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Cultural Ambivalence in the Translation of Algerian Popular Expressions into English

التناقض الثقافي في ترجمة الأمثال الشعبية الجزائرية إلى اللغة الإنجليزية

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Abstract:

Popular expressions express a nation's cultural identity and are concerned with its moral principles, conventions, traditions, rituals and cultural patrimony. Besides the fact that their authors are usually unknown, most of them are seldom written, and are generally transferred from one generation to another orally. Within this context, this paper will focus on the issue of popular expressions, and on the necessity to translate them to spring them worldwide. It also attempts to illustrate some translation strategies that may help the translator to overcome the problem of cultural clash between Algerian popular expressions and their English coequal. Finally, it suggests the adoption of Peter Newmark's semantic and communicative translation strategies to face the cultural loss caused by cultural variation between two distant cultures.

Keywords: popular expressions- cultural loss -semantic translation-communicative translation-faithfulness- culturally bound expression

ملخص

تعكس التعابير الشعبية الهوية الثقافية لأمة ما وترتبط بمبادئها الأخلاقية وقوانينها وتقاليدها وطقوسها وتراثها الثقافي. فإضافة إلى عدم معرفة هوية كاتبها، فإنه نادرا ما يكون لهذه التعابير أثر مكتوب. وعليه فغالبا ما يتم تناقلها بصفة شفهية عبر الأجيال. وفي هذا السياق، سيتناول هذا المقال أهمية الأقوال الشعبية و ضرورة ترجمتها و نشرها عالميا. كما سنحاول إبراز صعوبة ترجمتها لخصوصيتها الثقافية، و من ثمة عرض بعض الإستراتيجيات الترجمية التي من شأنها مساعدة المترجم على تجاوز مشكلة التناقص الثقافي لتحقيق الأمانة الترجمية. وأخيرا، سنقترح الاعتماد على أسلوبي الترجمة الدلالية والتبليغية لبيتر نيومارك.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

التعابير الشعبية– التناقص الثقافي– الترجمة الدلالية– الترجمة التبليغية– الأمانة–الخصوصية الثقافية

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1. INTRODUCTION

Popular expressions are so called because they are intended for a wide range of people. They form an integral part of life characterizing the beliefs, habits and customs of every period of human history. Hence, since ancient times, popular expressions have been an important aspect of human culture. Yet, it should also be noted that popular expressions have not known official publications, but have mostly been transmitted from a generation to another mostly orally.

Within this context, this paper is a review of the framework of four issues: popular expressions, culture in popular expressions, cultural loss in the translation of popular expressions, and Peter Newmark’s translation strategies in the translation of Algerian popular expressions.

Accordingly, we shall first define the issue of popular expressions. Then we will circle back with the controversy of culture, and how it is deeply rooted in popular expressions. Then we will tackle the question of cultural loss in the translation of popular expressions. Finally we will suggest some translation strategies that may help the translator to convey the exact meaning of the source popular expressions.

2. Definition of Popular Expressions

Popular sayings or expressions, also called culturally-bound expressions are simple statements that express a given perception. They give an insight into the culture, views, customs and opinions of life. Within this vein, each community is known by its popular expressions, which may be unknown in another community.

Mieder defines a popular expression as:

> *“a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable form and which is handed down from one generation to generation*”
> (200:10).

Another definition of popular expressions says:

> *A form of expression, grammatical construction, phrase, etc., peculiar to a language; a peculiarity of phraseology approved by the usage of language,*

> *often having a significance other than its grammatical or logical one.*
> (Adam Makkai 1972:23)

Zolfaghari & Ameri in their turn define a popular expression as:

> *a short sentence, which is well-known and at times rhythmic, including advice, sage themes and ethnic experiences, comprising simile, metaphor or irony which is well-known among people for its fluent wording, clarity of expression, simplicity, expansiveness and generality and is used either with or without change.*
> (2012:107)

In the light of the definitions above, we can trace the main features of popular expressions as being short phrases characterized by a quick entry to people's minds. They are memorable and often rhymed. Such expressions or collocations are learned through frequent use, and transmitted by word of mouth. They are usually encountered in everyday language, and are used mostly by the elders, and acquired by the younger in the process of communication. (Arnon & Snider, 2010; Cowie, 1988, 1998)

Popular expressions are divided into two major classes, encoding and decoding, (Adam Makkai 1972) illustrated as follows in the following table:

Encoding expressions	Decoding expressions
الصبر مفتاح الجنة Patience is the key to paradise	ولآت فاطمة لعادتها القديمة Here we go again

Table 1 Encoding and Decoding Popular Expressions

Encoding expressions are characterized with transparent and deducible meanings, while decoding ones have unpredictable and opaque meanings.

The first popular expression الصبر مفتاح الجنة is explicit in both source and target languages, and can be understood soon, while the second expression ولآت فاطمة لعادتها القديمة may cause translation difficulties mainly if the translator has no prior knowledge of the Arabic culture. In fact, the expression conveys the speaker's annoyance towards a person, who always commits the same pitfalls.

The significance of popular expressions lies in the fact that they provide an insight of people's likes, dislikes, and emotions of joy and sadness…etc. They also tell us about the life of ancestors, their traditions, and most importantly their perception of the world.

Although, popular expressions are pervasive in all languages and cultures, no one knows when they were created and by whom. They have an in-depth meaning that indicates the beliefs and the social norms of a group of people. (Belhadj Fatiha 2018:137)

In this context, Nagy points out that a culturally-bound expression is:

> *A popular set phrase having no author, known mostly in different languages, expressing in one sentence, a principle, advice, a genuine or assumed truth in general, concise from, it is basic idea being of general validity, or at least its users consider it as such.*
>
> (Cited in Oliver, 2006:1)

Another important characteristic of popular expression is spontaneity. Indeed, they are instantly used aiming the transmission of a message. They are also language-specific. In other words, they may have no equivalent in other languages.

To conclude this part, one can say that the complex nature of popular expression is the result of their colloquial use, figurative meaning, and ambiguity.

3- Popular Expressions and Culture

Newmark defines culture as manifestations of life peculiar to a given community (1988:94)

Within the same context, Raymond Williams says:

> *"One of the most complicated words in the English language."*
>
> (Williams 1976: 76)

The interaction between culture and popular expressions results from the involvement of culture in different areas of life, and from the fact that people express their values through popular expressions.

Oyserman et. Al says that:

> *..through a given culture, one's identity is created. Identities are defined as "the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles and social group memberships that define who one is"*
>
> *(2012: 69)*

Hence upon, the relationship between popular expressions and culture is bilateral. Beliefs, customs and values, are elements of culture and constitute the society's achievements in terms of morals. Popular expressions provide dynamism to culture, and express its history. They form the basis for the mind, without which most behavior would be random, unpredictable, and meaningless. In this context, Beacco says that popular expressions give advice and make comments about life. They are rooted in the ancient cultural heritage, and are part of a society's oral culture. (As cited Usman et. a 2013:47)

Dwivedi contends that:

> *Popular expressions are rooted in the reflections and perceptions of the self and other, in the history of language, in the memory of people, in religion, castes, space and geographical territory*
> *(Dwivedi, 2013:9).*

4. Cultural Loss in the Translation of Popular Expressions

Most translators agree that culturally-bound expressions are difficult to translate. Complications arise from differences in cultural ideologies. Thence, translating a culturally-bound expression without taking into consideration its ideology and cultural particularities will result in the deformation of its semantic connotations and denotations.

Worth mentioning also that in the process of translation of popular expressions, the cultural ideology of the expression and the one of the translator may collide because of differences in social and cultural settings. The effect of this disparity is an incoherent and misleading translation. Thence, the audience will get an incomprehensible message, and the main function of translation, which is to communicate the message, did not succeed. As a matter of fact, this may be conceived among the major obstacles in the translation of popular expressions.

Accordingly, the translator, who fails to take the cultural context into account, is likely to commit tremendous errors. Hence upon the cultural gap between languages can act on the process of translating culturally-bound expressions because of the interference of the translator's judgment on the source expression content. (Catford 1965:94)

Within the same context, Wolfram Eggeling contends that there are four patterns upon which a popular expression is received. (In Thomson-Wohlgemuth 1998:41-42)

-Primary conculturality occurs when the source text and the audience belong to the same culture.

- Disculturality occurs in case of a clash between the expectations of the audience and the ideological beliefs of the source text resulting in a sort of alienation.

-Secondary conculturality occurs in case of completely different ideologies. However, the text is adjusted to the audience's expectations.

-Classicity occurs when the audience perceives the translated piece of popular literature as aesthetic. However, because of cultural distance, the translation of the popular expression does not affect it.

Along the same lines, Larson claims that meaning in popular expressions is culturally conditioned and the response to a given expression should, in turn, be culturally conditioned (1984: 436-7). Therefore, the audience will interpret a given popular expression according to its own culture. In other words, translation is perceived according to the experience of the audience, and not to that of the author. Thus, the translator must act as a cultural mediator in order to ensure that meaning is more or less explicitly communicated.

Translation of popular expressions between similar cultures is probably uncomplicated and undemending. This is justified by the fact that the languages of related cultures have similar historical roots. Therefore, similar concepts in these expressions facilitate the transposition process.

Another problem that a translator can face in the translation of popular expression results from the fact that some popular expressions denote facts that are deeply rooted and specific in the source culture, and most of the time, they may have no equivalent in the target culture, either because they are unknown, or because they have not yet been codified in the target culture.

In this vein, Nida says that:

> *"Differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure"*
> (1964: 130).

Nord claims that culturally-bound expressions include cultural specific items that are referred to as “Culturemes.” These encompass the difference between the translator’s culture and the target one.” Thus to translate culturemes in popular expressions is to interpret their cultural meaning in relation to comparable items in the target language. (Nord1997: 34).

Hence, when translating popular expressions from two distinct languages like Arabic and English, a translator may encounter culturemes, which require a perfect knowledge of both the source and target culture.
These culturemes include:

4.1 Religious Culturemes

Religion is deeply incorporated in the Algerian popular expressions. Indeed, they make great reference to Allah, heaven, and hell. Therefore, the semantic content of these culturemes may not always be properly transferred to the target audience with a different culture. In such cases, the translator has to opt for either keeping reference to religion in the target language or the translation of meaning only.
Some popular expressions with religious culturemes are illustrated in the following table:

Popular Expressions	Translation
الحسان زينة الدِّين	Charity is the ornament of religion
لي عصا ربي فيك، طيع ربي فيه	He who disobeys God in you, obey God in him
كل ابن آدم خطاّء	To err is human

Table 2 Religious Similarity

Despite the fact that the expressions illustrated in the table above carry cultural connotations, they still have equivalents in the target language, hence upon their translation was not a hardship. The first example الحسان زينة الدِّين implies that one has to take care of the nearest members of his family, who live close to him before thinking of providing any help to others. This is indeed, a principle in the Muslim religion.
The second popular expression states that harm should not be faced with harm. True Muslims are those, who render good for evil, and Allah promised paradise for those, who forgive, and never seek revenge.

The last expression implies that it is natural for human beings to make errors. Yet, a person should always learn from his/ her errors. The issue of forgiveness is also insinuated in the example implying that Allah forgives people, so we should also forgive each other, even when mistakes are conceived as unforgivable.

As noticed, the translation of the expressions illustrated in the table above allowed the communication of the content of the source expressions because of its porosity and coherence in the source culture. Indeed, the understanding was achieved by the similarity in views in both cultures.

Yet, the troubles may arise with highly religious popular expressions, which pose real difficulties for the translator, who will be unable to make the religious transfer. In this context, some popular expressions were selected for illustration of the phenomenon of cultural untranslatability:

The first expression is خمسة في عين الحسود may be literally translated as “five in the eyes of the envious.” Number five has a particular significance in Arabic. It represents the five fingers of the hand for the Arabs, and each finger symbolizes one of the verses of Surat Al Falak (in the Holy Koran). It is a manual rite, which is strongly believed that it protects from evil. On the other side, the English use the expression “to touch the wood” to convey the same belief. It is superstitiously thought that touching the wood enhances good luck. This conviction is derived from the pagan belief that malevolent spirits inhabit wood, and in case a person expresses a future hope, he has to touch, or knock on wood to prevent these spirits from hearing him, and presumably preventing his hopes to coming true.

The expression إذا حظر الماء يبطل التيمم literally translated as ‘If water is available, no need to clean up with sand’ does not convey the religious connotation of the source expression for the simple reason that the word تيمم is inexistent in the English culture. The word تيمم means primarily using a stone or clean sand for ablution. As the concept is totally alien in English, its rendering was almost impossible in the target language.

Another expression, which is considered as a case of untranslatability due to religious culturemes, is ما خاب لاستخار. This expression makes reference to a prayer, which consists in imploring Allah for guidance. It is made with prescribed wordings, seeking guidance from Almighty Allah, regarding a major decision in one’s life. The prayer is done with a profound belief that Allah is the sole knower of the consequences of matters. Obviously, this faith, does not exist in the target culture, hence upon, this constituted a major reason for its untranslatability.

On that account, except for some very few expressions, achieving the same degree of faithfulness and emotiveness, when translating fixed expressions with highly religious culturemes is a goal, which is usually unfulfilled, especially when the languages involved are culturally remote as is the case with Arabic and English.

4.2 Aesthetic Culturemes

Popular expressions with aesthetic culturemes are characterized with figurative language. Indeed, each language has its figurative peculiarities constituting a challenge for the translator, who may have to consider several ways to produce a target expression with a similar aesthetic quality. Figures of speech are deeply incorporated in Algerian popular expressions making their translation in English a hard endeavor as is illustrated in the following table.

Popular Expressions	Translation
القرد في عين أمه غزال	Beauty is in the eye of the beholder
ابن الوزّ عوّام	Like father, like son
ديل الكلب عمره مايتعدل	A leopard doesn’t change its spots

Table 3 Aesthetic Dissimilarity

The first expression القرد في عين أمه غزال implies that people have different perceptions of beauty. What is ugly for someone may be beautiful for others. The reference to the animal monkey is the Algerian popular saying is a bit egregious as the monkey is an unpleasant looking animal. Yet, it is the prettiest in the eyes of its mother. This expression aesthetically describes the blinding love a mother can have for her child.

In the second expression ابن الوزّ عوّام implies that generally speaking, the son's character, or behavior resembles to that of his father. The Algerian expression uses the goose in the sense that this animal swims perfectly. Hence upon, if a father is a good swimmer, his son is expected to be a good swimmer as well. The son is figuratively compared to the goose to express the idea of character and skills’ inheritance. The English saying expresses the same saying in a more simple way without any use of figurative language.

In the last expression ذيل الكلب عمره مايتعدل implies that it is impossible for one to change his character, even if he tries very hard. It explains the idea that no one can change his innate nature. Hence upon, a person’s bad character is figuratively and metaphorically compared to a dog’s tail, which can never be kept straight.

Although, meaning was successfully conveyed in the translations of the expressions above, yet the source expressions’ aesthetic culturemes were portrayed differently in the target language. The first English expressions did not make any reference to whatever animal, except for the third one, where the dog is used in the Algerian expression to be substituted in English with a leopard.
Hence upon, one can definitely say that the translation failed to reproduce the source expressions aesthetic culturemes.

As yet, the controversy with popular expressions is that despite their peculiarity and distinctiveness, there are certain culturally bound expressions, which are shared among communities from different cultural backgrounds like is the case in the following expressions:

Popular Expression	Translation
التكرار يعلّم الحمار	Repetition teaches the donkey
اذا كان حبيبك عسل، ماتلحسوش كله	If your lover is honey, don’t lick it all.
الكذب معندوش رجلين	Lying has no legs
يصوم يصوم و يفطر على بصلة	He fasts and fasts and then feasts on an onion.
الخير مرا و الشر مرا	Good is a woman and evil is a woman

Table 4 Cultural Similarity

On this basis, we conclude that there are certain facts, which are common to all nations as was demonstrated in the examples above.

Yet, despite the similarities existing between nations and communities in terms of the perception of the world, views and moral principles, there is no doubt that there are many other cultural expressions, which do not have equivalents in the target language, hence their translation may result in a cultural loss.

Within this vein, the following table provides illustrations of popular expressions, with no equivalent into English.

Popular Expression	Equivalent
لي يدو في الماء ماشي كي لي يدو في النار	Easier said than done.
اللي يتلسع من الشوربة ينفخ في الزبدة	Once bitten, twice shy
امشي في جنازة، ولا تمشي في جوازة	Not available

Table 5 Cultural Dissimilarity

The first expression لي يدو في الماء ماشي كي لي يدو في النار implies that one, whose hand is in fire, is evidently not like the one whose hand is in water. Although, the translation conveys more or less the same meaning, but nonetheless fails to exhibit the picture of a hand that is burning, hence resulting in sufferance and endurance.

The second example اللي يتلسع من الشوربة ينفخ في الزبادي implies that whoever gets burned by soup blows on butter implies that a person, who has been hurt, should be careful to avoid such another bad experience in the future. Although the expression has an English equivalent, it is cultureless and unanimated because the equivalent fails to make the audience fully live the situation of the source expression.

The last expression امشي في جنازة، ولا تمشي في جوازه can be literally translated as walk in a funeral, and not in a marriage implies that one should not play the role of a match-maker, or interfere in people’s affairs, as this may lead to great problems. The source expression represents the idea of someone, who arranges a marriage, and in case the marriage fails, he will get blamed. The word “funeral” is used to bring about the image of a person walking in a funeral, and feeling sorrow and regretful because he should not have interfered in people’s choices mainly when this concerns an important issue as marriage. Such a situation presumably does not exist in the English culture as the western society is known for its non-interference in people’s affairs.

Ultimately, there are other popular expressions, which denote opposite meanings when translated from Algerian Arabic into English, as illustrated below:

كول واش يعجبك و لبس واش يعجب الناس	There is no accounting for taste
كل تعطيلة فيها خير	Time is money
خبر يبرد القلب	News that warm the heart

Table 6 Contradictory Meanings in Popular Expressions

The first expression "eat what you like, but wear what other people like" is perceived differently in both languages. The English consider that everyone is free to eat and wear what he wants, and no one can interfere in his tastes as opposed to the Algerian expression, which stresses on the necessity of compliance to the society's norms, mainly in the way of dressing. Indeed, this is imposed by the fact that the Algerian society is Muslim and wearing indecent cloths is not acceptable.

The same can be said concerning the second example, which gives very little importance to time to the extent that the later one is, the better will be. This can be explained by the fact that Algerians as Muslims believe that every action is controlled by Allah, who alone decides when things are to be done. Hence, if something has been delayed or postponed for whatever reason, it should be accepted because this is Allah's decision, and he alone knows the timing of events, contrarily to the English, who consider time as money, and hence, it is a valuable resource, hence, it is better to save time, and do things as quickly as possible to earn more and more money.

The last expression is another case for contradiction in the translation of popular expressions from Algerian Arabic into English. What is conceived by the Algerian as news that freeze the chest is seen by the English as news that warm the heart. Warmness and coldness are perceived differently in the Arabic and western societies, although, they both express the feelings of happiness and tenderness.
Hence upon, there are many Algerian expressions, which when translated result in cultural loss because of non-equivalence, and as they cannot be mentioned all in the present paper, we will just allude to some culturemes, which if included in a popular saying may result in a case of untranslatability

Arabic Term	English Equivalent
الدخلة	Wedding night
الضرة	Second wife
الطهارة	Purity
الوضوء	Ablution
بيت الطاعة	Husband's house
التيمم	Dust as substitute of water

Table 7 Untranslatable Culturemes

Such culturemes are difficult to translate because they refer to concepts, which do not exist in the English culture. There upon their translation will probably result in cultural loss. As a matter of fact, the best strategy in translating popular expressions including culturally loaded terms is to resort to borrowing, in addition to a concise explanation embraced as a footnote to describe the meaning evoked in the concept, as the strategy of borrowing alone may be insufficient to convey the meaning of the concept.

5. Peter Newmark's Translation Strategies for the translation of Culturally-bound Expressions

Many strategies have been suggested for the translation of popular expressions, among them, the ones that have been advocated by Peter Newmark, which relate to semantic and communicative translation, and which constitute Newmark's major contribution to translation

5.1 Communicative Translation Strategy

The communicative translation strategy attempts to produce an equivalent effect on the target readers.

In this context, Peter Newmark says:

> *Communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original. Semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original.*
>
> *(Newmark 1981: 39)*

The communicative translation strategy is used in a context, where what is being referred to in the source expression is unknown in the target culture. Hence, the translator has to create a new setting, which conveys the same meaning differently.

Some Algerian popular expressions exemplifying the use of the communicative translation strategy are included in the following table:

Popular Expressions	Translation
فوت على الواد الهرهار و ما تفوتش على الواد الساكت	A barking dog never bites
على قد لاحافك مد رجليك	Cut your coat according to your cloths
هرب من قطاع الريسان، طاح في قباض الأرواح	Out of the frying pan into the fire
المندبة كبيرة و الميت فار	Great cry and little wool

Table 8 Communicative Translation

The first Arabic popular expression فوت على الواد الهرهار و ما تفوتش على الواد الساكت implies that one should not be afraid of from people, who react angrily, or who readily threaten others. Indeed those, who make a lot of noise, are generally harmless. The Algerian saying makes reference to a rough valley, while the English express the same idea through a barking dog. Although, the two sayings are completely different, the translation succeeded in conveying the meaning of the source saying. In fact, one has to be more careful and prudent not from those, who are excited and violent, but from those who are silent and calm, but harm people covertly.

In the second popular sayingعلى قد لاحافك مد رجليك has been translated into English as "cut your coat according to your cloths." The Algerian popular expression makes reference to people, who live beyond their financial capacities, creating a situation, which may cause them serious problems. In fact, one should not stretch his legs beyond his blanket. In other words, a person's resources are limited. Hence upon they should be managed wisely. The same idea is expressed in English through the image of someone, who is not well dressed because he is wearing clothes that are longer than the coat. The communicative translation strategy greatly succeeded in conveying the meaning of the source saying, which is that one should make plans and decisions based on what he has, and not on what he would like to have. Indeed, a person should not seek what is unaffordable.

We notice in that the third saying the translation of the Algerian popular saying هرب من قطاع الريسان، طاح في قباض الأرواح into English has been clearly communicated. The communicative translation strategy allowed the transmission of the same meaning through the creation of a new situation. Indeed, they both imply that one may escape a bad situation, to find himself in another that is worse or more critical. Yet, the images used to express the same idea are completely different. The Algerian saying makes reference to two situations, yet both of them lead to death. The English expression portrays the image of being burnt either by putting one's hand in a frying pan or directly into fire.

The last example in the table المندبة كبيرة و الميت فار has been translated into English as "great cry and little wool." Both expressions imply that very often people make great deal of fuss and noise over an issue of no importance, or relevance. The translation coveys an identical meaning, however without making any reference to the mouse.

As illustrated in the examples above, the central concern of the communicative translation strategy is to convey the meaning of the expression, without caring about the changes that can be made by the translator at the cultural and aesthetic levels.

Hence upon, the communicative strategy has proved its appropriateness in cases, where a cultural-specific item is substituted with a target item, which although, does not have the same propositional meaning, yet, is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader (Baker, 1992: 40).

Hence, the translator may find himself in situations, where the communicative translation may prove as the safest strategy. In this case, he decides to replace a given cultural aspect in the source text with an equivalent in the target expression, without caring about difference in images, as long as this is not primordial for the understanding of the target saying. Baker states that "If the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the information to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations, translators can and often do simply substitute the information with another one provided it does not distort the meaning of the source saying" (1992:49). Hence, the communicative strategy is imposed by the peculiarity of cultural elements in the source expression.

5.2 Semantic Translation Strategy

The second translation strategy that may be adopted in the translation of popular expressions is semantic translation. Its central concern is to convey the popular expression through paraphrasing or literally.

Newmark P claims that:

> *Semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original".*
>
> (In Munday J.2001: 44)

Semantic translation has a source language bias. It shows greater loyalty to the source text’s author, and prefers to remain with the original culture. It seeks to be more specific in transferring nuances of meaning.

The following table provides some illustrations of semantic translation strategy in popular expressions:

Popular Expressions	Translation
الحيطان بودنيها	Walls have ears
الصبر مفتاح الجنة	Patience is the key to paradise
يد واحدة ما تسفق	One hand cannot applaud

Table 9 Semantic Translation

The semantic translation strategy addresses the target reader, without any anticipation of difficulties. It seeks to make a clear transfer of the source elements into the target culture by remaining within the original culture, with its connotations and denotations.

On the other hand, communicative translation strategy analyzes the meanings of source lexical units, and attempts to make them as close as possible to the source language, yet, allowing changes in the source expression when necessary.

Hence, semantic translation strives to retain the distinguishing features of the source popular expression stressing on the writer's ideas, while the communicative translation tends to be more detailed than the original popular expression including more meanings in its search for clarifications and accuracy. (Newmark, 2001)

Yet, even when applying the above suggested translation strategies meaning in popular expressions can be lost and faithfulness to the original popular expression can be impossible. Hence upon a perfect translation of popular expressions does not exist. In fact, even though, the translator attempts to make the source expression works in the target culture in the same way it worked in the source culture, he does not always succeed. Hence upon, faithfulness is guaranteed as long as the translator portrays the ideas of the source expression.

6. Conclusion

The present paper has made a quick theoretical reference to the concept of popular expressions. It also dealt with the issue of cultural loss in the translation of these culturally-bound expressions. It attempted to demonstrate that in some cases, translation is possible, yet in others, it tends to be problematic basically when this concerns the translation of culturally loaded expressions. Ostensibly, when gaps between two cultures exist, the achievement of a perfect transfer will be troublesome. Indeed, the problem, which faces all translators, is how to deal with cultural references in the translation of popular expressions. If the translator decides to omit them, this will probably result in cultural loss. At the same time, if he chooses to translate them, he may fail to represent them as they were originally presented in the source language. In such a situation the best for the translator is to find a compromise for an optimum translation of cultural specific items. In this context, many scholars have suggested a combination of procedures allowing the translator to decide on the translation strategy that is more in accordance with the product he is dealing with.

To conclude this paper, one can say that although, translators have always faced perplexing difficulties when dealing with cultural elements included in such obscure expressions, their experience in manipulating languages, in addition to their knowledge of cultural dissimilarities and ideologies have allowed them to carry on their task successfully. As a matter of fact, translators possess an innate talent in dealing with languages, which according to us is an essential prerequisite for conquering the world of translation abound with cultural dissimilarities and contradictions, and hence, bridging the gap between cultures.

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