Translation Challenges and Strategies: A Review of Theories

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Abstract

In the process of translating, the translator strives to represent the meaning and style of the original text as correctly and precisely as possible. Since the translation accurately captures what the words imply, its meaning is the substance of the original text. Creating identical meanings between the source and target languages seems to be a challenge because of the clear differences in the cultures that the languages have. The disparate characteristics as the result of the distinct cultural elements require a translator to employ translation strategies based on the translation complexity levels. This implies that to produce a more contextually relevant and acceptable meaning, a translator may take a long time and require a lot of translation effort such as seeking the right type of translation strategy. The current paper aims at scrutinizing the translation problems and strategies from different theories. The theories are reviewed to unpack the translation problems that might happen and investigate the strategies from several hypotheses applicable to tackle the issues.

Keywords: translation theories, translation problem & strategy, equivalence, source language, target language

Introduction

Translation is described as the process of transforming source text into target text and accurately conveying the message of the source text (Arjomandi, & Kafipour, 2016). This means that translators should take into account the message equivalence of the original and target texts. Ghazala, (2008) correctly notes that translators must completely comprehend the content of the source material in order to provide accurate and acceptable translations. According to him, all parts of language, such as meaning, syntax, style, and sounds, are equally important in the translation process, and failure to observe any of them will result in meaning distortion. Further, Ordudari (2007) asserts that translation has been utilized to convert written or spoken source language (SL) materials into written or spoken target language (TL) writings. The goal of translation, in general, is to copy varying types of literature in another language, including religious, literary, scientific, and philosophical works, in order to make them more accessible to a larger audience. Hence, as the pace of interaction between individuals and companies grows in

the global society, intercultural aspects of communication will continue to rely on translation.

Bhawuk (2017) contends that translation undergoes different levels. To begin, it is the process of putting an experience into words with the intention of sharing it with someone who speaks the same language. The second type of translation happens when people encode their common understanding of cultural objects and norms in addition to language, given that language is used to represent much of this understanding of the world. Another sort of translation occurs when two persons from different cultures do not speak the same language and must rely on an interpreter to communicate. When dignitaries travel to another country, this is a typical occurrence. Communication is reliant on the interpreters' abilities and the quality of the translations they deliver. The interpretive capacity of a translator is determined by their years of exposure to the other language and cultures, which helps them to learn the intricacies of each. The frequency with which the translator is called upon to translate or interpret is also a factor.

Translating SL texts into SL works is not simple because each language uniquely embodies the world due to its specific characteristics, culture, and ways of articulating things. The differences between an SL and a TL, as well as the distinction in their cultures, make the translation a difficult task. Form, meaning, style, proverbs, idioms, and other problematic characteristics are among them (Ordudari, 2007). Translation is considered accurate if the idea or emotion is accurately captured by the words (Bhawuk, 2017).

As translation is crucial in any field, it is critical to provide the correct meaning; thus, the translator ought to work based on the source text and provide the closest sense to the source text in order to avoid readers from translation troubles such as misunderstanding. Such issue arises as a result of the translator's misunderstanding or failure to use the proper strategy for translating the source text or a specific section of a text. It could occasionally cause serious issues for the reader. This misunderstanding is sometimes caused by the translator's word-for-word translation, which is unable to transfer the meaning of the source text (Arjomandi & Kafipour, (2016). With respect to the essence of the translation, the current study theoretically will focus on translation challenges and strategies from varying theories.

1. Translation

The translation is a complicated challenge, during which the meaning of the source-language text should be conveyed to the target-language readers. In different words, translation may be defined as encoding the meaning and form in the target language using the decoded meaning and form of the source language. Different theorists state numerous definitions for translation. Newmark (1981) defines translation as the endeavor to replace a written message and/or statement in one language with the same message and/or statement in another language. Further, Catford (1974) points out that translation is the process of replacing textual material in one language (SL) with textual material in another language. A parallel idea also comes from Nida and Taber (1974) stating that translation entails reproducing the closest natural equivalence of the source language message in the receptor language, first in terms of meaning and then in terms of style. The above ideas imply that translation is merely the replacement of the text from a source language to a target language, but, further, it involves the language characteristics or style and culture affecting the meaning. Thus, a translator must be familiar with literary and non-literary textual criticism in order to assess the quality of a text before deciding how to interpret and translate it (Newmark, 1981). As each writing style has its

own characteristics, a translator ought to possess knowledge of writing and be capable of using right methods to look for or identify elements in another language (Muamaroh, 2008).

Watt & Kruger (2022) argue that translation is a complex process. On numerous levels, meaning is "generated" by decoding the underlying text (for instance, grammatical, structural, literary, and socio-cultural levels). This "meaning" must then be encoded into the target language using the target language's linguistic, literary, and cultural traditions. These different aspects (grammar, structure, etc.) combine in an interactive process and result in meaning. Atomization or compartmentalization of the various aspects distorts communication. The translation complexity is determined by several aspects such as varying types of meaning (denotative, connotative, associative, etc.), several levels of meaning (primary, secondary, etc.), multiple ways to interpret words, rhetorical techniques, grammatical or semantic frameworks, and so on. Finally, the translator is confronted with a maze of options and decisions.

In translating or interpreting a text, Watt & Kruger also suggest that a translator needs to figure out severe constituent elements including:
1) The construction and semantics of words (including phonology and lexicography).
2) The construction of sentences (syntax and some stylistic elements, such as figurative language, metaphors, idioms, symbolism, sarcasm, irony, etc. are relevant). Words get their function and meaning inter alia within sentence structures, which might also play a role in determining the rhetorical nature of the text.
3) The structure of paragraphs (including the analysis of structures and discourses).
4) The genres of texts (including the use of micro, meso, and macro genres). Realizing that a piece of communication is a joke and not a scientific statement might make all the difference in the process of determining meaning.
5) The socio-cultural and historical ecology. This element deals with knowledge of the world, society, geography, history, etc. of the particular community to whom the source document was written. Communication (statements, arguments, rhetoric, content, etc.) is usually embedded in a particular socio-cultural and historical milieu. This type of knowledge is often implicit and not spelt out in the text itself.

Therefore, such complexity will affect the views of translators and their consideration in translation activities or strategies.

2. Translation Problems

Translators may run across challenges or difficulties throughout the translating process. "Mistakes, misjudgments, miscalculations, and error comprise an integral element of learning in obtaining knowledge," writes Brown (2000) in Silviana (2012). Miremadi (1991) divides translation problems into two categories: lexical and syntactic issues.

a. Lexical Problem

Although words are entities that relate to things or concepts, Miremadi in Owji (2013) asserts that a word in one language may not be swapped with a term in another language when referring to the same concepts or objects. He categorizes lexical problems into five categories: Straight/ denotative meaning: the words in the source text that can be matched with those in the target text "without missing pictures" are referred to as this type of meaning (e.g., mother, father, etc.). *Lexical meaning* refers to words or phrases that appear to be equal but are not; the translator must be aware of the author's intent beyond the words to avoid misrepresenting the author's message. *Metaphorical expression*. This section deals with the difficulties that come with translating idioms and

other related terms. For translating idiomatic expressions, Broeik (1981), as reported by Miremadi (1991), suggests the following: (a) recognizing the difference between everyday language and metaphors, (b) having the resources necessary to translate a single metaphor, (c) recognizing diverse situations and their limitations when utilizing metaphors, (d) accurately recognizing the limits on the message's translation and display. *Semantic voids*. This section covers words and/or idioms that reflect notions found nowhere else in the world. Close equivalences can be obtained, but precise equivalences are impossible to find. According to Miremadi (1991), this can happen in two ways: extra-linguistic factors, such as words that have referents in one speech community but not in others, and intra-linguistic factors, such as concepts that may exist in two language communities but have a completely different structure of use. Dagut (1931) believes as Miremadi (1991) stated, that this case occurs when the lexicalization systems of shared expressions are completely different. *Proper names*. The problem of proper names is the last sub-category in this group. Although proper names relate to people and may be translated from one language to another, the special meaning they contain that is not shared by the target speech community may be lost (e.g., Tanjung Perak in Indonesian).

b. Syntactic Problems

The third major category of translation problems is syntactic challenges; as Miremadi (1991) cited in Nida (1975), no two languages have the same structural organization systems (i.e., language structure varies from one language to another). These distinctions include word classes, grammatical relations, word order, style, and pragmatic aspects. Baker (1982) in Al Qudah (2012) categorizes the EFL learners' difficulty with phrasal verbs in four areas, following Brown (2000) in describing the problem or challenges: (a) semantics- understanding what the expression means, (b) structure- knowing what patterns the expression can follow, (c) phonology-producing correct, natural stress, and (d) collocation-knowing with which particular groups of words the expressions can be used.

3. Translation and cultural problems

The problem is what occurs when people from various cultures meet and communicate, i.e., when the message sender and recipient are from different cultures. People must make a determined effort to get along with and understand individuals whose ideas and origins may be very different from their own as interaction across cultures has expanded, making intercultural communication important. Language may be used to define cultural identity, relate to other phenomena, and refer beyond itself, especially when a speaker uses language for his purposes. A specific language denotes a certain social group's culture. As a result, we may deduce that language is a culture and that translating a language is translating a culture. As a result, knowing both the language and the culture is required to translate.

Culture is a hazy collection of common attitudes, ideas, behavioral customs, fundamental assumptions, and values that impact each member's conduct and interpretations of other people's behavior. Language is the vehicle through which other occurrences are expressed and embodied. It conveys the shared values, ideas, and meanings that individuals of a society share as a result of their socialization. Language also relates to culturally specific items, as evidenced by proper names that incorporated such objects. In British use, "a loaf of bread" suggests specific cultural items until a conscious effort is taken to empty it of that reference and establish a new one, according to linguist Byran(1989). As a result, we may draw on the fact that language is a

component of culture and that we can communicate cultural views and values via it, as well as the fact that the precise collocations of a given term are unique to a language and its relationship with culture.

The term "translation" refers to the process of creating an equivalent message in the target language. In this regard, Nida points out that creating an analogous message is a process of matching distinct sections of speech while also duplicating the communication's overall dynamic nature. To put it another way, both the text and the context must be evaluated. The culture and sign systems in which the language is produced influence the language and its surroundings. When translating, Nida (1975) outlines five crucial aspects of communication to consider. They are as follows: (a) the subject matter, i.e., the referents that are talked about, (b) the participants who take part in the communication, (c) the process of writing, (d) the code used is language, including all its symbols and arrangements, and € the message is the particular way in which the subject matter is encoded into specific symbols and arrangements. According to Nida (1975), when translating writings between cultures that are not closely linked, the translator may have difficulty understanding the message. In this scenario, the translator will encounter an uncommon word form, odd syntax, unexpected word combinations, and unfamiliar subjects. As a consequence, deciphering the original message will be difficult for him. He went on to say that some components of culture are universal and unaffected by culture. He stated that human experience is so similar throughout the world. Everyone eats, sleep, works, is affected by the experiences of their families, loves, hates, is/has jealousy, is capable of compassion, loyalty, and friendship, and uses a variety of essentially universal facial signals. What people from different cultures have in common is significantly larger than what divides them. To overcome cultural barriers and issues in translation, language must be translated to the target language (Nida, 1975).

Cultural dynamic equivalency was posited by Nida (1975). The dynamic equivalent translation is the most natural translation of the message in the source language. This definition includes three key terms: equivalent, which relates to the source language message, natural, which refers to the receptor language, and nearest, which connects the two orientations using the maximum degree of approximation. The translation should not have any traces of a foreign origin, and it should be compatible with the receiver's whole language and culture. However, there should be many core ideas and narratives that cannot be naturalized by the translation process when the source and receptor languages reflect extremely distinct civilizations.

In this situation, Nida (1975) asserted that no translation attempting to cross a significant cultural divide can claim to completely eradicate all traces of the foreign environment. As a result, the translator may not always be able to domesticate the Target text, but he will occasionally foreignize particular terminology or words. Domestication entails altering SL values so that they are legible to a TL audience. Foreignization, on the other hand, keeps the SL values and exposes the audience to them.

4. Translation Strategy

Translation is an arduous task, during which transmitting intentions, feelings, and implicit messages is the goal of it, thus, translation process requires appropriate strategies to create more equivalent messages between the target language and source language. In light of the translation challenges, different scholars offer distinctive strategies, such as syntactic and semantic strategies proposed by Chesterman (1997).

Syntactic strategies

Syntactic strategies are largely concerned with manipulating form. These include:
a) Literal translation: It refers to a translation that accurately conveys the original text's meaning without attempting to portray its style, beauty, or poetry.
b) Loan, calque: Individual item borrowing and syntagm lending are also part of this method. It, like other methods, refers to a conscious decision rather than the unintentional influence of unwanted distractions.
c) Transposition: Although this technique entails structural changes as well, it is frequently advantageous to isolate the word-class shift as a source of interest in and of itself.
d) Unit shift: A unit shift undergoes when a ST unit gets translated into a different unit in the TT: this happens all the time, and multiple subclassifications can be created for different types of unit shifts. The units include morpheme, word, phrase, clause, sentence, and paragraph.
e) Phrase structure change: This strategy includes adjustments at the phrase level, such as number, definiteness, and modification in the noun phrase, and person, tense, and mood in the verb phrase. Although its internal structure alters, the unit itself may stay unchanged.
f) Clause structure change: This strategy involves the change of phrasal and clausal constituents.
g) Sentence structure change: This technique impacts the structure of the sentence unit. Changes in main-clause and sub-clause status, as well as changes in sub-clause kinds, are included in this group.
h) Cohesion change: It deals with intra-textual reference, ellipsis, substitution, pronominalization, and repetition, as well as the usage of various connectors.
i) Level shift: The shift comprises the constituents of phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis, and they reflect features in different languages.
j) Scheme change: This designates the kind of adjustments that translators make to rhetorical schemes like parallelism, repetition, alliteration, and metrical rhythm when translating them.

Semantic strategies

From the perspective of semantic strategies, the changes are not only dealing with lexical semantics but also cover clause meaning. This category is subcategorized into:
a) Synonymy: In this strategy, the translator seeks the closet meaning to avoid repetition.
b) Antonymy: This subcategory chooses a word denoting the opposite meaning.
c) Hyponymy: It employs a member of a larger category, e.g., rose is a hyponym in relation to flower), and also hypernym is a related superordinate term, which describes the entire category with a broader term, e.g., flower is a hypernym in relation to rose (Owji, 2013).
d) Converses: Converses are two (typically verbal) structures that convey the same notion from opposite perspectives, such as buy and sell.
e) Abstraction change: It changes the level of abstraction, from abstract to more concrete or vice versa.
f) Distribution change: The same semantic elements are distributed among more or fewer items (expansion or compression).
g) Emphasis change: For whatever cause, this method increases, decreases, or changes the attention or thematic focus.

h) Paraphrase: In this paraphrasing technique, the pragmatic sense of any higher unit, such as an entire clause, tends to ignore semantic components at the lexeme level because some cases are loose, free, and under-translated.

i) Trope change: In the same manner as the trope strategy applied to the translation of schemes, this model applies to the translation of rhetorical tropes (i.e., figurative expressions).

Newmark (1998) offers eight levels of translation strategies practical for both the source language and the target language. *Word-for-word translation*: out of context, words are translated singly by their most common meanings. The primary purpose of word-for-word translation is to either comprehend the mechanics of the source language or to communicate effectively in the target language. *Literal translation*: the grammatical structures in the source language are transformed to their closest target language equivalents, but the lexical words are translated separately, out of context. *Faithful translation*: within the restrictions of the target language's grammatical structures, this technique aims to reproduce the original's precise contextual meaning. The degree of grammatical and lexical abnormality while transferring cultural words. *Semantic translation*: this strategy is different from faithful translation. It preserves the aesthetic value; the beautiful and natural sounds of the source language text, and the meaning is compromised when appropriate. On the other hand, the meaning in the faithful translation is uncompromising and dogmatic. *Adaptation*: it is the freest type of translation and is primarily used for plays (comedies) and poetry. The source language culture is translated to the target language culture, and the text is rewritten, while themes, characters, and plots are usually maintained. *Free translation*: the matter is reproduced without the manner, and the content is recreated without the shape of the original. It is usually a considerably longer paraphrase of the original. *Idiomatic translation*: It faithfully reproduces the original's message, but tends to distort nuances of meaning by favoring colloquialisms and idioms over those found in the original. *Communicative translation*: it aims to capture the original's exact contextual meaning in a way that the readership will find both message and language acceptable and understandable.

As-Safi (2011) categorizes the translation strategies into general and specific strategies. *General strategies* are concerned with different text types, while *specific strategies* tackle a certain text type, readership, and skopos, i.e., the function or purpose of the translation. The specific strategies are of five sub-categories: *Domestication strategy*, also called normalization or naturalization strategy, is applied to correlate cultural divides and create intelligibility in accordance with the hermeneutic method, which emphasizes interpretation and gives the translator the authority to change the text to make it natural, comprehensible, and readable. *Compensation strategy* is to make up for the loss of a significant feature of the source text that approximates its effect on the target text by means other than those used in the target text, i.e., making up for the effect of the source text which is achieved in one way through the use of another in the target language. *Strategy of Addition*: extra words and short or even long phrases are added to the translated text to permit a more accurate depiction of the source text's context while also expressing the target language's logic, colloquial style, and rhetoric.*Strategy of Elaboration and Explication*: the translator may use elaboration or explication to ensure that the receiver receives the original message in its entirety. *strategy of Approximation and Compromise* aims to achieve a balance or equilibrium between the aesthetic and cultural values of the Source Language that are acceptable or undesirable in the target language.

5. Conclusion

Establishing equivalence between source language text and target language text is challenging. Messages in the source text mean exactly the same as the target language. Translation studies would not be conceivable without the idea of equivalency because the subject matter would be lost. The goal of translation is to produce a text that is identical to the source material in every manner. However, since different languages have different characteristics or patterns, translating can be demanding. As a language and culture are closely related to each other, differences in cultural aspects are one of the factors that make the differences between languages more apparent and have an impact on difficulties in the translation process. Therefore, besides linguistic competencies, a translator ought to own cross-cultural knowledge to avoid misconceptions of the meaning transferred from the source text to the target language. In addition, varied techniques or strategies that translators use to present allusion appear to be crucial for the understanding and comprehension of the implications that they carry. Consequently, to provide pertinent and equivalent meaning, a translator's capacity to have the proper translation strategy is pivotal.

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