

How is cultural terminology handled in translation? *The Legend of the Thousand Bulls*

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Abstract

This study seeks to investigate how cultural terminology is handled in relation to strategies and procedures suggested by Vinay and Darbelnet (1977) based on cultural translation in the English translation of Yaşar Kemal's book *Binboğalar Efsanesi* (*The Legend of the thousand Bulls*). These strategies and procedures are direct and oblique translation. The former includes borrowing, calque, and literal translation while the latter is formed of transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. The first 37 pages of the target text were taken into consideration via examples from the book to be analysed in terms of all abovementioned strategies and procedures. As a result of the study, it was determined that the translator of the book Thilda Kemal performed all these strategies and procedures when rendering the Turkish book into English. In addition, it was found out that the linguistic and cultural competence of the translator allowed the book to be translated in a manner that would make it possible for almost every single word to be understood by the target reader. Finally, it was concluded that the translator took care of a myriad of cultural terms and usages as well as colloquial language with minimal use of omission, revealing that she is well-aware of the proper methods to be used when translating culture. It is also recommended that the English translation of the book be investigated by other means in relation to Translation Studies.

Keywords: The Legend of the Thousand Bulls, translating culture, equivalence, cultural competence, borrowing.

Kültürel terminoloji çeviri kapsamında nasıl ele alınıyor? *Binboğalar Efsanesi*

Öz

Bu çalışma, kültürel terminolojinin Yaşar Kemal'in *Binboğalar Efsanesi* kitabının İngilizce çevirisindeki kültür çevirisine dayalı olarak Vinay ve Darbelnet (1977) tarafından ortaya konulan strateji ve prosedürlere ilişkin nasıl ele alındığını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu strateji ve prosedürler, doğrudan ve dolaylı çeviri olmak üzere ikiye ayrılır. Birebir çeviri kapsamında ödünçleme, öyküntü ve sözcüğü sözcüğüne çeviri mevcut iken dolaylı çeviri kapsamında biçim değiştirme, başkalaştırma (modülasyon), eşdeğerlik ve uyarlama bulunmaktadır. Hedef metnin ilk 37 sayfası, kitaptan elde edilen örnekler ışığında yukarıda bahsi geçen strateji ve prosedürlerin tümü açısından ele alınmak üzere dikkate alınmıştır. Çalışmanın bir sonucu olarak, kitabın çevirmeni olan Thilda Kemal'in bütün bu strateji ve prosedürleri uyguladığı görülmüştür. Bunun yanı sıra, çevirmenin dilsel ve kültürel yeteneğinin kitap kapsamındaki hemen hemen her kelimenin hedef okur tarafından anlaşılmasını sağladığı belirlenmiştir. Son olarak, çevirmenin asgari ölçüde içermeme

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stratejisini uygulayarak birçok kültürel terimi ve kullanımı ve de kullanım dilini dikkate aldığı ve böylelikle kültürü çevirirken kullanılması gereken uygun yöntemlerin gayet farkında olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Ayrıca kitabın İngilizce çevirisinin Çeviribilim ile ilintili diğer araçlar açısından da çözümlenmesi tavsiye edilmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Binboğalar Efsanesi, kültür çevirisi, eşdeğerlik, kültürel yetenek, ödüncleme.

Introduction

From the mid-20th century onwards, translating activity has undergone huge changes in terms of procedures and strategies carried out related to translations and the analysis of translations. In fact, Translation Studies (TS) which was coined by the Amsterdam-based American scholar James Holmes has experienced paradigm shifts with an attempt to dissociate from the swirl of Linguistics and Literary Studies. As emphasized by Edmond Cary (1959), during a Congress held in Moscow in 1958, the debate between linguistic and literary approaches to translation reached a point where it was proposed that the best thing might be to have a separate science that was able to study all forms of translation, without being wholly within Linguistics or wholly within Literary Studies. Subsequent developments in the field opened the doors slightly for TS in relation to breaking its shell heading towards being a separate field of science. To illustrate, the French scholars Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet (1977) carried out a contrastive comparison of French and English with offers of translation methods regarding how translated products should be compared. In the process of time, scholars including Eugene Nida (2000) with his *Toward a Science of Translating* and Catford (1965) with his theorization of translation from a linguistic perspective among others considerably contributed to the field of TS in its road to achieving its purpose. It was in 1990 when Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere (1990) argued that the study of the practice of translation had moved on from its formalist phase and was beginning to consider broader issues of context, history, and convention. They called this shift of emphasis “the cultural turn” in TS. All these paradigm shifts in TS led to an interdisciplinary approach in TS with specific touching on cultural issues.

Bearing in mind that translation is a type of communication, it can be suggested that it does not infer solely a linguistic one but also a cross-cultural communication. This is manifested in the comparisons of source and target texts, specifically of literary texts. For, “learning about cultures takes place in a process of a conscious, reflective comparison, comparing the *foreign* target culture to one's own culture, comparing behaviour and products of behaviour” (Schäffner, 2003; 94). In this sense, comparison can give insight into how and on what purpose a translated text is translated based on some factors such as the viewpoint of the translator, addressees, and cultural issues. “A comparison of source text and target text can serve as an exercise to identify translation decisions and reflect about their potential causes and effects” (ibid, 2003; 97).

This study shall take into consideration translation procedures and strategies suggested by Vinay and Darbelnet (1977) that are carried out in the Turkish author Yaşar Kemal's book *Binboğalar Efsanesi* written in 1971 and its English translation *The Legend of the Thousand Bulls* translated by Thilda Kemal in 1976 in relation to cultural translation. The main focus shall be on idioms, proverbs, culture-specific terms, colloquial language, and social language used within the book and their translations. For that purpose, I will first offer a brief sketch of literary works on comparisons of source and target texts based on cultural translation and theories related to it.

1. Literature review

The paradigm shift that emerged in TS regarding cultural translations brought with it many studies on the issue. Some of these studies mainly centred on procedures and strategies that may be used when analysing translations of texts in terms of cultural terms while in some others comparative analyses were conducted on how translations are made based on culture-specific terminology.

Considering theoretical issues, Eugene Nida (2000) touched upon differences in translations with particular attention to equivalence in translation in his paper *Principles of Correspondence* in The Translation Studies Reader edited by Lawrence Venuti. He divided equivalence into two categories as 'formal equivalence' and 'dynamic equivalence'. Vinay and Darbelnet (1977), in *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A methodology for translation*, offered some methods to be used in translations and presented some recommendations for translators. Peter Newmark (1988) attempted to define culture and its relationship with culture as well as the 'cultural gap' or 'distance' between the source and target languages in his book *A Textbook of Translation*. In her paper *Text types, Translation types and Translation assessment*, Katharina Reiss (1989) discussed the long tradition in TS to link translation to aspects of communication seeking to reveal the importance of the communicative function of translation based on a target-oriented approach. The functionalist theoretician Christina Schäffner (2003) addressed the source and target text function in different communicative contexts touching upon the different purposes of source and target texts and issues such as cultural barriers, the role of translator, and translator's competence in intercultural communication. On another study, Christiane Nord (2006) elaborated communicative purposes of translations in her study titled *Translating for Communicative Purposes across Cultural Boundaries*.

There also exist a plethora of comparative analysis or cultural translation-based studies. Ana Hernandez Guerrero (2012) studied the role and choice of translators based on cultural translations, while Anna Ginter (2002) focused on cultural issues in translation with a concentration on translating between cultures based on literary texts by Vladimir Nabokov as well as Helen Fielding and lyrics of songs presented in different language versions of the musical *Metro* and Kate James (2002) mentioned the problems faced by translators on how to treat the cultural aspects implicit in a source text and on finding the successful techniques when conveying these aspects in the target language. She analysed *Les Loukoums chez l'Arabe*, an extract from *La Première Gorgée de Bière et autres Plaisirs Minuscules* with a focus on the nature of the source text, the ideal source text, and the target text reader.

Specific to the object that is analysed in this paper, some Turkey-based studies have been done. One of these has been conducted by Betül Özcan Dost and Aslı Özlem Tarakcıoğlu (2015) related to the translation of material culture elements in Buket Uzuner's novel *Uzun Beyaz Bulutu-Gelibolu* based on foreignization and domestication strategies. In her doctoral thesis *Yashar Kemal's Narrator in English: Implied Translator Diverged Voice*, Ezgi Ceylan (2014) took into account English translations of Yaşar Kemal's novels *Binboğalar Efsanesi* and *Yılam Öldürseler* in terms of narration. In another study, Jale Gül Çoruk et. al. (2016) performed a study on difficulties in translations of cultural objects with a specific attention to the relationship between translation and culture based on writings related to the literary text *The Brothers Karamazov*.

2. Translation as intercultural communication

The translation is not an activity that is carried out for solely linguistic transfer but also for intercultural communication, which reveals that translators are to be given a crucial role to intermediate between cultures. However, it must be remembered that it is not an easily-performed task when considering the difficulty that is very likely to be experienced by translators themselves and that arises from cultural terminology. Again, as stated by Guerrero (2012), “translating realia or cultural terms, such as the types mentioned above, may cause many translation difficulties, but this does not mean that they cannot be translated”. The term untranslatability would be a matter of taking the easy way out in this sense. For, the antidote of the poison, which refers to the highly challenging task of translating cultures, is available out there. For that purpose, to overcome difficulties and to produce a successful translation of cultural terms, the translator’s role is of vital importance. The translator can have recourse several devices for solving the problem of bridging the gap across cultures, providing that s/he is culturally aware of those differences and can rely on various procedures, techniques or strategies to deal with such translation problems (Guerrero, 2012). Some scholars present such strategies and procedures related to translating cultures. According to Nida (2000), “differences in translations can generally be accounted for by three basic factors in translating: (1) the nature of the message, (2) the purpose or purposes of the author and, by proxy, of the translator, and (3) the type of audience”. Besides, he purports that there are fundamentally two different types of equivalence: formal and dynamic (ibid; 129). Formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content and in such a translation one is concerned with such correspondences as poetry to poetry, sentence to sentence, and concept to concept (ibid; 129); whereas, a translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of expression, and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture; it does not insist that he understand the cultural patterns of the source-language context in order to comprehend the message (ibid; 129).

Newmark (1988) expresses that “frequently where there is a cultural focus, there is a translation problem due to the cultural 'gap' or 'distance' between the source and target languages” and offers some categories for translating between cultures. The first of these categories is ecology which contains flora, fauna, winds, hills, etc. The second one is material culture including clothes, transport, houses and towns, and particularly food while the third one is comprised of social culture that refers to work and leisure. And finally, the fourth and the fifth ones point to organisations, customs, activities, procedures, and concepts including political and administrative, artistic, and religious ones, and gestures and habits including ‘cock a snook’, ‘spitting’, respectively.

Vinay and Darbelnet (1977; 31) stated that “generally speaking, translators can choose from two methods of translating, namely direct, or literal translation and oblique translation”. These are direct (literal) translation which includes borrowing, calque, and literal translation, and oblique translation which is formed of transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation.

3. Strategies and procedures

According to Guerrero (2012; 5), the procedures or strategies based on comparative stylistics (Vinay y Darbelnet, Malblanc, Intravaia and Scavée), also used by other scholars (Vázquez Ayora, Newmark, ...), or the techniques suggested by Bible translators (Nida, Nida and Taber, Margot), intended to propose a metalanguage and to catalogue possible solutions in the task of translation. She further suggests that such procedures have been sometimes criticized, among other reasons because there is even a lack of

consensus as to what name should be given to these categories (procedures, techniques, strategies or methods are often interrelated and used as synonyms) (ibid; 5-6). In fact, it is not possible to mention certain approaches that should be conducted when it comes to translating cultural terms and usages, specifically in literary works. Thus, the translator of a given text is the one who is responsible to produce the most appropriate translation that will intermediate between the source and target texts. Besides the obligation to have a good command of the target language, the translator should be acquainted with the culture and social language of the target receivers as it is a prerequisite to achieving his/her goal. “Translators require a (translation-specific) intercultural competence in order to enable communication between others, to ensure access to intercultural interaction” (Schäffner, 2003; 91). Now that there is a consensus on the fact that translators are mediators who are given the task of bridging the gaps across cultures, liabilities should be fulfilled. In this context, “if the professional task of a translator is defined as enabling communication between members of different cultures, this means that translators need to have a bicultural competence” (Schäffner, 2003, 91). Accordingly, Nida (2000; 128) pays attention to the importance of cultural knowledge of the translator by illustrating that “white as snow’ may be rendered as ‘white as egret feathers,’ if the people of the receptor language are not acquainted with snow but speak of anything very white by this phrase. Here, Nida emphasizes the purpose of the translator as one of the basic factors in translating.

What strategies and procedures should be performed depends on the decisions and choices of translators to a certain extent. Whether the message or the form or the equivalent effect will be prioritized in translating is something that is settled by the translator him/herself. “It is up to the translator to choose the most suitable way to render it in the TL, and for the TC, depending on the aim, the time available, the potential readers, etc. of the translation” (Guerrera, 2012). Strategies that will be conducted are in fact the constituents of the highly challenging task of translation. In this context, the main problem for the translator is how to comply with cultural issues, i.e. to decide which issues take priority such as the cultural aspects of the source language community, the cultural aspects of the target language community, or perhaps a combination of the two, and a compromise between two or more cultures? (Ginter, 2002).

Vinay and Darbelnet (1977; 42) offers documentation for translators as part of strategies to be used to overcome difficulties. They suggest that “they [translators] must be able to locate a text in its social environment and be informed about the current state of literature, science, politics, etc. of both language communities which are reflected in the texts they are asked to translate”. And “they also state that a translator’s work is never done, that it starts again with every new text, and that lack of direct and regular contact with the countries of the two languages can lead to serious misinterpretations and inappropriate TL expressions” (ibid; 42).

Apart from the decisions and choices of translators in translating cultures, some other factors come to the fore. It may be thought that two geographically close countries with similar language structures shall not bring about a problem when it comes to translating cultural terms; nevertheless, that is not the case at all. Imagine the Turkish and Azerbaijani languages and the proximity between the two countries both geographically and linguistically. One would surely have the idea that translating between these languages and cultures would possibly not pose a problem with a smooth process of translation. Though both languages are within the Turkic group of languages genealogically, there exist problems when translating a text from one of them to the other. As stated by Sedat Adıgüzel (2012; 55), though a number of lexis in Turkish and Azerbaijani are same in terms of spelling and pronunciation, they bear different meanings in dialects. To illustrate, the word “ata” meaning “ancestor” in Turkish takes on the meaning

of “father” in Azerbaijani, or the word “baba” meaning “father” in Turkish is used as “grandfather” in Azerbaijani (ibid; 55). There are numerous examples of this type of differences, which should be born in mind by the translator of a literary text that includes a myriad of cultural connotations. Nord (2006) suggest that even in neighbouring cultures with closely related language structures (like, for example, Dutch and German, or Spanish and Portuguese), culture-specific usage norms and behaviour conventions account for divergent expressions of communicative intentions, which may then be interpreted as markers of different functions by the target audience.

In this study, strategies and procedures put forward by Vinay and Darbelnet (1977) shall be taken as a basis for the analysis of translations of cultural elements within the book *The Legend of Thousand Bulls*. The main approaches that will be handled are direct (or literal) and oblique translations. I will first describe the approaches as part of direct translation and then those of oblique translation.

3.1. Direct translation

As is evident from its name, direct translation refers to a literal translation that takes into account lexical equivalence between the source and the target text. Regarding direct translation, Vinay and Darbelnet (1977; 31) points out that

“In some translation tasks it may be possible to transpose the source language message element by element into the target language, because it is based on either (i) parallel categories, in which case we can speak of structural parallelism, or (ii) on parallel concepts, which are the result of metalinguistic parallelisms.”

In this sense, two points can be mentioned related to a direct translation: a similarity between two languages related to linguistic structures and metalinguistic structures that may include specific concepts. As these similarities still pose a problem and make a gap in relation to intercultural communication, strategies and procedures to be used as part of direct translation should be drawn upon. These are borrowing, calque, and literal translation (ibid). “To overcome a lacuna, usually a metalinguistic one (e.g. a new technical process, an unknown concept), borrowing is the simplest of all translation methods” (ibid; 31). To set an example, such words as ‘radio’, ‘television’, ‘euro’, and ‘vodka’ from different languages are borrowed, and as stated by Vinay and Darbelnet (1977; 31-32), this is done to introduce the flavour of the SL culture into a translation. “One of the most easily observable results of intercultural contact and communication is the set of loanwords that is imported into the vocabulary of each language involved” (Hoffer, 2005; 53). Nearly all languages have an exchange of loanwords where there is a necessity for importing a cultural reference. There are many simple cases of culturally motivated borrowing where a cultural importation is accompanied by a lexical importation in a straightforward way, e.g. Quechua borrowing plata ‘money’ from Spanish, or English borrowing kosher from Yiddish (Haspelmath, 2009).

Yet, borrowing is not the only way of importing a loanword from another language. Calque is one of the strategies used as part of direct translation which, according to Vinay and Darbelnet (1977; 32), is a special kind of borrowing whereby a language borrows an expression form of another but then translates literally each of its elements. It occurs in two different forms: i. a lexical calque which respects the syntactic structure of the TL, whilst introducing a new mode of expression, e.g.: English-French calque Compliments of the Season!: Compliments de la saison!; or ii. a structural calque which introduces a new construction into the language, Science-fiction : Science-fiction (ibid; 32). Haspelmath (2009; 39) defines calque (or loan translation) as a complex lexical unit (either a single word or a fixed phrasal

expression) that was created by an item-by-item translation of the (complex) source unit giving examples such as German herunter-laden (calqued from English down-load), French presque île (calqued from Latin paen-insula ‘almost-island’), or English loan-word (calqued from German Lehn-wort). He adds that calques may also be morphological derivatives, such as Czech diva-dlo ‘theatre’ (calqued from Greek thea-tron (look-PLACE)), or Italian marcat-ezza (calqued from English marked-ness) and that calques may be fixed phrasal expressions, such as English marriage of convenience (calqued from French mariage de convenance) (ibid; 39).

Another form of direct translation is a literal translation that is also known as word-by-word. It occurs when a SL word or phrase is translated into a TL word or phrase, without worrying about style, but adapting the text to the TL syntactic rules, with minimal adjustments, so that it sounds both correct and idiomatic (word order, functional words, etc.) (ibid; 48) and is the direct transfer of a SL text into a grammatically and idiomatically appropriate TL text in which the translators’ task is limited to observing the adherence to the linguistic servitudes of the TL (ibid; 48). It is usually preferred when a translation is carried out between two languages that belong to the same language family and share common cultural usages and terms (cf. Vinay and Darbelnet, 1977). Newmark (1988; 68-69) states that “literal translation is correct and must not be avoided if it secures referential and pragmatic equivalence to the original”. He does not rule out the function and applicability of literal translation thinking that referential and pragmatic usages should be translated using this strategy, and he defies the notion that “the prevailing orthodoxy is leading to the rejection of literal translation as a legitimate translation procedure” (ibid; 68) with an attempt to reveal that not all translations are possible without a literal translation.

3.2. Oblique translation

Vinay and Darbelnet (1977; 31) attempt to describe oblique translation as follows:

“Because of structural or metalinguistic differences, certain stylistic effects cannot be transposed into the TL without upsetting the syntactic order, or even the lexis. In this case, it is understood that more complex methods have to be used which at first may look unusual but which nevertheless can permit translators a strict control over the reliability of their work: these procedures are called oblique translation methods.”

They assert that if, after trying direct translation procedures, translators regard a literal translation unacceptable, they must turn to the methods of oblique translation, and here, by unacceptable they mean that the message, when translated literally

- i. gives another meaning, or
- ii. has no meaning, or
- iii. is structurally impossible, or
- iv. does not have a corresponding expression within the metalinguistic experience of the TL, or
- v. has a corresponding expression, but not within the same register. (ibid; 34-35)

It is obvious that a literary work will contain a plethora of cultural terms and usages that shall require a translation in which different procedures should be used to maintain the successful transference of the message, form or stylistic features of the source text. Thus, the oblique translation should be performed to render the message hidden in the source text to the target text with a conscientious performance of translating.

One of the methods used in oblique translation is transposition, which “involves replacing one word class with another without changing the meaning of the message” (ibid; 36). From a stylistic point of view, the base and the transposed expression do not necessarily have the same value, so translators must choose to carry out a transposition if the translation thus obtained fits better into the utterance, or allows a particular nuance of style to be retained (ibid; 36). Supposing that a literary text contains an utterance in Turkish as “Seni gördüğümde çok heyecanlanıyorum”, which means “I get excited when I see you”, is transposed as Turkish is an agglutinative language and thus requires the use of adverbial clauses affixed to the final of the word/verb. Or sometimes it is not possible to transform a verb into a gerundial in English, i.e. ‘go’ for ‘his going’, which is wrong. However, in Turkish every single verb can be transformed into a gerundial solely by adding a possessive pronoun, i.e. ‘Onun eve erken gidişi üzüyor (That he goes home early is saddening), where ‘gidişi’ can be rendered as ‘his going’ (literal translation) in Turkish though it is rendered through noun clause in English.

Modulation, as another method of oblique translation, is a variation of the form of the message, obtained by a change in the point of view. This change can be justified when, although a literal, or even transposed, translation results in a grammatically correct utterance, it is considered unsuitable, unidiomatic or awkward in the TL (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1977; 36). It is a method that should be carried out in translations between Turkish and English as the two languages are highly different from each other. For example, a sentence in Turkish as “Asla erken kalkmam” which means “I never wake up early”. In this sentence, “Asla” means “never” and as “never” takes away the possibility of using a further negative usage grammatically in English, the negation particle used in Turkish (-ma) is not used in the English version.

Equivalence is one of the crucial methods of translation. Vinay and Darblenet (1977; 38) purports that most equivalences are fixed, and belong to a phraseological repertoire of idioms, clichés, proverbs, nominal or adjectival phrases, etc. In general, proverbs are perfect examples of equivalences, e.g.: Il pleut à seaux/ des cordes. : It is raining cats and dogs. Nida (2000) introduces formal and dynamic equivalence. The former focuses the attention on the message while the latter aims at a complete naturalness of expression. Nida (2000; 129) exemplifies formal equivalence by stating that phrase such as “holy kiss” (Romans 16:16) in a gloss translation would be rendered literally, and would probably be supplemented with a footnote explaining that this was a customary method of greeting in New Testament times. And he illustrates dynamic equivalence with the same example stating that J.B.Phillips’ rendering of the New Testament seeks for equivalent effect and in Romans 16:16 he quite naturally translates “greet one another with a holy kiss” as “give one another a hearty handshake all around” (ibid; 130).

The last method that is included in oblique translation is adaptation, which according to Vinay and Darbelnet (1977; 39) is used in those cases where the type of situation being referred to by the SL message is unknown in the TL culture. They further suggest that in such cases translators have to create a new situation that can be considered as being equivalent and thus adaptation can be described as a special kind of equivalence, a situational equivalence (ibid; 39). Adaptation is a method that is frequently used when rendering book and film titles (cf. Vinay and Darbelnet, 1977). For example, the movie “Mission Impossible” is rendered into Turkish as “Görevimiz Tehlike”, which literally means “Our mission is danger”, which is not preferred in case of film titles.

4. Analysis

This section of the paper shall give examples of all seven methods of translation used in the translation of *Binboğalar Efsanesi*. While doing so, the first 37 pages of the translated version of the book are taken into consideration to illustrate the usage of abovementioned methods as the analysis of the whole book, which covers 288 pages, would require further investigation and space, leading to a deviation from the main purpose of the paper. Examples shall be presented with the whole sentence in which the relevant methods are used with underlined or bold words or phrases that are considered to have been used in relation to the relevant methods. Besides, where necessary, interpretations of examples shall be provided along with possible reasons for using the relevant method. In some examples, only the target text shall be presented without making use of the source text.

Example 1: Borrowing

“Since time out of mind this valley has been the summer pasture of the wandering Turcomans, the **Yörüks** and the nomads of the Aydinli tribe.” (Kemal, 1976; 5)

“Yörük” is a word that refers to nomads in English and derives from the verb –yürü (yürümek in infinitive) meaning “to walk” with the word *yörük* or *yürük* designating “those who walk on the hindlegs, walkers” (TDK, 2009). In the example above, Thilda Kemal does not change the word and retains it as in the original form not to give rise to misunderstanding though it is also possible to make use of the word “nomad”. For, it is one of the essential and frequent words that are used in the book.

Example 2: Borrowing

“He wore nut-brown **shalvar**-trousers of homespun wool and a waistcoat cut from an old silver-embroidered jacket or **aba**.” (Kemal, 1976; 5)

“Shalvar” refers to a kind of trousers that are worn by a plethora of people in the Middle East and Turkey. It is a kind of cultural garment which is still preferred by some communities in Turkey, specifically by those living in the southern region. Shalvar, a word of Persian origin, also known as Punjabi pants and, in some contexts, as (a subtype of) Harem pants, is a form of baggy trousers predating the Christian era (Persian-English Dictionary, n.d.). And, the word “aba” is of Arabic origin, which refers to a coarse woollen cloth that is woven from goat or camel. The translator presents the word as is since it is used in its original context. That is to say, it is used by those who weave it from goats or camels as shown in the book.

Example 3: Borrowing

“And the feast began. Flowers were strewn over the orange metal-cloths, beside the **yufka**-bread. Fragrant **yogurts** and **ayrans** ... Whole roasted-sheep and goats, lambs, and kids on large copper platters ... Piles and piles of rice-**pilaff** ...” (Kemal, 1976; 11).

Example 4: Borrowing

“It was an ancient long-forgotten whirling **semah** they were playing, that nobody would have known how to dance to now, for the leading **saz**-player was the centenarian **sheikh**, ..” (Kemal, 1976; 11)

Example 5: Borrowing

“Our deliverers the Twelve **Imams** ...” (Kemal, 1976; 12)

Example 6: Borrowing

“They flock to high places, roofs, **minarets**, hilltops or mountain peaks, so they can better catch a glimpse of the two stars joining together.” (Kemal, 1976; 15)

Examples 3-6 highlight the use of borrowing method in different forms and with different words. While the words “yogurts, pilaff, sheikh, and minarets” are borrowed with slight differences of writing, the words “yufka, ayrans, saz, and imams” are rendered in their original forms. All these words are either of Turkish or Arabic origins and have been accepted universally though it is possible to find an equivalent word or word group that may refer to most of them. Therefore, the translator prefers to make use of them in these forms to create naturalness. In some cases, she renders the words through an additional word that would remind the word, e.g. rice-pilaff.

Example 7: Calque

“May our offering **find grace** ...” (Kemal, 1976; 12)

As shown in Example 7, the phrase “find grace” refers to the phrase in the source text as “Hızmatın kabul, yüzün ak olsun”, in which “hızmat” refers to “service”. Here, the translator renders a cultural usage through calque by rendering “hızmatın kabul olsun” by means of “find grace”.

Example 8: Calque

“May the Twelve Imams and **Selman the Pure safeguard** ...” (Kemal, 1976; 12)

The noun phrase underlined in Example 8 is the form of a calque of the noun phrase in the source text which is “Selman Pakın himmeti” in original. “Selman” is the name that is used as is while “the Pure” refers to the word “Pak” and “safeguard” refers to “himmet”. Though it is not or has not become a universal usage, it can be said that such a usage implies a calque in this context.

Example 9: Literal translation

Source Text: “Ne olur Haydar Usta ... Bir seferlik bir seferlik de bizim için iste. Sen obanın en yaşlısı, babası değil misin? Bir yıl, bir bu yıl bizim isteğimizi yap, ondan sonra ne istersen yap. Allahın yılı mı yok Haydar Usta? Nolursun Haydar Usta? Gözüm Haydar Usta. Bak, bir obanın çoluğu çocuğu, yaşlısı genci senin ağzının içine bakıyorlar. Ne dersin Ustam?”

Target Text: “Please, Haydar, Master. Just this once ... Wish for us just this time. Aren’t you the oldest of the tribe, the father of us all? Do this for us this year, just this one year and then you can do what you like. All God’s years, what are they for, eh? Come, Haydar, Master ... Dear Haydar ... Look, a whole tribe, young and old, everyone is hanging on your lips. Come, what do you say, Master?” (Kemal, 1976; 9)

As it is seen in Example 9, almost the whole speech is translated literally. The style, collocations, word usages, and punctuations are almost the same throughout the paragraph.

Example 10: Transposition

Source Text: “**Mustan’ın kafası çok kızmıştı**. Tam evinin eşiğinde Osman Ağa’nın oğlu Fahri’yi öldürdü.” (Kemal, 1976; 32)

Target Text: “**Beside himself with rage**, Mustan had killed Osman Agha’s son Fahri on the threshold of his house.”

The example above makes it clear that transposition is carried out in the first sentence. While “kafası kızmak – infinitive form) means “flying into a temper”, which also means “to rage” as shown in Example 10, the verb form of the word is transposed into a noun along with a preposition (beside) although the source text includes a verb phrase.

Example 11: Transposition

Source Text: “İşte görüyorsun halimi. Hiçbir şey söylemeye hacet yok. Bu gece yıldızını göremezsem...Bu gece bu su şu kayada donup kalmzasa, benim sonumu artık biliyorsun.”

Target Text: “You can see for yourself what a mess I’m in. if I don’t see your star tonight... If the water here doesn’t freeze over this rock, then it’s all up with me and you know it.” (Kemal, 1976; 33)

The first part of source text shown in Example 11 includes a verb phrase formed of a preposition, verb and noun and is a colloquial type of speech that is used in Turkish to show one’s condition (see above: hal(imi)). As there is no way to render the relevant word into English in its present form, the translator makes use of transposition to render it in a correct sense by transposing a noun into a noun phrase. And the second part of the final sentence of the source text contains a noun (son(umu)), which means “end” in English. Using a colloquial adjective form (all up), which means “at or very near an end (Merriam-Webster, 2019), the translator translates the relevant noun into English through transposition.

Example 12: Modulation

Source Text: “Yörükleri ne bu kışlıktan, ne bu yaylaktan kolay kolay ayıramazsın, ölürlür.”

Target Text: “**Take** the Yörüks away from their pastures or their winter quarters **and** they would die.” (Kemal, 1976; 5)

The source text in the example above is a pure Turkish usage that requires a good command of language knowledge. As stated by Vinay and Darbelnet (1977; 37), “we distinguish between free or optional modulations and those that are fixed or obligatory”. The modulation that should be performed in this sense is the fixed one as it is exclusive to a specific language and thus should be modulated in a manner to make it understandable for the target readers. The translator, therefore, changes the sentence structure by using the imperative mood in English and inflects the Turkish sentence which is given in a tone that makes the reader feel for the Yörüks living in their own place is a necessity and they should not be offered to do the opposite. It seems that the translator has taken into account the grammatical fact of both languages and thus prefers to modulate the sentence. In fact, this requires expertise. For, in the case of fixed modulation, translators with a good knowledge of both languages freely use this method, as they will be aware of the frequency of use, the overall acceptance, and the confirmation provided by a dictionary or grammar of the preferred expression (ibid; 37).

Example 12: Modulation

Source Text: “Bu gece onu göreceğim, hiç bir çaresi mümkünatı yok. Varıp huzura yüz süreceğim. Hiçbir çaresi mümkünatı yok. Padişahlar için yaptığım kılıcı ona vereceğim, Hiçbir mümkünatı çaresi yok.”

Target Text: “**I know**. I’ll see him tonight. **I know! I’m sure**. I shall be able to honour him face to face. I’ll give him the sword I’m making, a sword fit for the kings. **Yes, I’m sure. Sure!**.” (Kemal, 1976; 6)

The example above evinces that a free modulation is manifested here. It can be said that the result of a free modulation should lead to a solution that makes the reader exclaim, “Yes, that’s exactly what you would say” (Vinay and Darbelnet; 1977; 37). The translator first interprets the source text and transfers what has been understood by him or her. Thereafter, s/he translates the text in a way to have the target readers say “I am convinced”. The example above possesses such a character when it comes to a free modulation. While the source text includes the phrase “Hiçbir mümkünatı yok”, meaning that “there is no way or chance”, the translator changes the tone of the speech with a positive but an emphatic tone through “I know, I’m sure” to naturalize the expression.

Example 13: Equivalence

Source Text: “Ulan ne biliyorsunuz?”

Target Text: “How do you know, **for heaven’s sake?**” (Kemal, 1976; 10)

Every language has its own specific exclamations and colloquial speeches. The example above embodies the word “Ulan”, which is a noun that does not have a proper meaning but refers to a coarse exclamation that is frequently used by Turks. Yet, depending on the context, it may bear a favourable or unfavourable meaning and sometimes, the semantic implication of this word depends on the relationship between the sender and the receiver. In the source text, it implies a harsh tone of voice and shows the incredulity of the sender of the message. For this reason, the translator renders it with an equivalent translation and effect to reveal its naturalness through the word “for heaven’s sake” which shows an annoyance.

Example 14: Equivalence

Source Text: “Himmetin hazır olsun,” dedi Dede, ayrıldılar.”

Target Text: “Go with my blessing,” Koyun Dede said, and they each went their way.” (Kemal, 1976; 14)

The source text included in the example 14 reveals that the speaker of the utterance conveys a type of greeting which refers to making a wish in Turkish. As regards the target text, the translator chooses an idiom that goes along with each other. The phrases that correspond to each other in both texts show that equivalence has been accomplished by the translator through an already available in the target language. Vinay and Darbelnet (1977; 38) claims that “the method of creating equivalences is also frequently applied to idioms; for example, “To talk through one’s hat” and “as like as two peas” cannot be translated by means of a calque”, thus it is believed that equivalence could be sought through proper usage of phrases that are considered to be meaningful and compensatory.

Example 15: Adaptation

Source Text: “Şimdiye kadar her candarma görüşünde eli ayağı kesilirdi. Şimdi hiç korkmuyor, ölümü hiç düşünmüyordu.”

Target Text: “Up to now, the mere sight of policeman would be enough to make him go limp all over. Now he felt no fear at all and the thought of death never crossed his mind.” (Kemal, 1976; 32)

It should be noted that not every culture or community has the same perceptions and images or realities. Something named by an American can turn out to be different in England, e.g. trousers in British English turn into pants in American English. Thus, the translators are well-aware of this fact when they render such cultural images. The example above illustrates such usage. Though in Turkey, especially, in villages the security is provided by the Gendarme (military police), in England policemen are in charge of the security in villages. In this context, the translator adapts the situation by using the word “police” in order to show that the word in the source text should be understood in this way.

Conclusion

This study was intended to reveal the strategies and procedures used in the translation of Yaşar Kemal’s legendary book *Binboğalar Efsanesi*, which was translated by Thilda Kemal in 1976. Thilda Kemal was Yaşar Kemal’s wife before she died and had a good command of Turkish and English as she lived in Turkey for a long time. Besides, as she was a part of the community which had similarities to that narrated in the relevant book, she was expected to create a successful work of art. Chosen from this point forth, the book was analysed in relation to strategies and procedures suggested by Vinay and Darbelnet (1977) based on the translation of cultural terms and images. Comparing the source and the target text of a literary work will surely give an insight into how cultural terminology is handled, especially in translations between two languages that are highly different from each other, e.g. Turkish- English.

Accordingly, if the book which is translated embodies a story that belongs to a specific community in a given time, further investigation is required to reason out how cultural terminology is approached.

It is highly hard to take care of a literary work like the one written by the legendary author Yaşar Kemal though the translator of the book Thilda Kemal should be given credit for her outstanding piece of art with her victorious touches when translating the relevant book. In this context, as a result of the analysis based on the strategies and procedures including direct and oblique translation which are comprised of borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation, it was found that the translations of cultural terms and images were carried out taking into consideration all these methods. Though it can be said that the calque and adaptation methods were those that were used the least, it is still a fact that the translator benefited from all of them in one way or the other.

What is surprising is that Thilda Kemal seems to have exerted herself to the utmost to render every single piece of the word written in the book with minimum omission. This fact reveals that she has the required competence of language and culture that allows a translator to deal with such a challenging task.

Finally, it is sure that untranslatability shall be discussed forever by some scholars based on assumptions. Yet, it should be borne in mind that whether languages are distinctive or far from each other linguistically, stylistically, or by other means, there exists an equivalent effect that can be sought and provided. The results of this study show us parallelism with this fact.

It is also recommended that the source and the target text of this book can be investigated thoroughly as this study was limited to solely the first 37 pages of the target text and that studies based on other parameters can be conducted to reveal how other issues are handled in the book.

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