

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN TRANSLATING

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
This article discusses the difficulties encountered in translation and ways to overcome them. It also analyzes the importance of culture in the translation process based on examples.	Translation, culture, people, traditions, words, books, characters, oral folklore.

Introduction

Culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, customs, practices, norms, and artifacts that define a particular group or society. It encompasses a wide range of elements that influence how people think, behave, and interact within their community. Culture shapes many aspects of life, from language, religion, and food to art, social structures, and ways of thinking. It is both learned and passed down through generations, constantly evolving as societies change.

Language is one of the most important aspects of culture, as it not only serves as a means of communication but also reflects how people in a culture perceive the world around them. Language is intertwined with cultural values, idioms, expressions, and concepts. For every translated sentence, the translator must be able to decide on the importance of its cultural context, what the phrase really means, not necessarily what it literally means, and convey that meaning in a way which makes sense not only in the target language but also in the context of the target culture [2].

There are many institutions and practices that exist in one culture and don't exist in other cultures. Deeply held belief systems, even commitments to truth vary from culture to culture. Each of these unique culturally based psychological entities is associated with words that have meaning in one language that is distinct to that language and not duplicated in other languages. How would those unique features of culture be translated? Only someone steeped in the cultures of both source language and target language can hope to make an interpretation.

Culture is the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression [1].

The notion of culture is essential to consider the implications for translation and, despite the differences in opinion as to whether language is part of the culture or not, the two notions appear to be inseparable. Discussing the problems of correspondence in translation, Eugene A. Nida, an outstanding linguist, one of the founders of the modern discipline of Translation Studies, confers equal importance to both

linguistic and cultural differences between the source language and the target language and concludes that “differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than make differences in language structure.

For every translated sentence, the translator must be able to decide on the importance of elements of culture for translation, what the phrase means, not necessarily what it literally means, and convey that meaning in a way which makes sense not only in the target language but also in the context of the target culture [3].

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Culture and translation are deeply interconnected, as translation involves not just converting words from one language to another, but also conveying cultural meanings, norms, and values that are embedded in the source text. Culture shapes how people interpret language, and translation needs to bridge the cultural differences between the source and target audiences. Language carries more than just literal meanings; it also reflects cultural context. Certain words, phrases, or concepts may have strong cultural significance in the source language that doesn't directly translate into the target language. Culture plays a significant role in the process of translation. When translating, especially between languages that are culturally distinct, translators must navigate not only linguistic differences but also the cultural nuances that shape the meaning of words, phrases, idioms, and concepts.

Texts often include references to specific historical events, societal norms, rituals, or values that are part of the source culture. In translation, these references must either be adapted, explained, or substituted with something relevant to the target culture so the meaning is preserved and understood [5].

Translation requires sensitivity to the values and norms of both the source and target cultures. What might be acceptable or common in one culture could be offensive or misunderstood in another. For instance, humor, religious references, or certain symbols may carry different connotations in different societies, so the translator must adapt these aspects appropriately to avoid causing offense or confusion. Certain topics may be sensitive or taboo in one culture but openly discussed in another. Translators must be aware of such differences and, when necessary, adjust content to make it suitable for the target audience while maintaining the original intent of the text [6].

Localization involves adjusting a translation so that it aligns with the cultural expectations of the target audience. This can include changing references to local customs, food, currency, and social behaviors to make the translation feel more familiar to the target culture. Idiomatic expressions and slang are often deeply rooted in the source culture and can be difficult to translate directly. A translator must either find an equivalent expression in the target language or, in some cases, choose to explain the phrase in a way that conveys the intended meaning.

Example: The English idiom “kick the bucket” for dying may not make sense in another language, so the translator may need to use a local expression for death, or provide an explanation.

In translation, the translator often acts as a mediator between two cultures. The goal is not only to convey the original meaning but also to respect and preserve cultural identity. This can be particularly important in literature, where cultural nuances, such as characterizations, storytelling traditions, and dialects, help form the essence of the text [7].

Example: Translating a novel about a specific cultural group (e.g., Indigenous communities) requires an understanding of both the source culture and the intricacies of language used to express those cultural values. Translation is often not a neutral process. There are power dynamics at play, especially when translating between dominant and minority cultures or languages. Translators need to be aware of how their choices may shape perceptions of both cultures. This is especially crucial in works involving marginalized or non-Western cultures, where translators might need to safeguard authenticity and avoid reinforcing stereotypes.

Example: In translating literature from postcolonial contexts, translators must be cautious not to erase or distort the cultural and political messages embedded in the text.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Cultures evolve, and so do the meanings attached to words and concepts. When translating older texts, it's essential to consider the contemporary relevance and how the cultural context of the original has changed over time. The translator may need to adapt certain aspects of the text while ensuring that the core message remains intact.

Example: A translation of a classic text might need to reconsider terms related to gender or race that were acceptable at the time of writing but are now considered outdated or offensive [5].

Humor is often tied to specific cultural references, social norms, and values. What's funny in one culture might not be funny in another, or may even be confusing. In translating comedy, the translator might need to adapt jokes, wordplay, or situations to fit the target audience's cultural understanding of humor.

Example: British humor often relies on dry wit or irony, while American humor may be more direct. A translator may need to adjust the style of humor to align with the target audience's comedic sensibilities [6].

CONCLUSION

Culture is integral to the translation process because it influences how meaning is understood and communicated. A translator's role is not only to translate words but also to navigate cultural nuances, ensuring that the translation is not only linguistically accurate but also culturally appropriate. This requires deep knowledge of both the source and target cultures, as well as the ability to adapt the text in ways that preserve its essence while making it meaningful and accessible to the new audience. In translation, culture is not just an accessory but a core element of the process. A translator must be able to bridge not only language gaps but also cultural divides, ensuring that the final translation communicates the message, tone, and intent of the original text while remaining relevant and comprehensible to the new audience.

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