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**Abstract :** *The article aims to establish what translation strategies the translators use during the process of translation, and how they cope with translating culture-bound terms into their native language. Hopefully, the results provided will give insight to the problems facing translators in this specific type of translating.*

**Keywords:** *culture-bound terms, culture, translation strategies.*

It is irrefutable that the need of cross-culture translation in this modern innovation-based society is greater than ever, especially today when information is instantly transmitted globally, through media such as television, radio and, above all, the Internet. However, when it comes to these social media, the data that have to be translated can, in vast number of cases, be checked and revised in order to provide the best translation possible. So in the process of translation, where translators are required to react instantly, instinctively.

Culture is a term that has a wide range of meanings, and defining the word itself is

difficult. Katan delivers one of the oldest definitions of culture formulated in 1871 by Edward Burnett Tylor, an English anthropologist: "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits

acquired by man as a member of society." He follows with American anthropologists Alfred Louis Kroeber and Clyde who had compiled a list of 164 definitions by 1952. Their 165th definition is this:

"Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement

of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values. Culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand, as conditioning elements of future action.”<sup>1</sup>

There are two rules.

**1. The coherence rule:** the target text must be effectively coherent to allow the intended

users to understand it, given their assigned background knowledge, experience and situational circumstances. The initiating point for a translation is a text as a part of a world continuum, written in the source language. It has to be translated into the target language in such a way that it becomes part of a world continuum which can be conveyed by the recipients as coherent with their situation.

**2. The fidelity rule:** concerns inter textual coherence between translating and source text.

Culture-bound terms, or culture-specific terms, are considered to concepts, institutions and personnel specific to the source language culture. Thus, they have no equivalents in the target reader’s cultural point, which makes them so complicated to translate into the target language. Most culture-bound terms can be easily detected, because they are associated with a specific language and cannot be literally translated due to the fact that literal translation would distort the meaning.

During the process of translation, each translator pay attention to the following Translation procedures, strategies and methods:

**Technical procedures:**

- a) analysis of the source and target languages carefully;
- b) a perfect study of the source language text before making an attempt to translate the text based on culture.

**Organizational procedures:**

Constant reevaluation of the attempt made; contrasting it with the existing available translations of the same text done by other translators, and checking the text’s communicative effectiveness by asking the target language readers to evaluate its accuracy and effectiveness and studying their reactions<sup>2</sup>.

**Translation strategies used for culture-bound terms**

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<sup>1</sup> Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1961 qtd. In Katan 2005:16)

<sup>2</sup> Ordudari, Mahmoud. Translation procedures, strategies and methods  
<http://www.bokorlang.com/journal/41culture.htm>

1) *Using a term/word/phrase of similar meaning and form*- This strategy aims to utilize a term or word in the target language which brings roughly the same meaning as that of the source language, moreover, consists of equivalent lexical terms to illustrate.

2) *Using a term/word/phrase of similar meaning but dissimilar form*

3) *Translation by paraphrase*, According to this strategy, it is important to show the translators' ability to cope with a difficult situation under pressure during the process.

4) *Translation by omission*- this may be because it has no close match in the target language, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons.

5) *Functional equivalence*- it can be equivalent to word-to word translation. It is suitable when translating certain legal, political texts in target language.

6) *Formal equivalence*.

7) *Transcription/borrowing*- It is used if the particular culture-bound term cannot be translated by any other strategy, most often, because it does not exist in the same form in the source language culture, especially in translating "proper names".

8) *Conventionalization*.

9) *Descriptive translation*- this kind of translation uses generic translation process rather than culture-bound terms to enter the same meaning into the target language. It is appropriate in many contexts where formal equivalence is considered insufficiently appropriate.

### **Conclusion.**

Translation is a cognitive process. It requires a vast majority of concentration, good memory capabilities, and specific knowledge of the world around us.

With a highly advanced development of economic globalization, the economic and trade exchanges and cooperation between countries are increasing. All kinds of international conferences are held frequently all over the world, and translation has become an indispensable part of international conferences. Therefore, it is highly recommended to use strategies based on translation techniques to save time and maintain the balance between productivity and efficiency. Furthermore, every translator must comprehend the specific features of culture –bound terms by keeping the original meaning.

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