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Language and Culture in Intercultural Communication

FATIHA GUESSABI 👤 ⓘD

Faculty of Letters and Languages, Department of Languages, Tahri Muhammed University of Bechar-Algeria
✉ **Corresponding Author**: FATIHA GUESSABI, **E-mail**: fatiha_guessabi1@yahoo.fr/ guessabi.fatiha@univ-bechar.dz

ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT

Language is probably the best way of conveying a culture, both oral and written, in human societies. Language, written or oral, plays an essential role in developing a form of social knowledge, which is common sense thought, socially developed and shared by members of the same social or cultural characteristics. This common knowledge is sometimes called a social representation. Through language, man assimilates culture, perpetuates it or transforms it. Nevertheless, like every language, each culture implements a specific apparatus of symbols with which each society identifies. Culture is defined as the body of knowledge and behavior that characterizes a human society or a human group within a society. Different languages are necessary in order to preserve things such as culture; heritage and getting people from different cultures to dialogue may require intercultural mediation. These intercultural communications can be regarded as translation. Therefore, the relationship between language and culture is rather complex. Our article will discuss the relation between language and culture in intercultural communication which is translation in our case. Many ideas will be presented with examples to prove that language and culture are two faces to one coin. This research shows that language and culture are not competitors and not interdependent but complete each other.

1. Introduction

In communication between people who have different cultural backgrounds, the message may fail and the discourse is often misunderstanding because the receiver does not get the speaker's intended meaning of the message, and he does not know how to decode the message they receive; thus, the lack understanding of the discourse occurred.

Sometimes we find two persons with the same code which means with the same language but their discourse fails because of the lack of knowledge about behavior patterns in each culture (Tiono, June 2002). In this context we mean by culture the way of thinking of a person according to his society based on Sapir's theory which is quoted by Cooper (Cooper, 1973):"culture is what a society does and think" (p. 99). Thus, each society has its own way of thinking, expressing ideas and interpreting messages; i.e., different societies with different cultural backgrounds. In addition to that, Cooper explains that "culture is three crude divisions: perception, norms or attitudes and conceptualization"(p.103). According to Cooper's words, two different nations have different cultures, perceptions, norms, attitudes, and concepts.

Thus, I would analyze how a language is a culture in intercultural communication because people's perceptions and concepts of differences can bring about intercultural communication hindrances, especially in translating or interpreting contexts and what might be the impacts of miscommunication.

2. Culture and Language

Since this part will focus on the relation of culture and language in ELT, it would be logical to start with a succinct definition of culture. All cultures have own set of perceptions, behaviours, and values pertaining to family, beliefs, the roles of the sexes, authority, and the way of life. Therefore; culture is a means of "sharing successful results of choices made by others in the past"

(Bohannan 1992, 13) and it "facilitates living by providing ready-made solutions to problems, by establishing patterns of relations and ways for preserving group cohesion and consensus" (Harris and Moran 1982, 65). These cultural adaptations can be explained clearly; for instance, in the igloos where people are well suited for living in the arctic; in tropical climates where people have the afternoon siestas; and sign language as the natural mode of communication for deaf people. After defining culture, what is the relation between language and culture in ELT?

In ELT, language and culture are closely linked and inseparably intertwined. Sociocultural theories of learning see language learning as a socially situated activity (Lantolf, 2006) and it is viewed as the primary semiotic resource which both enacts and creates our cultural context (Geertz, 1973) (Halliday, 1979). Further, "language is the means by which culture and representations that learners have of other cultures are spread. Language is not only a linguistic code to master (the linguistics perspective), a social act (the sociolinguistic perspective) and a cognitive process (the psycholinguistics perspective)." (Lussier, 2011)

It is also an intercultural process (Vygotsky, 1962; Bourdieu, 1982).Therefore, many attempts have arisen to bring culture into the classroom in a more overt and systematic manner (Baker, 2016) and a more intercultural stance to language education (for example, Byram, 1997; 2008, Kramsch 1993; 1998; 2009). Moreover, Language and culture are inexorably linked, meaning that particular languages contained and constructed particular cultures in unique ways (Sapir-Whorf, 1954). This 'marriage of language and culture' (Risager, 2007) is inseparable. Furthermore, Valdes states that "language, culture, and thought... the current consensus is that the three aspects are three parts of a whole" (1986: 1) and that "a native culture is as much of interference for second language learners as is native language" (Valdes, 1986). In addition to that, Sybing says that "native-speaker culture cannot simply be separated from a language that has already left its cultural imprint on non-English-speaking cultures" (Sybing, 2011).

Nowadays, culture has been integrated by theorists and educators as an important part of language education and training. It is impossible to study language without culture because they are closely interrelated and they imply the crisscrossing of identities and the positions they are summoned to (Hall, 1969:13-14). Thus, Learners should turn language encounters into intercultural relations (Guilherme-Durate, 2000), develop positive cultural representations of other people and their cultures, and reach an understanding of these cultures. Learners must understand the cultural specificity of "Otherness". In situations of misunderstandings, lack of incomprehension, and even conflicts, educators must invite learners to use cultural mediation.

However, in cross-cultural studies, cultures are viewed as relatively homogenous and bounded entities at the national level which could be compared as distinct 'units' (Hall, 1979) (Hofstede, 1991) which means that a language is a culture and a culture is a language too. Nonetheless, Kramsch defined culture as "firstly a membership in a discourse community that shares common social space and history and a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting. Secondly, it is the discourse community itself. Thirdly, it is the system of standards itself." (Kramsch, 1998) , explains that culture has a crucial role in intercultural communication. Kramsch suggests that intercultural communication should be viewed as taking place on a 'cultural faultline' (Kramsch c. , 1993) in which linguistic and cultural practices and products occupy a 'third space' (ibid.: 233). According to her, there is a problem in ELF in intercultural communication because it is not clear what particular target communities and language norms the communication is 'in between' (ibid). Therefore, students should be acquainted with the intercultural group they will socialize with by video or the internet before participating in an exchange program. (Lussier, 2011). Indeed, Canagarajah (Canagarajah, 2005) regards cultures as hybrid, diffuse and de-territorialized with constant movement between different local and global communities in teaching English, while Pennycook (Pennycook, 2007) defines cultures as "how cultural forms move, change and are reused to fashion new identities in diverse contexts". We conclude this discussion with the ideas of Lussier (1984):
" when studying the effects of intercultural and interlinguistic exchange programs, mentions two essential conditions: 1) the planning of such programs must bring students to live together in significant situations which make them use the other language informally, in diverse contexts outside the classroom, 2) the quality of the various contacts and pluricultural experiences, as lived through such exchanges, are an essential key to success. In fact, students need to integrate language and culture." (Lussier, 2011)
The discussion above reveals that language and culture are one coin with two faces the right one is a language and the left one the culture. They are not interdependent but complete each other.

3. Culture and Communication
  The process of communication contains a sender who encodes a message, which is sent to a receiver who must decode the message in an understandable one by keeping the intended meaning of the sender through a code which is the language. The process of communication is very complex when it deals with two different cultures and languages, few glitches occur relatively and in many daily times between senders and receivers e.g., "I'm sorry, I didn't quite get your point." "That's not what I meant!" "Huh?") (Mindess Anna with Thomas K. Holcomb, 1999). As a result, it greatly increases the likelihood that the sender's original

intent will not get through to the receiver if they have two different codes. In addition, when cultures vary, the communication practices vary as well as:

 "Our entire repertory of communicative behaviors is dependent largely on the culture in which we have been raised. Culture, consequently, is the foundation of communication. And when cultures vary, communication practices also vary. ' (ibid:32)

According to the author of Culture and the Clinical Encounter, communication strategies are not universalho endeavors to sensitize health providers (Mindess Anna with Thomas K. Holcomb, 1999). She points out that

 "Silence and the word yes lead to numerous misunderstandings. Neither necessarily signifies agreement. Silence can mean "I do not agree with what you are saying, but I am too polite to say so." Yes can mean "I am listening but not promising or agreeing" [or] "I do not understand what you are saying, but I acknowledge you are trying to tell me something, and I am grateful for that...." (Gropper, 1996.)

  Because of the explosion of technology, air travel, profound social, political changes and missionaries' missions, these days the relative isolation is gone forever and most people are living now their entire lives in different places in the world where they are not native. Therefore; the challenges of communicating with representatives of another culture appears and the bulk of communication takes place between people who shared different culture.

"In the world of tomorrow, we can expect to live—not merely vacation—in societies which seek different values and abide by different codes. There we will be surrounded by foreigners for long periods of time, working with others in the closest possible relationships. If people currently show little tolerance or talent for encounters with alien cultures, how can they learn to deal with constant and inescapable coexistence?" (Barnlund, 1989)

Thus, from the field of intercultural communication, the answer may be found to this question and the problem of intercultural communication will be solved by translation.

4. Language and Culture in Intercultural Communication

The intercultural communication field includes three elements: firstly, proxemics, which studies social and personal space. Secondly, paralinguistics is the study of the way something is said, including intonation, speech rate and the use of silence. Thirdly, kinesics studyody motions such as gestures, eye gaze, and facial expression (Mindess Anna with Thomas K. Holcomb, 1999). All these channels carry intended and unintended messages.

Understanding vocabularies used in a certain language cause problems in intercultural communication because each language has its own specific vocabulary related to its culture; therefore, if the translation is word-for-word, misinterpretation will occur and the communication will occur breaks down. For example, if an idiom is translated into a foreign language, sometimes the translation would make a completely different meaning. The idiom" love me and love my dog" was translated incorrectly into Arabic as "ahibani wa ahiba kalbi". The intended meaning of the idiom is that 'love me with all my negatives" but the translator said to love him and his dog too. In Arab society, the dog is not a loved animal in their culture, unlike the European society. The dog is a disgusted animal and the camel is the preferred one because their prophet Muhammad (peace upon him) advises them to take care of this pet. Therefore, the word 'dog' should be interpreted as ' a camel' in order to send the intended message. As a result the equivalent translation in the Arabic culture is a poem "I love her and she loves me and her camel loves my camel".

  Sometimes miscommunication happens because some words have different meanings or impressions in different cultural contexts. For example, when an American invites an Arabian for dinner and has whisky, the Arabian might say thank you. However, the Arab might get confused when the host passes the whisky to him. He might put the whisky back on the table without taking any because in Arabian culture, the word 'thank you' can be used to reject something, whereas in American culture, 'thank you' means 'yes'. This misunderstanding might influence their communication since each has a wrong idea about the other. In another example, when an Arabian visited a European country and stayed in a hotel, he might say " no bacon in my breakfast, which means he is a Muslim and needs something "halal". However, the receptionist might get confused he thought he is a vegetarian person, whereas in Islamic culture, 'bacon' means 'forbidden'. This misunderstanding might influence their communication since each has no idea about the other. From the discussion above, it can be concluded that we can never understand each other without culture even if we have the same language. Thus, without a culture, people cannot understand a language as Tiono quoted:

"Some factors such as the use of vocabulary in a language, the different discourse patterns, the different language functions or the different concept of time in different cultural backgrounds can hinder intercultural communication. Besides, these factors can also cause false stereotype about other people or nations. Thus, to overcome the intercultural miscommunication, it is not enough if people only learn about one's language; instead, they should also learn about his cultural background since human beings have culturally different conceptualization. (Tiono, June 2002)

5. Culture in Translation

Nowadays, the world is a babel of languages and interlingual communication. This communication is impossible to occur between people speaking different languages unless the linguistic barrier is overcome. Thus, the difference in languages leads to the appearance of translation, which is a complicated intellectual activity due to two dominant factors: language and culture. We usually define the translating process by making some reference to languages, but the cultural factor in translation is also undeniable if not so obvious. No translation is possible unless the receiver understands the message very well as the source reader understands it. However; this understanding can be achieved only if the sender has whole information about this language and background knowledge of facts referred to the received people; who belong to the same linguistic community, members of a certain type of culture ,and share many traditions, habits, ways of doing and saying things, and have much common knowledge about their country like its geography, history, climate, its political, economic, social and cultural institutions, accepted morals, taboos (Komissarov V. N., 1991). In this context, the author Fatiha Guessabi added (Guessabi, 2011)"the problem is what happens when cross-culture contacts and interaction take place, i.e., when message producer and message receiver are from different cultures. The contact among culture increased and made intercultural communication imperative for people to make a concerted effort to get along with and understand those whose beliefs and backgrounds may be vastly different from their own. Language can mark the cultural identity. It is also used to refer to other phenomena and refer beyond itself especially when a particular speaker uses it for his intentions. A particular language points to the culture of a particular social group." We can conclude that the variety of cultures obliged the translator/ interpreter especially in journalism translation to know more about the target people which means their traditions, attitudes, beliefs, behavioral conventions, and basic assumptions and values that are shared by them as is explained by V. N. Komissarov :"In addition to overcoming the linguistic barrier the translator has to surmount the cultural barrier, to make sure that the receptors of the target text are provided with the presuppositions required for their access to the message contents''. (Komissarov V. N., 1991)

Obviously, translation enables people of different backgrounds to send and receive information and to achieve successful communication between diverse cultures. According to E.Nida, translation is the production of an equivalent message in the target language to the source one. This production of the TL message is a process of matching different parts of speech and reproducing the total dynamic character of the communication. In order words, the text and the context have to be considered because both are based on the culture and sign systems in which the source language is created.

Additionally, cultures are very important in the translation phenomenon because they influence the way the members of a society view and perceive the world. However, conveying the message of the source text in a way understandable for the audience in the target text is essential for a translator in translation. Therefore, every journalist should know how to deal with different strategies of translating cultures because he may face rare words, unusual expressions, strange speech and unfamiliar themes. As a result, he will find problems in decoding the original message.

According to Monireh Akbari culture has an important role in translating a language. She discussed this importance by focusing on the following definition of culture as she said that Peter Torop (Torop, 2009) insists on the relationship between culture and translation as culture operates largely through translational activity, since only by the inclusion of new texts into culture can the culture undergo innovation as well as perceive its specificity (Akbari, 2013). As translators, we have to assume the role of a cultural insider for both texts in order to render a culturally more faithful translation. In addition to that, Mohammad Salehi (Salehi, 2012) mentioned that different viewpoints in translation studies and views of the interaction between culture and language and between culture and translation. He points out that culture influences translational discourse in a number of ways. We can conclude that the majority confirms the language and culture as concepts indispensable, although some hypotheses insist on the irrelevance of these two concepts. Moreover, Komissarov said:

"Translation is an important vehicle for intercultural contacts. Translating from culture to culture means, first and foremost, to bring to the receptors new facts and ideas inherent in the source language culture, to broaden their cultural horizons, to make them aware that other people may have different customs, symbols and beliefs, that other cultures should be known and respected. This cultural and educational role of translation cannot be too much emphasized. " (Komissarov, 1991).

Therefore; Language and culture are closely related and very essential in the process of translating. In the translation of cultural words, Newmark proposed two approaches: semantic which means keeping the original culture "local colour" and it may cause problems for the general readership and limit the comprehension of certain aspects. The communicative method insists on the target reader and his culture. According to Newmark this method is "the most accurate translation procedure, which excludes the culture and highlights the message" (Newmark, 1988).

Finally, we can conclude that any cultural problem in translation has a relation with a language problem and is handled as similar language problems of non-cultural origin. For example, the English idioms are one of the translation problems: neither

have any identical equivalent in Arabic but can be easily translated with Arabic idioms based on different figures of speech. Komissarov (Komissarov, 1991) summarized the relationship between language and culture in translation as follows":

1. The linguistic and cultural aspects of translation need not be opposed, for they are complementary. Cultural (ethnographic) translation problems can usually be reformulated as language problems and incorporated into the linguistic theory of translation.
2. The differences in the source language and target language cultures may necessitate additional information in the target text explaining unfamiliar facts and ideas to the receptors. In other cases, they may result in the omission of irrelevant details. Both addenda and omissions are typical translation procedures, not necessarily caused by cultural differences.
3. Orientation towards the target text receptors means concern for their adequate understanding of this source text message. Any type of equivalence implies loyalty to the source text which is the hallmark of true translation.
4. It is expedient to draw a line of demarcation, both in theory and practice, between translation and various types of pragmatic adaptations, which may more or less depart from the original message to achieve some specific pragmatic goal."

6. Translation as Intercultural Communication
The translator and the interpreter are often confronting the aspects of culture in communication that curb their job as samovar explained:
"Culture *and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, but it also helps determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed or interpreted."* (Samovar, 1982).
Nevertheless, to explain that translation is as intercultural communication, the statement of Julian below proves that and discusses it, she said:
 " translation can be simply characterized as communication between members of different cultures who presumably follow differing sociocultural rules for behaviour, including speaking and who can range from groups at the national level like linguistic minorities (Turks or Lebanese in Germany) as well as groups that have potentially differing rules for speaking such as social class, age, gender" (Juliane, 2016)
'Intercultural differences' such as values, beliefs, behaviours of culture members led to misunderstanding of communication between interactants. However, intercultural understanding is very important concept in translation and interpreting studies wchich called functional equivalence by Nida "Functional equivalence is a condition for achieving a comparable function of a text in another context." (Juliane, 2016) . Further, Newmark contends that "cultural equivalents are usually inaccurate but they are a shorthand, have emotional force, are useful for immediate effect on the receptor, e.g. in the theatre or cinema (subbing or sub-titling), and they transport the readership uncritically into the TL culture" (Newmark, 2001). Thus, it is very essential to understand the intercultural concepts in translation in order to the linguistic-cultural transposition will be undertaken successfully.
Many linguistic schools take account of 'culture' in translation among them is the Prague school of linguistics that conceived of language as primarily a social phenomenon and is naturally inextricably intertwined with culture. Obviously, language is embedded in the culture in the process of translation. Since 'meaning' is particularly important this means that translation cannot be fully understood outside a cultural frame of reference and it is exclusively culture-related. Thus, translation is a particular culturally practice with a predominantly linguistic procedure as komissarov said "translation from language to language is ipso facto translation from culture to culture". (Komissarov, 1991). In addition to that "translating involves not just two languages, but a transfer from one culture to another" (Hervey and Higgins, 2007: 28).

7. Conclusion
Culture and language are inseparable and culture is always embedded, integrated into language context. The translator should move from passing information of target cultures to the language in context, giving meanings to TL readers, and raising receivers' cultural awareness in the process of translating. Therefore; Language and culture are closely related and essential in translating and translating are as intercultural communication. Thus, translators must learn about the language with its cultural background to overcome intercultural miscommunication since human beings have culturally different conceptualization.
The article concludes that to cope with these cultural problems in translation is only to manipulate or adapt meanings with their equivalent in the target language; in other words, finding the word in its context. The problem of culture in translation led to a very wide gap between languages. As a result, translators face a serious burden in translation because it is not just a transfer of words but culture as well, in other words, not because of their incompetence towards translation, but because of cultural diversities of words and language, hence the recommendation that the nearer a translation is to the original words or text in the face of equivalence, the better. (Ukpong, 2017)

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