**Research Title:**

**Proverbs Translation Difficulties**

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**Supervisor:**

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**Acknowledgment**

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Abstract

The translation of proverbs from a source language to a target language is not an easy process. For, the translator should be acquainted with the culture of both the source language SL and the target language. This type of translation may be listed among the most difficult processes of translation, and it requires experience, technics, and deep diving in the study of culture of both the source and target languages. The researcher states that English proverbs together with all European proverbs stem all from Latin, Greek, and roman cultures, and from the teachings of the Bible. Thus the translation of proverbs between the European languages seems rather less difficult than the translation to or from Arabic language due to the difference in family language and culture. The main objective of the researcher is to perform an ideal translation of proverbs from the source language to the target language. One of the most distinct solutions and technics suggested by the researcher is to search for proverb equivalent in the target language.

**Tools and Methodology**

The tools used in this study are texts and terms represented by proverbs in both the source and target language. Based on the nature of the current study, the researcher used the descriptive method to describe the difficulties encountered by the translator in translating proverbs from Arabic to English and vice versa.

Introduction

The job of translation is not as easy as it sounds. The translator encounters lots of difficulties while performing the translation process. There are many types of translations, one of which is the translation of proverbs from the source language ST to the target language TL. This type of translation is perhaps the most difficult because a deep dive in the study of both the source language culture and target language culture is a prerequisite requirement to create an ideal translation of proverbs and idioms. Starting by the research main question: What are the difficulties encountered by the translator in translating proverbs from Arabic to English, and vice versa, the researcher would like first to describe the source from which stem such difficulties. Thus, a detailed description of the difference in family language, culture sources, religious beliefs, etc. have been determined by the researcher. Meanwhile, the researcher suggested some technics as means to surpass such difficulties to create an ideal translation of proverbs from Arabic to English and vice versa.

Based on the nature of the study, the researcher adopted the descriptive method with the use of texts and terms as tools for the current study.

Literature Review

The current study represents the reply to the research main question: "What are the difficulties encountered by the translator in translating proverbs from Arabic to English, and vice versa?, which reflects the researcher's main question and sub-questions. For that reason it is used the descriptive approach with the use of "terms" and "texts" as tools for this study.

English as in international language hold lots of proverbs representing an Anglo culture of a Latin, Greek and roman source. Wolfgang stated that "Hundreds of diachronic and comparative proverb collections and investigations have shown that there were basically three major sources and waves of dissemination of those proverbs and proverbial expressions that belong to the common and identical European stock" ***(Wolfgang, M., 2014, p.15)***. Therefore, the translation of proverbs between the European languages is much easier in comparison to the translation of a European country proverbs such as English proverbs to Arabic language that is different in language family, cultural and religious sources. Despite the differences between Arabic and English proverbs, which denote a challenging aspect of translation, the researcher suggests to find similar ready used proverbs in both the source language and the target language with a deep dive in studying the culture of both the source and target languages. On the hand, the researcher states that Arabic provers and English probers have different cultural backgrounds as stated by **G. Rex** "It is suggested that English proverbs tend to concentrate on friendship, love, criticizing women, contentment, patience, acceptance of fate, etc. while Arab proverbs reflect virtues and ideals of desert life ( generosity, magnanimity, courage, loyalty, protecting the honor of women). ***(G. Rex, 1967, p.40-42)***. As a result, such translation is a challenging aspect which requires technics, diving in the study of both cultures.

**Key Terms:**

A proverb is defined variously as a "short pithy saying in general use" (Flower and Fowler, 1960:967), "a crystalized summary of popular wisdom or fancy" (Wilson, 1980:vii), or "a test didactic statement" (Freyha, 1974, ix).

***(G. Rex, 1967, p.39)***

Significance of Research:

This study stands for a cross-cultural significance between nations. The translation of proverbs from one language to another contributes in nations culture share at the international level. The importance of study stems also from the need to show the particular difficulties encountered by the translator when translating proverbs from the source language to the target language. First of all the researcher describes the types of difficulties related to the translation of proverbs. Once, such types of difficulties are determined, the researcher suggests relating solutions and technics to surpass such difficulties. Consequently, this study connotes an important national and international significance.

Research Questions:

The current study is based on the following main-question:

* What are the difficulties encountered by the translator in translating proverbs from Arabic to English, and vice versa?

This main question is subdivided into the following sub-questions:

* What is the influence of structural sequence of proverbs in translation?
* What does the translator care for in translating proverbs, the translation of meanings contained in the proverb in its original text, or does he care for the structural word to word translation?
* Does the grammatical translation have any significant role when translating proverbs from the source language to the target language?
* How does a translator create an ideal translation of proverbs from one language to another?
* Does the difference in language family have an influence in translating proverbs?

Research Methodology:

Throughout the current study and based on the nature of study, the researcher adopted the descriptive method because it is an appropriate approach. The researcher described the type of difficulties encountered by the translator of proverbs from the source language to the target language, using texts and proverbs terms as tools. The researcher describes how the proverb loses partially its power when transferred to another language by the means of translation. Therefore, the methodology adopted by the researcher played a fundamental role in conveying the researcher's viewpoint about the translation of proverbs from one language to another and from one civilization to another.

**Limitations of the study**

This study is limited in only stating the difficulties encountered by the translator in translating proverbs from the source language SL to the target language TL. (Arabic/ English), and to suggest related solutions and techniques to surpass such difficulties and create an ideal translation of proverbs.

**Objectives of the study**

* Determination of difficulties encountered by the translator in translating proverbs from Arabic to English, and vice versa.
* To determine whether the structural sequence of proverbs have an influence in translation.
* To determine whether the translator, in translation, cares for the meanings contained in the proverb in its original text, or the structural word to word translation.
* To determine whether the grammatical translation has any significant role when translating proverbs from the source language to the target language.
* To show how a translator creates an ideal translation of proverbs from one language to another.
* To determine whether the difference in language family has an influence in translating proverbs

Theoretical background:

**Sources of European Proverbs**

It is quite difficult to trace the origin and history of a proverb in a particular language. Such studies very quickly take on major proportions, and they get very involved if the proverb under investigation proves to go back to medieval times or even further to classical antiquity. Any bilingual speaker or translator will have noticed that there exist two types of proverbs. On the one hand, there are those proverbs that have the same meaning but different structures, vocabulary, and metaphors, and they consequently have different origins in their respective languages. Whoever wants to translate those texts would have to know the quite different equivalent in the target language or find it in a dictionary. Regional proverbs becomes especially difficult translation problems, since possible equivalents are often missing from dictionaries that tend to include only the more common proverbs.

There is then no doubt that a considerable corps of common European proverbs can be traced back to classical times. Since they were loan translated from the same sources, they exist in the many languages of Europe in identical forms. Little wonder then that Gyula Paczola was able to find exact equivalents of the classical proverb "Where there is smoke, there is fire" in 54 European languages. A few other very popular proverbs from classical times that are still very much in use today in Europe and elsewhere are: "Barking dogs do not bite" (51 European languages), "one swallow does not make s summer" (49).

A second source of proverbs for the entire European continent and beyond is the Bible, whose proverbs date back to classical antiquity and early wisdom literature. As a widely translated book, the Bible had a major influence on the distribution of common provers.

The third source for European common proverbs is Medieval Latin. It must not be forgotten that the Latin Language of the Middle Ages had the status of a lingua franca, and as such it developed new proverbs that cannot be traced to classical times.

The fourth source for common European proverbs reverses the historical move of proverbs from Europe to the United States. They are texts that have been disseminated since the middle of the twentieth century throughout Europe by means of the mass media.

***(Wolfgang, 2004, p. 10-13)***

**Types of Difficulties of Proverbs translation**

Some proverbs are poetic and so preferred in its poetic impact –they are by nature aphorism in their originals where they are usually shorter and nevertheless keep their pungency. For poems or poetic texts, the factor of sound or melody, especially rhymes or rhythms are vital. In translation, you either translate meaning for the speakers of target language, usually known as language "B" usually known as language "B" or you translate words for words if your concern is the grammatical component of the language of origin, called language "A". Now it is very difficult to translate proverbs by getting equivalent meanings of words or sentences of language "A" (source language) into language "B" (Target language) in another language especially for a target language that is based in a completely different environment. Many of the proverbs, upon translation, may lose substantial parts of their meanings and certainly their poetry and pungency. What I often do is to explain first the environmental or cultural background of the original proverbs before the translation or before I speak.

Almost all original proverbs are shorter than their translation.

Lawrence, 2010, p.34

**The Status of Proverbs in Arabic and English**

From the foregoing it is clear that proverbs occupy an elevated status in Arabic and that this pre-eminence has deep roots in Arabic culture. Al-Fahuri comments: The Arabs, like other Eastern and specifically Semitic peoples were strong disposed to transmitting wise sayings (Hikam) and coining proverbs. They gave utterance to them in all situations, using them to support their speech and to explain their actions. (1980:10).

Proverbs, as a principle vehicle (along with Hikam) for transmission of the heritage of their ancestors, are a source of intense pride for the Arabs reflecting the distilled wisdom of generations in the heartland of Arabia and representing, with their brevity and richness of meaning, the purest form Kalam (or scholarly speech). In addition, proverbs of the Quran and the Hadith of the prophet Muhammad having become proverbial.

It is claimed that classical Arabic contained more than five thousand proverbs from which popular proverbs in Arab countries are derived (al-Gaylani in al-Humaydi,I:31).

Proverbs are virtually a universal feature of human culture and it is axiomatic that the proverb inventories of different societies often reflect the shared experience of mankind in confronting the vicissitudes of life. It is quite possible to find congruence between English and Arabic proverbs.

 It is suggested that English proverbs tend to concentrate on friendship, love, criticizing women, contentment, patience, acceptance of fate, etc. while Arab proverbs reflect virtues and ideals of desert life (generosity, magnanimity, courage, loyalty, protecting the honor of women). In truth, this kind of generalization is untenable; however, it is noticeable that, in Arab culture, abstract qualities are personalized to a greater extent (reflecting, perhaps, an Arab preoccupation with an awareness of their own history and culture). ***(G. Rex, 1967, p.40-42)***

Conclusion:

Proverbs in every nation represent cultural, religious and social backgrounds, which may complicate the process of translation. Thus, to perform an ideal translation, a literal translation would the only solution. As a result of this study, the researcher stated that it would a good solution to look for equivalents in the target language, i.e., a proverb used in English may already used in Arabic with a different structure and use in the Arabic cultures. Thus instead of translating a proverb from language to another, we simply try to find an equivalent use of such proverb in the target langue. On the other hand, the researcher highlighted the study of culture of both the source and target languages to easily facilitate the task of the translation of proverbs

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