Case Study

Conflict of Culture in Translation: A Case Study of AbdelrahmanMunif's Novel *Cities of Salt: Al-Teeh*

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ABSTRACT

Translation of culture-bound lexical items in texts has been uneasy task because languages differ from one culture to another and so not all linguistic items can be translated from the source language (SL) into the target language (TL). Sometimes translation may not meet the intent of the original author of a text. Translators, therefore, find themselves in conflict with the SL in a way that the speakers of the SL who have come across the translated text in the TL find faults in most of the translated text. This paper investigates the problems encountered when translating a text by a culturally different translator. The paper seeks to unearth the problems found in the translation of the novel, *Cities of Salt: Al-Teeh* which is written in Arabic Bedouin and translated into English by Peter Theroux, a native English speaker. Little research has been done on the effects of Bedouin culture on the quality of the translation of texts written in Bedouin dialect. To achieve its purpose, the study used a descriptive research design involving the adscription of culture-bound translated lexical items in the novel. Translated lexical items were purposively sampled focusing on culturally bound items. The data were then subjected to content analysis within the framework of Newmark's cultural domains. The results revealed that culture-bound lexical items had been mistranslated, failing to attain intended meaning. The findings of this study could be used to improve the quality of the translation of culture-bound lexical items from SL to TL.

Keywords: Bedouin culturally-bound expressions, Peter Theroux, source language, target language, translation

INTRODUCTION

Translation is the process through which a text is reproduced from a source language to a target language by a translator who should be bilingual and bicultural as well. What this means is that the translator must

not only be competent in both languages but must also be aware of the cultural connotations of the languages. This is because the translator is merely a message conveyor and is expected to maintain the stylistic features of the original text. The maintenance of stylistic features is for the purposes of conveying an equivalent message of the source text into the target language. This follows Newmark's (1988) argument that the translator's aim tends to be similar to that of the author's himself.

It is important to note that translation is not merely an exchange of words and meanings from one language to another but a communication process as well. This means that as the translator goes about his/her business, he/she must take into consideration the fact that he/she does not only match the words from SL to TL but is under obligation to communicate as much as possible the cultural connotations associated with the SL text. This is in order that different cultures are brought together so that the native speakers of the TL may have a taste of the cultural exchanges with the native speakers of the SL. This, therefore, means that the translator should observe equivalence in textual materials whenever he/she translates a text. This is based on the fact that translation is about the replacement of the textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language (Catford, 1965). Shunnaq's (1998) definition of translation is grounded on that of Catford's (1965). Shunnaq stated theorists of translation agreed that translation was the rendering of the same ideas from the source language into the target language. Shunnaq concluded that the translator was both a text producer and receiver.

The conflict that the translators find themselves in is that sometimes they may not find it easy to translate the style, the lexical items and the associated cultural themes found in the source text. Ilyas (1989) explained that this was because languages differed in the areas of lexemes, grammar, phonology, graphology, as well as in their formal and contextual meaning. Therefore, much time has to be spent by the translator to produce a target language text (TLT) which should be as much as possible natural and genuine as the source language text (SLT). The overriding question, therefore, is whether it is possible to produce such a text. This paper seeks to address problems faced by translators particularly those who may not be aware of the knowledge of the culture that defines the source language. To identify problems faced by translators in their attempt to translate culture-bound lexical items, the paper was guided by the research question on the effects of cultural conflict on the quality of translation. A case study of the novel, *Cities of Salt: Al-Teeh* written in Bedouin dialect by Munif (1983) and translated into the target language, English, by Peter Theroux in 1987 was selected. The choice of this novel was based on the fact that it was translated by a translator with a different cultural background from that of the novelist, hence an expectation of cultural conflict in the translation. The choice of this novel was also guided by the observation that there are mistakes related to culture made by the translator and no such

study on the effects of cultural conflict on the quality of this work has been undertaken.

The findings of the research question are deemed important in three ways: first, they will present an avenue through which translators will reflect on the culturally-related lexical items associated with the culture of the original authors and cultural connotations of the source language. Second, they will provide a platform for further discussion of the appropriateness of translations of texts and bridge a gap between the target language and the source language. Third, the findings of this paper could as well spark an interest in re-translating the novel understudy, taking into consideration the suggestions from the discussions of this paper.

Literature Review

As discussed in the previous section, translation involves a reproduction of work from a source language into a target language by a translator who should be bilingual and bicultural as well. A translator, therefore, has to be competent in both the SL and the TL. Language competency is governed by some linguistic factors which are dependent on linguistic universals such as phonology, morphology, semantics and syntax. These universals may vary according to external factors such as the geographical location of the translators. The linguistic factor, dialect, as observed by Petyt (1980) can be viewed as distinctive linguistic features of a language used by a given group of people within a particular geographical location to communicate.

Dialects may differ in lexical, phonological or grammatical properties. Some scholars including Crystal (1992) had referred to a dialect as a variety of language. Bedouin dialect in which *Cities of Salt: Al-Teeh* is written is a subpart of the Jordanian Arabic different from Standard Arabic in terms of phonology, grammar and vocabulary. Following Crystal's (1992) observation on the difference between a language and a dialect, it is important to find out how a dialectal property of Bedouin affects the quality of the translation of the novel *Cities of Salt: Al-Teeh*into English.

It is worth noting also that every translated text originates as an expression of some contradiction between the transmitter's culture and the model reader's culture. The contradictory kind of translation, according to Farghal and Shunnaq (1999) is common in inter-lingual translation characterized by linguistic differences that may be attributed to cultural differences. As observed by Catford (1965) as well as Farghal and Shunnaq (1999), the translator's aim is to find out what is referred to as adequate translation equivalence. Adequate translation equivalence is an empirical phenomenon which can be discovered by comparing the source language text with the target language text (Baker, 1992). Therefore, the choice of a suitable equivalent in a given context depends on some linguistic aspects which include the dialect being translated as well as extra-linguistic factors (Baker, 1992). The case studies by Baker (1992), Catford (1965) as well as Farghal and Shunnaq (1999)

on translation equivalence, provide an invaluable resource to the current study as they highlight the underlying factors other than linguistic competence that affects the quality of works of translation. The study is informed to a great extent that mistranslation experienced in most translated texts are grounded on cultural differences in the writer of a text and the translator of the text.

A number of studies have been done on the effects of the cultural gap on the quality of translating culture-bound lexical items. These studies have also highlighted how the translators have been arriving at translation equivalents despite the cultural gaps. For instance, Al-Rikaby et al. (2018) posited that it became difficult to translate culture-bound terms and proper names into the target language. They attested this using Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus* written in English and translated into Arabic. In their comparative analysis of the English version of the text and the translated version, they found that the transmitter used domestication and foreignisation of culture-bound terms and proper names to come up with translation equivalents. They argued that the transmitter also employed Newmark and Coilie's taxonomies in arriving at the equivalents. In support of the influence of culture on translation, Safarnejad et al. (2014) in their analysis of a translation of metaphors from Persian to English using a cognitive approach, argued that any kind of translation required an understanding of cultural contexts. Invaluable as the studies on cultural influence on the translation by Al-Rikaby et al. (2018) as well as Safarnejad

et al. (2014) are to the present one; a few contradictions are inevitable in the quality of the translation of *Cities of Salt: Al-Teeh* to the TL. This is based on the observation that there is always a culture gap among communities and this gap attributes to the outcome of a work of translation.

This paper, therefore, is aimed at identifying and discussing the problems facing translators in the course of translating texts with Bedouin idiomatic expressions as well as their terminology from Arabic into English specifically in Theroux's translation of Munif's (1983) novel; *Cities of salt: Al-Teeh*. The problematic issues are related to problems resulting from differences between Arabic and English cultures. The translator finds himself powerless in providing the appropriate cultural equivalents, especially when it comes to translating something of Bedouin culture-specific nature. Such cultural difficulties are discussed in this paper in relation to Theroux's translation and possible solutions are suggested to bridge the gap caused by cultural conflicts.

The art of translation has also been viewed by different quarters as a genuine reflection of the actual aspects of different civilizations. Culture has been the major point of contact between human beings since the very beginning of life. It is true, therefore, to say that many societies express culture through language making the relationship between culture and language symbiotic. Newmark (1988) classified culture under the following categories: ecological expressions which deal with the effect of environment on language; the

second category is the material culture that includes food, clothes, transport and others; the third category is a social culture which includes many activities related to the life of people. The fourth category includes organizations, customs, and concepts. Finally, the fifth category discusses gestures and habits. Adopted in this paper are five domains namely ecological, social culture, organizations (heritage), material culture and gesture and habits.

Theoretical Framework

The present study grounds itself on Newmark's (1988) strategies of translating cultural terms between two different languages. Table 1 summarizes Newmark's taxonomy which poses specific translation strategies and their corresponding features. Table 2 includes the number of items purposively selected and discussed for each of Newmark's domain.

Table 1
Newmark's (1988) taxonomy for cultural bound terms

Strategies	Feature/ Procedures
Transference	Transferring a SL term in a TL term
Naturalization	The SL word is adapted first Ito the normal pronunciation, then into the normal morphology of the TL
Cultural equivalent	A cultural word in the SL is replaced by with a TL one
Functional equivalent	Using a culture-neutral word
Descriptive equivalent	The meaning of the Bedouin expression or term is explained using several words
Componential analysis	Comparing a SL word with a TL one which has a similar meaning but is not a clear one-to-one equivalent
Synonymy	A near target language equivalent
Through-translation	Literal translation of common collocations, names of organization and components of compounds
Shifts or transpositions	A change in grammar from SL to TL
Modulation	Occurs when the message of the original text reproduced in conformity with the current norms of the TL.
Recognized translation	Using the official or the generally accepted translation of any institutional term
Compensation	Occurs when a loss in one part of a sentence is compensated in another one
Paraphrase	The meaning of a Bedouin term is explained in detail
Couplets	Combining two different procedures
Notes	Additional information is added to the translation

Table 2
The number of items described in the study

Newmark's cultural domains	Number of items described in this study for each domain
Ecological domain	Three items
Social culture	Two items
Organizations, customs, and religious ideas	Five items
Material culture	One item
Gestures and habits	Two items

METHODS

This study adopted the descriptive research design. The design involved the selection of the items to be investigated based on the content of the items which in this case were culturally based items. These items were then described and analyzed using a content analysis approach in order to draw conclusions and generalizations. This study was procedural: First, the researcher purposively marked the lexical items that are culturally bound in the translated version of the original text. Second, the marked items were subjected to content analysis in which case the researcher analysed the translation of the novel *Cities of Salt: Al-Teeh* and the intended equivalents. Lexical items from the translated text were then compared to those from the source text then thematically categorized under the five domains according to Newmark's (1988) categorization which are ecological; social culture; gesture and habits and organizations, material culture. The paper basically follows the following procedure in its analysis: identifying the problematic expressions, idioms, sentences or utterances with their translations as rendered by Theroux; comparing the intended meaning in the source text; proposing alternative translations for the given examples and finally analyzing them in terms of Newmark's five categories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the findings of this study, most lexical-bound expressions, Bedouin fixed expression, proverbs, and idioms in the novel *Cities of Salt: Al-Teeh* are either mistranslated because of the poor cultural background of the translator, or they are literally translated into English. The literal translation of expressions in this novel is found to result in meanings that are not context-based hence a failure to meet the original author's intended meaning by the translator. It is also obvious from the findings provided in this study that the principle of emotiveness in the original text is missed the English translated text. Findings in this study are categorised following Newmark's (1988) five domains of translation.

This paper analysed the data on the basis of Newmark's five domains in translating cultural expressions of two or more cultures. Through this, strategies or inconvenient translations of the source language expressions made by Theroux in accordance with the level of formality, mistranslations, and non-translated expressions and/or idioms are discussed.

It highlighted some examples of translated items purposively selected. An introduction to each category as well as illustrative examples is provided followed by an analysis together with their translation. A suggested translation is also presented if the situation necessitates. The judgment criterion for the translated items is based on adequacy criteria which are considered as suitable, not suitable, and rejected.

Ecological Domain

Newmark (1988) made an assertion that most cultural words were easily detectable. This is because they are always associated with a

particular language and therefore not easily translated literally. If the literal translation is done, the meaning gets distorted. Ecological domain associates the relationship between language and the environment in which it operates. This means that language is shaped by the environment from where the speaker geographically occupies.

According to Newmark (1988), geographical features can normally be distinguished from other cultural terms in that they are usually value-free and that their diffusion depends on the importance of their country of origin as well as their degree of specificity. This paper observes that the translator is not quite successful in finding the corresponding equivalent in the target language particularly in the instances involving ecological related terms. Geographical features form part of the ecology and as Larson (1998) pointed out, lack of corresponding equivalence might be attributed to differences in geographical semantics in the source language and the target language. The difference leads to what Stolze (2009) called semantic void or lexical gap. In addition, colour terms constitute another interesting part of cultural divergence among languages. Names of animals as well as names of rivers or local winds that are part of the area that might constitute a problem to some translators who attempt to translate cultural words encountered within different novels. Consider the translation below.

1. اذا ردت تحمر عينك, فما كل الناس تخاف

العين الحمرا

(Munif,1983, p. 88)

2. "If you want to redden your eyes that not everyone is afraid of red-eye." (Theroux, 1983, p. 88).

Theroux uses the literal equivalent to translate the SL statement, ignoring the connotative meaning found in the SL expression. The colour 'red' in the SL statement is used in the Arabic traditions as well as the English traditions as a sign of anger, embarrassment or feeling upset. Theroux's translation though close to the intended meaning of the SL statement does not seem to have fully captured the meaning, thereby creating a distorted image. The speaker in the SL statement in the item 1 above meant the case when the addressee wants people to fear him by showing the sign of anger, yet not all people, according to the SL speaker, would feel scared of or fear him.

The colour 'red', according to Cobuild's (1987) English dictionary in the case when you say that someone's face is red means that it is redder than its normal colour because they are embarrassed, angry or out of breath". In addition to that, it also points out that "if someone reddens; their face reddens or their face turns pink often could be because they are embarrassed or angry.

In some instances, a translator might translate an Arabic idiomatic expression for instance; "إذا ردت تحمر عينك" ideationally if he could not find an appropriate equivalent in English that has the same function as that in Arabic, in order to give appropriate translation of the SL statement in the Arabic expression above, as shown in item 3.

3. "If you want to be rough with people, not all people fear a rough man." (Proposed translation)

On the other hand, pointing to someone as red-faced might give the negative connotation rather than the positive one. For example, when one tells a person that he has a red face he might mean that he belongs to the Indians or he is part of their tribe. Accordingly, instead of using the connotative way in referring to the sign of anger, we can use either the connotative or the denotative method whichever serves the purpose. Another example from this cultural category is shown in the following example whose translation is given in item 4.

4. اربط الدهما تحت ذيك الشجرة
(Munif, 1983, p. 77)

5. "Tie the horse under that tree." (Theroux, 1987, p. 57)

It seems that Theroux's translation in item 5 above has followed the deletion procedure in translation to avoid translating the word *Dahma,* which is filled with emotiveness and evaluativeness. The Bedouins used to name their horses with different names taken from their environment as a kind of linkage with their environment and to express their admiration for the beauty of their horses. The name *Dahma,* means darkness or deep black, Anis et al. (1978) indicate that *Dahma*is was taken from the colour of the sky during the night when the sky is out of stars (p. 300). A suggested way here is to transliterate the word *Dahma*and to provide a footnote to

explain its meaning to the TL readers. The suggested translation, in this case, would be as shown in item 6.

6. "Tie *Dahma* (the horse) under that tree."

The same way of naming the horses can be applied to example (7).

7. خيال الشقرا
(Munif, 1983, p. 78)

8. Rode it like a champion (Theroux, 1987, p. 58).

Arabs feel very proud when they own horses as has been said above and they name them after an incident or according to the colour of the horses. Arabs treat their horses as a member of their families and sometimes even more than that. Theroux's translation tries to establish a similar image to that found in the SL expression. Yet the TL expression does not reach the desired result. The SL expression is filled with emotiveness. The SL expression refers to the knight as well as the horse at the same time, while the TL version ignores the role of the horse totally.

Despite his failure to find near-synonym equivalents in the TL in the translation of the text, "Cities of Salt: *Al-Teeh*", Theroux has managed to provide appropriate equivalents of some geographical terms, for instance, the expression 'Zawan', when he translated it as 'weeds' which means a 'useless plant that hinders or prevent the growth of the useful ones', instead of using the word 'darnel' that does not give the intended meaning of the

SL expression. As for the word '*Ajaj'*, it is the name of the local wind that is filled with dust and small particles when it blows. Since the Bedouin environment is filled with sand and dust, this kind of wind is very familiar to them. Theroux translated the word as swirling dust.'

Munif's text also contains names of some animals and birds that are geographically speaking, a characteristic of the Arab desert. Though the word '*jerboa'* is included in the English dictionary yet this lexical term needs a degree of detail. For desert birds such as '*Al-Qata'*, Theroux mistranslates this name into 'cats', because this bird only lives in the desert and Theroux is from a western country, in which there are no such birds. It is suggested that such names must be transliterated and then if there is equivalence in English, we provide it as '*sandgrouse'*, with a footnote to state that these animals and birds live only in the desert.

Social Culture

Social aspects are very important characteristics of the social culture of nations (Newmark, 1988). In improvising the strategies for finding an appropriate equivalent of an SL in a TL, Newmark (1988), described social culture category as a constitution of activities and rituals that were related to the life of people. Munifasserts that many of these activities and rituals that are specific to the Bedouin culture. Arabs in general and Bedouins, in particular, believe that unless you slaughter an animal for new objects that you have bought and smear blood on them; those objects will be envied by other people, as expressed by Munif in the following example:

9. إذا ما كان ذبح لسيارته, لازم نبعثلو دم واحد من هالكلاب

(Munif, 1983, p. 456)

Theroux could not understand this social specific ritual, so he mistranslates it thus:

10. "If we don't wreck his trucks, we'll let him see the blood of one of those dogs." (Theroux, 1987, p. 490)

The ritual addressed in the abovementioned example is well-known and widely practised by Bedouin communities. However, the translation made by Theroux is misleading and confusing for the TL reader. It also disturbs the image found in the source text. It seems that Theroux's poor cultural knowledge of the Bedouin rituals as well as in Munif's linguistic style that uses figurative language extensively in the novel leads to this unsatisfactory and meaningless translation. The following is a proposed translation to the above-mentioned sentence:

11. "If he has not slaughtered an animal for his new car, we will send him the blood of one of these dogs." (Proposed translation)

A footnote is also required to explain why this ritual is widely practised in the Arab world. Another example that belongs to this category is the following:

12. الخويا يصلون بعد كم يوم ونريدكم تبيضون الوجه وتكونون بالشغل مثل النار وبالطاعة مثل المحبس باليد

(Munif, 1983, p. 173)

13. "The friends are arriving in a few days and we want you to do your utmost for them to work hard and obey them as if you were their servants."

(Theroux, 1987, p. 180)

This is translated as in item 14.

14. "We want you to do your utmost for them." (Proposed translation)

It is clear that Theroux has presented an equivalent that lacks the connotative meaning found in the SL expression. The SL expression is filled with emotiveness as well as evaluativeness because the speaker here tries to elevate the feelings of pride among the workers, which Theroux fails to capture and render into English.

Organizations, Customs, and Religious Ideas

Each nation has its own heritage which distinguishes it from other nations; this heritage includes customs, traditions and religious beliefs. One of the most important and unique customs that Arabs especially the Bedouins are proud of is hospitality, which is always attributed to those who have honour and dignity. For the most part of Arab history, hospitality was one of the most benevolent attributes of the Arabs. The host has to be generous with his guests; otherwise, he will lose his respect among others. The guest, in turn, must express his satisfaction by using particular expressions like the one used by Munif in the following example:

15. منازل عامرة ودايمة

(Munif, 1983, p. 273)

16. "Beautiful and lasting residences." (Theroux, 1987, p. 292)

The sentence in item 15 is misunderstood by Theroux, or he cannot find an appropriate equivalent in the English language so he translates it literally thus distorting the image found in the source text. The SL text is also charged with emotiveness which the TL text lacks. The English reader will not be able to capture the meaning of the translated text; even if he could, he would not feel the same enjoyment as the Arabic reader. The expression should be translated into item 17 below:

17. "May God bless this home." (Proposed translation)

Religious features are used to present cultural implications for translation. It is obvious that Islam and the Quran have had a great impact on Arabic life and culture and that the emotive overtone of some Arabic religious expressions is not fully understood by the native speakers of English. Translators, therefore, encounter serious problems when attempting to render certain religious expressions or sentences that imply religious connotations. Munif's text is full of such expressions. The expression "وكل الله" was used extensively

by Munif and was translated by Theroux into "Trust in God". This expression has different pragmatic connotations in Arabic that are determined by the context which is ignored by the translator. The following two examples and their English counterparts illustrate this point:

18.   لا تخاف, نمشي, نمشي, بس وكل الله
    (Munif, 1983, p. 280)

19. "Trust in God"(Theroux, 1987, p. 292)

It seems that Theroux could not capture the exact meaning of this expression so he translated it literally into 'trust in God', which is not meant in the original text. A relevant translation for this expression in this context is as shown in item 20.

20. "Calm down" (Proposed translation)

The same expression in the example in item 21 means exactly as "Trust in God" which provides evidence to show that the meaning of this Arabic expression differs according to the context in which it is used, which Theroux ignores or could not capture since he opted for literal translation to handle the problems encountered in this novel.

21.   وكلي الله يا سارة.. الزمان طويل
    (Munif, 1983, p. 22)

22. "Trust in God Sara"
    (Theroux, 1987, p. 16)

Religion, as discussed above, dominates Arabic as well as Bedouin culture; therefore expressions of this kind are expected and frequent in most of their speeches. This fact is clear in Munif's novel which creates a real challenge and a test to Theroux's ability to understand thus transfer them into English. It seems that Theroux was unable to capture the intended meaning of such culture-bound expressions. The following example makes this point clear:

23.   والله يا بن راشد, كل ابن ادم
    اخرتو خرقة
    (Munif, 1983, p. 79)

24. "By God, IbnRashed, every man has a hole in his ass" (Theroux, 1987, p. 78)

The proverbial expression in item 23 is charged with religious implications and indicates some kind of threat to everyone that life is very short and everyone has an end. So when translating such expressions the translator has to keep in mind that there should be an equivalent that has the same meaning without losing the emotiveness of that expression, without equivalence, translating the expression ideationally is the best choice. Theroux misunderstands this utterance and his translation disturbs the meaning and gives an inaccurate translation, the only justification for that is his poor Bedouin cultural background. To overcome such problems the following translation would serve the same meaning but lacks the emotiveness that the SL expression has.

25. "Remember IbnRashed, life is ephemeral" (Proposed translation)

Idiomatic expressions are another problematic area in translation especially between languages of remote origins such as Arabic and English. Barkema (1996) defines idioms as lexicalized expressions with idiosyncratic meanings. They are not translated literally, as their meaning cannot be guessed from their elements (Ajaaj & Mohammed, 2014). Therefore translators usually feel powerless when dealing with such expressions since idioms are not easily translated so they opt for literal or word-for-word strategies to overcome this problem which resulted in either a change in meaning or meaningless translation (Jabbari, 2016). Jabbari recommended that translators should deal with these expressions in context and searched for the real meaning conveyed by that particular idiom and thought about the cultural connotation as well.

A number of Arabic Bedouin fixed idiomatic expressions was used in Munif's novel and was mistranslated into English by Theroux due to inappropriate strategies used to convey these expressions as well as the lack of cultural background needed in such situations. The following is a clear example of this area:

26. جماعتنا وحنا ادرى بهم, اما سراجين او ظلمة, طلقة ثانية وتلاقيهم بالظهرة

(Munif, 1983, p. 22)

27. We know our own people, <u>day and night</u> one more shot and they will all be in Zahra (Theroux, 1987, p. 16)

The idiomatic expression "اما سراجين او ظلمة" is a fixed expression used only by the Bedouins to indicate behaving in a distracted, crazy way which Theroux translates literally into "*Day and Night*", which distorts the image found in the SL expression. Therefore, ideational or functional translation is better with these expressions.

The following is a proposed translation for this expression:

28. We know our people, like a chicken with its head cut off, one more shot and they will all be over *Zahra* (the hill).

Theroux also transliterates the word 'الظهرة' '*Zahra*' without any translation or footnote to explain the meaning of this word which is simply translated into a *hill*.

Material Culture

Munif mentioned only once a piece of cloth that Bedouins used to wear which showed somehow a tradition that Bedouin clothing style was different from the western culture. Theroux transliterated the word into '*ghotra*' (p. 136) which was misleading for the English reader so providing a footnote to explain this would be better as '*Ghotra*' is a white head-dress used by Arabs in general and Bedouins in particular.'

Gestures and Habits

Gestures and habits are a phenomenal part of the Arabic culture and language therefore revolves around them. Language and culture

dictate each other and therefore it is difficult to separate the two in the translation of an Arabic text.

One of the distinctive habits practised by Bedouins in the selection of names of newborns, names of places and animals. Bedouins choose these names in relation to their environment or after an important event or incident. Consider the name '*Dyab'* (Munif, 1983, p. 53), which was transliterated by Theroux (1987, p.19) as '*Zyab*'without explaining the reason behind the naming. The child named '*Dyab'* means 'a child who was born in the year when a wolf attacked his father's sheep' so he named him '*Dyab'* which is the plural form of the word '*Deeb'*. The translated version of the story seems to ignore this reason and only provides a transliterated name '*Zyab'*.

Bedouin Common nouns, also, created a challenge to Theroux since they were culture-specific terms, and they required a good knowledge of the Bedouin culture to understand them first in the TLT, and then rendered them into English. Theroux in his translation failed to capture most of these nouns because of his lack of knowledge of Bedouin culture. The following example will explain this point:

29. مالك شغلة الا تضحك مثل العجيان
(Munif,1983, p. 37)

30. You have been doing nothing but laughing like a <u>hyena</u>! (Theroux,1987, p. 33)

The word "عجيان" 'Ijyan' is the plural of "عجي" 'Ajy' which is a Bedouin fixed

expression used only by some Bedouin tribes living in Jordan to refer to little kids; this term is also mistranslated by Theroux into "Hyena". It seems that Theroux tried his best to use the contextual factors to guess the meaning of this expression but he failed. The choice made by Theroux changed the meaning completely and distorted the image found in the SLT. The following is a proposed translation for the abovementioned example:

31. You have been doing nothing but chuckling like kids!(Proposed translation)

CONCLUSION

This paper is an attempt to investigate the dilemma that a translator finds him/herself in when translating texts from a culturally different environment from his/her own. The paper is a case study of Theroux's translation of Munif's (1983) novel *Cities of Salt: Al-Teeh*. The source language is Arabic Bedouin while the target language is English. Because of the scope of this paper, it was not possible to discuss all the (mis)translated linguistic and ideological translations of this novel. The conclusion of this paper is that the translation of culturally-related linguistic and ideological items is a challenging task as the translator is expected not only to be bilingual in both the source language and the target language but also bicultural in the cultures involved. This is because the relationship between language and culture is symbiotic and until the translator is conversant with the two

cultures and languages, the work will not convey the message as was intended by the original author.

The main finding of this paper is that in translating a text, the translator should not only be concerned with literal translation but also take into consideration the connotative meanings as well as the cultural underpinnings of the source text because the translator is only a conveyor and a bridge between the source language and the audience of the target language. This paper also found that a dialect must be translated into a dialect rather than into standard language if not, the target message will not have the same influence as the source message. The paper establishes that transliteration is a good strategy when the translator is faced by names such as desert animals and/or names of places. It also determines that there is a correlation between the translator's native language and the type of translation equivalence opted for.

This paper employs Newmark's (1988) classification of cultural domains in the analysis of ecological; material; social; organizational, customs and concepts, and gestures and habits. The analysis of the examples in the text has shown that Theroux's translation as a lot of lexical gaps. To fill these gaps, this paper recommends making footnotes as one way of clarification or providing more information about cultural items likely to be mistranslated and in cases without equivalents, translating the expression ideationally is the best choice. It also recommends that during translation, the translator can seek the services of a person from the culture from which the original text is written.

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