

# Cultural Problems in Translation

## Definition of culture

**Culture includes thoughts, communication, languages, practices, beliefs, values, customs, rituals, manners of interacting, roles, relations and expected behaviors of racial, ethnic, religious or social groups and the ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations. Here, it should be asserted that not all cultures are alien to one another with the same degree. **The greater the differences between the SC and the TC, the greater the difficulties in translation; and the less differences between them, the less the difficulties in translation.****

# 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.

# Cultural Equivalent

## 1. Total cultural equivalent (same form+ same meaning):

Arabic Expression	Meaning	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 الامر (له ضلع ...)	be involved in something	have a hand in something
تحت اليد (تحت السيطرة)	Under control	In hand
ما باليد حيلة (خارج السيطرة)	Out of control	Out of hand

## 2. Partial equivalent (same meaning but different form):

Arabic Expression	Translation
سكين في الخاصرة	a pain in the neck
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

# Borrowing the Source Language Expression

English Expressions	Translation
To shed crocodile tears	بيكي بدموع التماسيح
To fish in troubled water	يصطاد في الماء العكر
To digest ideas	يهضم الافكار
The man of hour	رجل الساعة
Literary currents	التيارات الادبية
To throw light on	يسلط الضوء على

## Compensation Strategy (CS)

- 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, "hoopoe" «هدد». 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".

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



- شعرت بالتعب لأنني لم أتناول السحور.
- تشهد الأردن وفق الاحصائات الرسمية حوالي 25 جريمة شرف سنوياً.
- دفع خمسة ملايين دينار عراقي كمقدم صداق.
- نظرة المجتمع قد تدفع باللقيط للانطواء.
- ذهبت والدتي الى العمرة العام الماضي.
- ابدأ بالعائلة فلأقربون أولى بالمعرف.
- بعد أن استهلك كل الماء لديه كان لا بد له من التيمم كي يصلي صلاة العصر.
- رغم غزو الموديلاات الرجالية الحديثة، لا تزال الدشداشة العراقية محافظة على حضورها.
- أكدت المحكمة قرار حظر النقاب في الجامعات المصرية.

- I felt tired because I didn't have \*Suhoor.
- \*Suhoor: a light meal before starting a new fasting day of Ramadan (before daybreak).
- As per official statistics, Jordan witnesses about 25 honor killing crimes annually.
- He paid five million Iraqi dinars as an advance dowry.
- The image drawn by the society for a foundling may force him to solitude.
- My mother performed \*Ummrah last year.
- \*Ummrah: Visiting the holy shrines in Mecca and Madina out of the time of Pilgrimage.
- Start with your family since charity begins at home.
- After he had used all the water he had, he was obliged to perform 'al-tayammum (sand ablution) to perform the 'al'aser (afternoon) prayer.

Tayammum: refers to the dry ablution in Islam using sand or dust only if no water is available.

- Although men-modern fashions are prominent in Iraq, Iraqi \*dishdasha is still worn.
- \*Dishdasha: an ankle-length garment, usually with long sleeves, similar to a robe.
- The court confirmed the decision to ban \*AL niqāb in Egyptian universities