

Translation as a Reconstructing Factor of Public Relations

Younes Aich 

Associate Professor, Chouaib Eddoukkali University, Department of English, El Jadida, Morocco

✉ **Corresponding Author:** Younes Aich, **E-mail:** younesaich8888@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Received: July 11, 2021

Accepted: August 20, 2021

Volume: 4

Issue: 8

DOI: 10.32996/ijllt.2021.4.8.12

KEYWORDS

Public relations, intercultural communication, translation

ABSTRACT

Translation is very important to create an effective cultural exchange since it substantiates the concept of intercultural communication. Given that the source text is the embodiment of the cultural aspects of a given society or nation, the author makes use of his/her mother tongue to communicate his/her ideas about how he/she perceives his community with his/her readers. Thus, the source text mirrors particular aspects of a given culture and portrays how people of a certain community live and interact. Seen from this perspective, translation is definitively considered as a reconstructing factor of public relations as it draws attention to how linguistic systems operate within social structures and the extent to which cultural patterns prescribe rigid rules on language. The interconnectedness of language and culture is at the heart of public relations, for it determines the nature of relations that circulate within a social structure. Translation, in this sense, deals with the different linguistic and cultural aspects that make up a given social structure in an attempt to come up with an informative conclusion about the communicative patterns that characterize certain nations or communities.

Cultural translation is practically employed to reconstruct public relations and promote cultural co-existence among people from different cultural regions. Translation is very important, in a sense, as it bridges the gap between people from different regions or cultures; people who belong to a different culture may have different ideas about others and may find it difficult to communicate with the world. In this regard, the role of the translator is vital as he/she diminishes stereotypes and consolidates understanding and connections throughout the globe.

The importance of cultural context in translation enriches the idea of cross-cultural communication and enlarges the horizons of understanding between cultures. Translators know that cultural differences are part of human nature; every human group is different and unique regarding the ecological, historical and economic experiences that characterize it. Hence, translators' cultural competence enables them to examine the emotive nature of language mainly that the meaningfulness of any linguistic system stems from the unquestionable links that language users weave with their entourage. Given that these links are purely subjective and changeable due to their social nature, the significance of expressions differs regarding the particularities of social interaction.

Translators are invited to confirm their awareness of these relations and experiences that make up the cultural platform of people through studying such human experiences and struggling to decipher the differences and similarities that are encoded in the human experience as a whole.

Though human experiences are purely unique, they play a prominent role in constructing cultures within different regions. Thus, cultures are not similar in their construction process; however, one culture is likely to be produced by a variety of subcultures. People from a given region contribute to creating their own culture by their daily contact, which renews and recreates itself

linguistically and socially. The historical evolution of language, in this respect, is crucial for translators to understand the mechanisms of public relations in a given social group. Language is the homeland of speakers simply because it is where the thinking methods are founded, like how people voice out their emotions and visualize public contact and social hierarchy. Language evolution throughout history enhances profound modifications concerning how speakers use the language to interact and react to a large number of issues within a specific social context. Hence, it is possible to note that languages are very important in how to perceive the world as they shape the thinking automatism of language users and dictate the nature of processes to go through in order to produce culturally appropriate expressions. On this basis, language is a channel whereby the cultural elements of society are portrayed and transmitted. In this regard, one is never free in his everyday use of language, not only that language systems and rules prescribe how one should speak and write, but also the social conventions determine how language is used to control public relations and social hierarchy:

Whenever we speak or write in our native language we do so in one style rather than another, according to the situation, the relations that hold between us and the person to whom we are speaking or writing, the purpose and nature of what we have to communicate.

According to Lyons (1981:27), language is the medium through which individuals communicate their ideas and ensure a sort of contact with their milieu. On the other hand, society prescribes rigid social systems to control social communication on the basis of appropriate use of language. Chomsky (1981:229) views language as rule-governed but the productivity of language is infinite, in the sense that individuals are able to produce an endless number of expressions in different situations if they master the rules that govern the language use. The individual freedom to employ the productivity of language becomes limited when it comes to the establishment of public relations in society. The social interaction prescribes communicative patterns that become preliminary while using the language within a community of speakers. Using a language successfully entails a cultural competence on the part of speakers, for linguistic competence only is not sufficient to establish an appropriate contact with the social environment; the cultural competence renders the linguistic system meaningful and socially appropriate. Culture, in this sense, is important as it enriches the language and determines what is meaningful and what is meaningless or abusive:

Some things will be more highly codable in one language than they are in another. For example, just as Eskimo is said to have no single word for snow, but many different words for different kinds of snow. It seems that most Australian languages have no word meaning "Sand", but several words which denote various kinds of sand (1981:303).

Language becomes productive and rich because of the cultural entourage of speakers. Additionally, any language system is enriched by the everyday contact of speakers with each other and with the different aspects that make up their environment. For example, the ecological impact on language enlarges the vocabulary and the contact with individuals determines the nature of social interchange. In this sense, language is culture governed, for no language usage among individuals is executed without cultural boundaries. Accordingly, social structures exert authority not on the language but rather on the function of language within society. This is because the freedom to use languages is not restricted only due to the prescriptions of linguistic rules, but also to social boundaries that affect one's use of linguistic systems.

Drawing on this authoritative impact of social structures on social interactions, translators are obliged, in a sense, to study these mechanisms through which linguistic systems operate within different social contexts, for any interpretation of any linguistic construction is pointless unless it is contextualized. Culture is then the homeland of meaningful and significant expressions simply because it is there where people feel at home and deliberately produce their own notions about life to live together. Hence, respecting and adhering to the prescribed cultural norms secure a safe contact among individuals from the same social group:

There is no doubt that one's knowledge of one's native language is culturally transmitted: it is acquired, though not necessarily learned, by virtue of one's membership of a particular society (1981:303).

When people leave their cultural safety zone, they do not necessarily get rid of their cultural baggage since their cultural apparatuses are rooted in their mechanisms of thinking and living. However, their unconsciously constructed social behavior confronts a new environment of cultural exchange in which they find themselves in need to impart adaptation to their behaviors in order to minimize the risk of facing serious problems. People living in a multicultural milieu thereby find it difficult to deal with each other mainly that every individual speaks or writes from his/her cultural perspective. A multicultural milieu becomes a milieu of communication problems and misunderstanding if cultural differences are perceived as strange and abnormal. The cultural baggage brought by people to the new milieu of social interaction is deemed crucial for encoding and decoding communicative patterns. The fact that the world has become a real melting pot entails that people who are fully involved in this

milieu become cross-culturally competent and aware of the importance that multicultural awareness has in their social and professional life.

Translation in this regard is of paramount importance to draw attention to the role of multicultural awareness to render a message meant for the target culture. For example, one can notice that Americans are very careful about the accuracy of content; they see language as a medium of information transfer. Their focus is on clarity and directness; they expect their language to be the bridge whereby the intended message becomes clear for the receiver. In this sense, the major conception about language is that of communication and information transfer. The American communicants expect the speaker to facilitate the task of understanding by using direct and meaningful expressions. On the other hand, making a comparison between American communicative patterns with Arab ones reveals some cultural differences that distinguish Americans and encourage Arabs to improve their understanding of Americans mainly at the level of language use and vice versa. Rhonda Zaharna (1995:245), a specialist in public diplomacy, intercultural and international strategic communication, is concerned with culture and communication in Arab and Islamic societies. She views Arabic as being at the heart of Arab identity:

The major socio-historical forces that influenced the role of Arabic for the Arabs stem from the language's association as an art form, a religious phenomenon, and an identity tool.

For Zaharna (1995:245), Arabs view their language not only as a medium of language transfer but it stands for a whole identity. There is a kind of musicality in language use. The focus is on the beauty of expressions and how they are used to construct meaning. The emphasis on beauty in Arabic language use, according to Zaharna, stems from the glorious history that poetry knew in the Arab world. To comprehend a message in Arabic, the listener is responsible for the process of understanding as he/she must decode the linguistic and cultural elements that are embodied in the text. In other words, the listener should pay attention to the context where the expression is uttered or written, for the meaning in Arab communication is usually not direct. Translators who intend to translate for Arab readers must take these cultural differences into account so that the cultural contact between Americans and Arabs can be successful. Multicultural awareness enables translation to establish a fruitful contact between cultures. Translators understand cultural differences and enable people from different culture groups to know each other and estimate their differences rather than simply assessing the cultural elements of the Other as being true or wrong.

There is a sort of correlation between the function of language systems and the social structure. Any change at the level of the language system use is very likely to be perceived as the result of a possible change in the social structure. To translate literary works, the translator should know the correlation between the language system and the social structure of the period when the literary work was produced. For example, to understand the works of the Russian author Tolstoy, Lyons (1981:319) highlights that the translator should know that any change in public relations and social hierarchy can affect language use.

Rather striking evidence of this can be found in nineteenth-century Russian literature, notably in the novels of Tolstoy (cf. Friedrich, 1968). The point is that diglossia existed at that time among the members of the Russian aristocracy, French being the H language and Russian the L language (cf. 9.4). When they spoke French among themselves, they would use V to one another, regardless of bonds of family or friendship that might unite them. In this respect they followed upper-class French usage of the period (1981:319).

It is well known that in most modern languages, there is a sort of distinction between what are socially and culturally known as the polite and the familiar pronouns of address: French "Vous" : "Tu". Such pronouns of address in the French language were used in earlier periods of history to acknowledge social status and determine public relations among the members of society. The social employment of T and V has been restricted nowadays especially in France:

In many countries of Europe, and notably in France, the reciprocal use of T among colleagues and acquaintances has greatly increased in recent years, at all social levels, but especially among the young and those of a politically more liberal or left-wing outlook. It is very rare nowadays, for example, for husbands and wives to use V to one another or for non-reciprocal usage to exist between parents and children. However, this was the practice in all upper-class families in earlier times; and it has not quite disappeared (1981:318).

In this respect, for translators to fully understand the works of Tolstoy there must be a kind of cultural study of the period that produced the work. Any translation of Tolstoy's work should highlight the nature of public relations that existed in earlier times in Russia and even the historical evolution of the correlation between the language system of the French language and the social structure of French society. Thus, translation reconstructs public relations and encourages successful cultural contact between people in a multicultural milieu.

The main purpose of this paper is to discuss the idea that cultural translation is at the heart of reconstructing relations between people and readers that are different and culturally remote from each other. Culture is the most important issue in translation especially that the meaning of any linguistic constructing element differs from one culture to another. Translation is concerned in the first place with ensuring the circulation of similar ideas in different languages without any distortion of the original meaning. This, in a sense, can be achieved only if the target language readers are able to comprehend everything without any possibility of getting lost in decoding the linguistic elements of their own language. The intended meaning is not really embraced unless the intended reader is aware that the best culture does not exist, but his/her cultural identity is rather important and needs to co-exist with other cultures. The words and expressions that make up a text are usually not neutral or objective, for they take part in constructing a given textual structure which is usually socially and culturally dependent. The subjective nature of the words that are used in a given text entails that translators are culturally competent to investigate the emotive nature of languages.

References

- [1] Bassnett, S. & Trivedy, H. (1999). *Postcolonial Translation*. London: Routledge.
- [2] Lyons, J. (1981). *Language and Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [3] Sherry, S. (2000). *Changing the Terms: Translating in the Post-colonial Era*, University of Ottawa Press: Ottawa.
- [4] Venuti, L. (1995). *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. New York: Routledge.
- [5] Venuti, L. (2000). *The translation Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.
- [6] Zaharna, R. S. (1995). 'Understanding Cultural Preferences of Arab communication Patterns,' *Public Relations Review*, (21)3: 241-255.