A Relevance Theory Perspective to Face Interculturalism Challenges: How to Avoid Intercultural Miscommunication in Translation?

نظرية الملاءمة سبيلا لمواجهة تحديات التلاقح الثقافي: كيفية تجنب سوء التواصل بين الثقافات في الترجمة؟

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Abstract

This study is framed within a relevance theoretical approach; it is a context-based theory relying on the cognitive and communicative principles of translation, suggested by Ernest August Gutt (1991), who introduced the concept of direct and indirect translations and aims to analyze various translation strategies that are, likely, to help translators achieve optimal relevance, foster interculturalism, and avoid intercultural miscommunication. The significance of this study is to provide a comprehensive overview of intercultural communication and miscommunication in translation. A content analysis method is used to explore the translation strategies used to render some electronic articles' titles. The study concludes that intercultural translators, as cultural mediators, should first assess relevance and reproduce the same cognitive and communicative effects by choosing appropriate strategies to render the ST message by building on existing assumptions with less processing effort, and not creating new ones.

Keywords: Interculturalism**;** Relevance Theory; Miscommunication; Translation; Cultural Diversity.

ملخص:

تندرج هذه الدراسة ضمن مقاربة الملاءمة التي تستند إلى السياق وتعتمد على المبادئ المعرفية والتواصلية في الترجمة، وقد اقترحها إرنست أوغست جوت (1991) الذي قدّم مفهوميْ الترجمة المباشرة وغير المباشرة. وتهدف الدراسة إلى تحليل استراتيجيات الترجمة المختلفة التي من شأنهامساعدة المترجمين في تحقيق الملاءمة بشكل أمثل، وتعزيز التعدد الثقافي، وتجنب سوء التواصل بين الثقافات. وتكمن أهميةالدراسة في تقديم نظرة شاملة عن التواصل وسوء التواصلالثقافيين في الترجمة. ولهذا الغرض، سنعتمد على طريقة تحليل المحتوى للتعرف على استراتيجيات الترجمة المستخدمة لنقل عناوين بعض المقالات الإلكترونية. وقد خلُصت الدراسة إلى وجوب قيام المترجمين، بصفتهم وسطاء ثقافيين، بتقييم درجة الملاءمة وإعادة إنتاج الأثر المعرفي والتواصلي نفسهباختيار الاستراتيجيات المناسبة لنقلالرسالة الواردة في النص المصدر والاعتماد على الافتراضات السياقية الموجودةوالتي تقتضي بذل جهد أقل للفهم ولا تتطلب تكوين افتراضات جديدة.

كلمات مفتاحية: تلاقح ثقافي، نظرية الملاءمة، سوء تواصل، ترجمة، تعدد ثقافي.

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1. Introduction

The concept of culture gave rise to many other distinctive concepts, such as interculturalism, which is a widely adopted term in cultural relations and studies stemming from cultural diversity. It is a concept and an approach that influenced many researchers and policy-makers. Due to the increasing contact between countries, intercultural communication is of paramount importance; it is often linked with identity as well as cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Distinctive features of languages and cultures may, sometimes, lead to intercultural miscommunication; that is why intercultural competence can overcome intercultural barriers and cultural sensitivity. Intercultural translation, in turn, is not a mere linguistic process; it is a cultural activity that encompasses many other factors, that is why it is fraught with complexities. Thus, the cultural transfer can be problematic. On the other hand, interculturalism favors cultural diversity and implies cultural dialogue and exchange at multiple levels; intercultural texts are influenced by several cultural spaces, include many ideological standpoints, and reflect others' experiences.

In this vein, intercultural translation challenges translators whose task is not merely transferring words and expressions from the source language to the target language; they, often, face many challenges related to interculturalism and take extra-linguistic factors into account since they, always, deal with source texts that contain language subtleties as well as a great number of culture-specific items, which are different in each culture. In light of cultural and linguistic divergences, intercultural miscommunication may be unavoidable in the translation process because the translator is torn between transferring the "foreign" or preserving the "familiar". Hence, the problem, we attempt to address, is as follows: How can intercultural miscommunication be avoided in translation? We suppose that relevance theory can offer an interesting framework to intercultural translation and avoid miscommunication.

2. The Broad Concept of Culture

Culture is a term that is widely used and studied. Many scholars have attempted to define and classify it. Taylor states that: "Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Taylor, 1958, p. 1). We notice that culture is a wide concept that comprises many elements and aspects of life, which are, sometimes, difficult to define; it is the way of life of people and is closely linked to the societal level.

It is admitted that culture influences individuals' thoughts, behaviors, feelings, and practices. Thus, culture shapes identity and promotes nationalism. Each community has its own cultural traits that may resemble or differ from other communities' cultural characteristics. For instance, a handshake is usual in America to greet a stranger, whereas, in France, kissing someone on both cheeks is very common. In Islamic

countries, men must not shake hands with women. Hence, these different attitudes are, generally, guided by the cultural, social, and even religious norms of each country.

Jenks argues that three categories in the definition of culture exist: the "ideal," which corresponds to human perfection and universal values, the "documentary," which is related to the intellectual and imaginary work comprising human experiences and ideas, and the "social," which includes the way of life and ordinary behavior (Jenks, 2003, p. 28). In this regard, we should mention that culture is not a simple term that can be explained from one angle; it should be considered at many levels. The simplest definition, we can adopt, is that culture represents the way of life of a given society in all its spheres.

Considering the various meanings and definitions of culture, several classifications have been made. For instance, cultures are classified as primitive, folk, classical, feudal, modern, postmodern, traditional, popular, and contemporary. (Sen, 2010, p. 2) These classifications are, somehow, historical relating to each epoch, where human development can be tracked and analyzed.

On the other hand, Newmark suggests five cultural categories to which cultural terms are related, namely "ecology", "material culture", "social culture", "organizations, customs and ideas", as well as "gestures and habits" (Newmark, 1988, p. 103). Thus, each category comprises different aspects of life and generates specific terms and expressions.

The first category, which is "ecology," comprises animals, plants, local winds, mountains, and plains. The second category comprises clothing, food, housing, transport, and communications. The third category is related to work and leisure. The fourth category includes political, social, religious and historical aspects of life among others. As for the fifth category, it comprises human behaviors in different contexts. (Newmark, 1988, pp. 96-103) We notice that these categories cover, almost, all spheres of life and maybe universal when similar among cultures, or considerably differ.

Cultures may have universals, which Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) refer to as "human nature," and specifics, which refer to traits specific to each culture that contribute to cultural diversity as well as cultural dimensions, which are six according to the dimensional approach introduced by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, namely: attitudes towards nature, time orientation, basic human nature, activity orientation, human relationship and attitudes towards space. (as cited in Heidtmann, 2011, pp. 37-39) In other words, on the one hand, cultures have some common characteristics, which relate to the universal human needs and values, on the other hand, they have different traits and dimensions, which result in cultural diversity.

To recapitulate, culture is a wide concept with various definitions. It covers all aspects of human life, be it in the past, the present or even the future. Culture classifications are multiple, cultural categories, as well. Cultures can share similar features and values or have different ideals and backgrounds. This is the reason why

cultural awareness is of paramount importance to understanding commonalities and diversities among cultures.

2.1 Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity is valuable and vital; it is mostly the result of culture specifics as we have seen above. We can define it as the existence of several cultures or the existence of different cultural features in one society; each social group may have its own cultural characteristics, preserves them, and accepts other groups' cultural traits.

Parekh explains that every culture, no matter how rich it is, seeks to develop a limited range of values and potentials and may omit others; it cannot reflect all the valuable elements of human life. Thus, different cultures complement, learn and broaden the perspectives of each other. (Parekh 167) That is to say, cultural diversity does not imply a cultural clash; on the contrary, it promotes awareness, exchange, and dialogue.

Cultural diversity is important in many regards; it brings about concrete reciprocity among citizens, that is, according to Mookherjee (2009) being: "in a mutual position to affirm their allegiance to the polity drawing upon their distinctive values" (p. 135), citizens in a given community can exercise citizenship when their differences are respected. Parekh adds that: "The value of other cultures is independent of whether or not they are options for us... inassimilable otherness challenges us intellectually and morally, stretches our imagination, and compels us to recognize the limits of our categories of thought" (Parekh, 2000, p. 167). It can be inferred from this statement that cultural diversity is a way of enriching one's own culture and experience in addition to challenging one's thoughts and way of life as well as admitting limits and shortcomings.

Cultural diversity has its advantages and disadvantages that should be taken into consideration. Creating multiple perspectives as well as promoting understanding, openness and flexibility are the most important benefits drawn from cultural diversity. Identity loss, ambiguity, confusion, miscommunication, misunderstandings, incompatibilities as well as domination, power and influence imbalances are among the most outstanding disadvantages. Hence, cultural diversity should be valued and managed in moderation.

3. The Concept of Interculturalism

Although interculturalism is not a new concept and can be traced back to 1959, there is no agreement upon this term (Barrett) because it is widely contested; its meanings are, somehow, ambiguous and may challenge national identities. Claude Clanet maintains that the term "intercultural" brings forth the notions of "reciprocity" and "complexity" in the field of culture contacts. (as cited in Seul, 2018, p. 14) The notion of reciprocity requires the existence of two or more cultures as well as mutual exchanges at many levels in relation to cultural, social, religious, and political fields.

As for the notion of complexity, it implies that cross-culture relations are intertwined and encompasses many policies and activities.

The concept of interculturalism developed in Europe from the 1980s and 1990s and centered on encouraging and enhancing dialogue among groups of different backgrounds to reduce prejudice. (James, 2008, p. 3) In fact, minority cultural groups had to face many types of prejudice, such as racism, social division, and xenophobia due to their cultural and religious differences; interculturalism was the most effective means to allow communication and understanding.

We believe that the primary aim of interculturalism is to promote dialogue and communication among various cultural groups as well as respect of other cultures, no matter how different they may be.

It is noteworthy that interculturalism has generated a wide range of academic commentaries and criticisms. Some academics presented arguments in favor of interculturalism, while others handled it with suspicion and harshly criticized this notion.

Parekh states that closed identities can be highly problematic, and cultural equality, due to heterogeneity lack, may prevent pluralism. Therefore, interculturalism becomes a way of understanding and accepting others in a culturally shaped world focusing on the position, where intercultural dialogue may take place, adding that successful multicultural society reflects its members' diversity in its institutions (Parekh, 2000, pp. 172, 342). In other words, culture is a defining characteristic of people and communities, living in a culturally closed world, where one single dominating culture will not be fruitful; cultural pluralism should be encouraged since it allows a better discussion and understanding of different values, beliefs and ways of life. Diversity is not a shame; on the contrary, public institutions should highlight and value differences existing among their members to avoid them feeling excluded and marginalized.

UnaChaudhuri (1991) regards interculturalism as a "cultural rape" (qtd in Knowles, 2010, p. 2); this means that national cultures may be swept away in favor of another "influential" culture. Too much openness can cause cultural dislocation and break up mutual relations. History has shown that most colonialism policies sought to impose colonist culture, which was "superior" in the eyes of those policies-makers.

Thus, the re-examination of interculturalism is inevitable since modern cultural production is more and more characterized by increasing hybridity, syncretism as well as transnationalism, and less monochromatism. (Knowles, 2010, p. 3) That is to say, interculturalism has several advantages and disadvantages that should be carefully weighed; enhancement of good relations among different communities, understanding other cultures, and accepting differences are among the strong points of interculturalism, while cultural integration difficulties, marginalization of minorities, and identity loss are among the drawbacks of this concept. Hence, intercultural exchanges should be carried out in a moderate and conscious way.

Interculturalism is the ability to understand and manage cultural otherness without feeling threatened or losing one's own identity. It is about coexistence in a world full of differences and complexities, which require fostering respect and understanding, as well as rejecting domination.

3.1 Features of Interculturalism

Communication is considered as the basic characteristic and central means of interculturalism aimed at facilitating exchange and understanding among people, who have different backgrounds. (Wood, Landry& Bloomfield, 2006, p. 9) That is to say, communication is regarded as a principle of interculturalism; it enables cultural discussions, which may result in reducing gaps and creating bridges among different cultures as well as preventing all forms of discrimination and exclusion. In this vein, the communication process should be smooth and fluid to avoid misunderstandings, bias, judgments, and stereotypes.

Moreover, openness, dialogue, and interaction are among the defining features of interculturalism (Barrett, 2013); these features allow the development of interculturalism. Openness may challenge ethnocentrism, racism, and prejudice through understanding the specificities of different communities and cultural groups, especially, in an immigration context, where immigrants suffer most often from marginalization and racism.

People, in general, and cultural groups, in particular, should open up to others, seek to understand them, and learn from their experiences in order to enrich their own perspectives. Interculturalism values cultural diversity, multiplicity of perspectives and ideas as well as social cohesion in difference, rejects domination, discrimination and stereotypes, and promotes solidarity and equality.

3.2 Interculturalism and some Related Concepts

In studying cultures contact, one may encounter many intertwined and opposite concepts, which should be well-defined and understood.

Deculturation is a concept that is widely used notably in the context of colonialization; it is the process of destructing the culture of a given nation. It also refers to the loss of one's own culture, involuntarily or voluntarily; for instance, when an Algerian person stays in France for a very long time, he may lose the ability to speak his mother tongue or he may encounter difficulties in speaking dialect or standard Arabic without mixing French words in their diction. Therefore, the deculturation process occurs, unconsciously, as he drifts little by little from his own cultural traditions.

Acculturation refers to the process of adapting slowly to a new culture. It is a culture change or shift towards another culture. Leininger states that acculturation is taking on traits of another culture due to interaction or participation in the acculturative changes in one's own culture. (Leininger, 1970, p. 235) In other words,

acculturation is the adoption of a new culture, which can be opposite to the original one.

Enculturation is another concept; it refers, according to Bishop to: "A process of intentional engagement and interaction between an individual person and others who "represent" their cultural heritage, ... it is developmental" (Bishop, 1991, p. 123). This clearly means that enculturation is about learning culture from others, which involves learning the language, norms, values and traditions; it is an ongoing, conscious or unconscious, process taking place in society.

It is worth noting that the processes of deculturation, acculturation, and enculturation are not static, they are continuously developing according to the power relations among countries.

3.3. Interculturalism versus Multiculturalism

The concepts of interculturalism and multiculturalism may seem quite similar at first glance; however, they are different in many aspects; for instance, the principle of tolerance is the founding principle of multiculturalism, but the principle of openness does not characterize all multicultural relations. In contrast, openness is the prerequisite for developing interculturalism. (Wood, Landry & Bloomfield, 2006, p. 9) In this regard, we should mention that there is a difference between tolerance and openness; tolerance is not a value but a strategy of institutionalization, which does not predicate that there will also be openness to difference. (Hoving, 2004, p. 7) This tolerance does not necessarily mean that there is openness in dealing with other cultures and communities.

According to New Start Magazine (2006), interculturalism promotes interaction and participation of citizens in a common society despite their differences; it is a form of integration, whereas multiculturalism implies the existence of different cultures without necessarily interacting with each other; it highlights and celebrates differences (as cited in Meer & Modood, 2011, p. 14). Thus, interculturalism encourages people of different backgrounds to mix with each other, understand, and respect their differences, while multiculturalism highlights differences among people of different cultures and does not seek unity and integration.

We can say that in a globalized context, interculturalism and multiculturalism may exist at varying degrees. Multiculturalism recognizes the existence and merging of diverse cultures within one society, interculturalism affirms that culture is different and encourages respectful interaction. (Barrett, 2013, p. 169) Both multiculturalism and interculturalism are the products of cultural diversity, the debate of which concept is better may be of little importance in the globalization era, where cultures are constantly in contact, and the forms of communication and expressions are continuously evolving.

3.4 Interculturalismand Contact Hypothesis

The contact hypothesis was developed by Gordon Allport in 1954. He asserted that prejudice among groups could be reduced by involving them in achieving common goals on an equal basis. Since 1994, Miles Hewstone and colleagues (2007) have been developing this perspective to minimize prejudice between Catholics and Protestants. (James, 2008, p. 11) This approach claims that intergroup contact is likely to combat discrimination and violence and promote respect for others and social homogeneity.

Hewstone suggests that forging lasting friendships is more likely to overcome prejudices. (as cited in James, 2008, p. 11) That is to say, building real relationships among diverse cultural groups may enable each group to know about its peers, understand their characteristics, and accept them.

Thus, contact is vital to interculturalism in certain favorable contexts, especially when the will of truly understanding the "other" is there. However, in some situations, contact can reinforce stereotypes when it is not smooth and well-intentioned.

4. Intercultural Communication

Communication is a term that is largely used in daily life in broad and narrow senses; according to Le Poire, communication is defined as: "Messages that are typically sent with intent between two or more persons, messages that are typically seen as intentional, and messages that have consensually shared meaning" (Le Poire, 2006, p. 27). Thus, communication is a process of messages transmission and reception to intendedly exchange information and achieve certain purposes based on shared knowledge.

As for intercultural communication, it is a process involving people from different cultures, who exchange messages and interact with each other. In this vein, Neuliep states that: "Intercultural communication is a complex combination of the cultural, microcultural, environmental, perceptual, and sociorelational contexts between two people who are encoding and decoding verbal messages" (Neulip, 2009, p. 29). This complexity is reflected in the process of message reception, which is greatly influenced by ethnocentric cultures.

The notion of ethnocentrism is predominant in intercultural communication. Thus, every communicative act is subject to the values and standards of one's own culture. We see others through our cultural lens.

Intercultural communication can, if carried properly, avoid cultural clash and reduce violence and conflicts. To this end, cultural context should be taken into consideration because it is the cluster in which people organize and deposit their opinions, perceptions, values, judgements, and emotions.

Hall (1976) distinguishes between high-context culture and low-context culture. In high-context culture, people, greatly, rely on contextual information surrounding the message and pay little attention to the language used. This means that people interpret messages, whether explicit or implicit, according to their own perceptions and

experiences. Inversely, in low-context culture, people rely more on language codes to understand messages. Little information is deduced from the environmental and sociorelational contexts. Thus, words are of paramount importance and determine the implicit and explicit conveyed meanings.

We notice that these two types of cultures produce two different modes of communication: one relies on non-verbal communication and contextual elements, while the other on verbal communication. In both instances, intercultural communication competence (ICC) is much needed and should be well-developed.

It is noteworthy that ICC has become a key element in language learning and teaching. Research findings have shown that this competence helps people overcome ethnocentrism and promote mutual understanding and difference tolerance (Dong, Day & Collaco, 2008). Moreover, Lustig and Koester (2003) point out that ICC is "contextual, and it produces behaviors that are both appropriate and effective; and it requires sufficient knowledge, suitable motivations, and skill action" (p. 64).

To summarize, intercultural communication enables people, from different cultural backgrounds, to establish relationships, exchange information and express their opinions, and feelings. In addition, intercultural communication is based on the combination of various contexts that should be taken into account in encoding and decoding the conveyed messages.

5. Intercultural Miscommunication

Miscommunication can occur in any interactive act; Milroy (1984) defines it as: "A mismatch between the speaker's intention and the hearer's interpretation, the communicative success is threatened" (p. 8). Usually, incorrect reception due to misinterpretation and misunderstanding leads to a communication breakdown.

Moreover, Mortensen and Ayres (1997) believe that miscommunication is, in a huge part, the consequence of "the sheer clamor of clashing viewpoints and the stressful outcomes of opposition and resistance" (p. 219). In this regard, misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and misinformation are responsible for communication failure.

However, miscommunication is not a mere communication failure, but it is a process that may take place because of derivation or violation of communicative rules (Anolli, 2002, p. 5). Derivation can distort the original message, thus, prompting of a variety of errors that can have negative consequences.

We can define intercultural miscommunication as the process by which people, from different cultures, interact with each other but fail to understand each other; the intended message is not properly conveyed, resulting in miscommunication at the lexical, syntactic, semantic, or pragmatic level.

It is, generally, assumed that intercultural communication may, necessarily, involve a clash of cultures because when interacting with people from other cultures, each one carries diverse assumptions, value judgments, and beliefs shaped and guided by

cultural and social standards and norms. Moreover, people are generally afraid to communicate with people from cultures different from their own, due to several reasons; they may think that other cultures are backward compared to theirs, which makes them feel superior to others. Besides, the feeling of "strangeness" of others makes them uncomfortable. This communication apprehension may lead to intercultural miscommunication, due to conflicting experiences and standards.

Based on Hall's distinction discussed above, Chung and Chen (2007) suggest a number of possible communication differences for members from both low-context culture and high-context culture in electronic interaction, which are: "meaning display, value orientation, personal relationship, action base, logic, message learning time, verbal interaction, non-verbal style, idea presentation, message style, and credibility source" (p. 285). The influence of both language and culture on people's interaction is great. The fact of not sharing the same values and norms may pose problems of communication, leading to meaning distortion.

Intercultural miscommunication is chiefly due to subtle differences in cultural standards and linguistic backgrounds. (Dybkjær & Minker, 2008, p. 105) For instance, in the United Kingdom, people avoid the great display of emotions, while in the United States, people can, outwardly, show their emotions, that is why cultural sensitivity is required. Moreover, understanding language nuances is crucial to ensuring good communication flow.

6. Intercultural Translation

Translation is usually defined as the transfer of words and meanings from a source language (SL) to a target language (TL), taking into consideration linguistic, semantic, syntactic, and stylistic features. Baker and Malmkjær(1998) state that: "a definition of translation cannot be based purely on a configuration of elements such as unit of translation, source text, or genre. Rather, a theoretically sound definition of translatorial action must take account of all the elements involved in human communicative action across cultures" (p. 4). Hence, translation is a communication act involving a cross-cultural transfer.

Baker and Malmkjær explain this reality by the fact that: "cultures may have different conventions, transcultural text production may require substitution of elements of the source text by elements judged more appropriate to the function of the target text is to serve" (1998, p. 4). This means that cultural divergences should be taken into account in the translation process as well as the function of the text in a given communicational situation. Therefore, intercultural translation is a translation involving two cultures that can be similar or different; this type of translation requires finding balances between the "self" and the "other".

According to Faiq:

> in intercultural contacts through translation, otherness is measured according to a scale of possibilities within a master discourse: when the other is feared,

> the lexical strategies (centrifugal pressures) one expects are those that realize hierarchy, subordination, and dominance. Otherness can and often does lead to the establishment of stereotypes, which usually come accompanied by existing representations that reinforce the ideas behind them. (2004, p. 37)

It is worth noting that translation can play an influential role in intercultural contexts for it can exclude the "other" through representing "the self" as moral. (Said) Thus, translation becomes a double-edge sword in that it may foster or hinder interculturalism.

Intercultural translators may encounter several difficulties when undertaking intercultural translation; these difficulties arise, mainly, according to Nord, from the: "differences in conventions between the two cultures involved, such as measuring conventions, formal conventions, text-type conventions, conventional forms of address, and salutation formulae" (1997, p. 59).

Indeed, cultural differences, among cultures, are the primary source of difficulties faced by translators, who are intercultural mediators; culture-specific items are hard to translate and may even be untranslatable when they do not have their equivalents in the target culture because they were formed based on historical, religious, social, and ideological developments. For instance, Italian people use many words to name different kinds of pasta, and Eskimos have several names to talk about the snow. (Newmark, 1988, p. 94) Likewise, Arab people have many words to name and describe the desert, the sand, and the camel.

In the same vein, cultural loss in translation may occur when dealing with culturally-bound items as explained by Nida (1964): "Differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure" (p. 130). This loss can be found at the semantic, syntactic, and stylistic levels.

Translation theorists have tried to set leading norms that should be followed by translators to produce good translations; the basic principle was the preservation of meaning and the naturalness of the target text. Several translation strategies were suggested by translation scholars: Nida (1964, 2003), Newmark (1988), Baker (1992), Chesterman (1997), Venuti (2001), Davis (2003) to name just a few. Among these strategies, we can mention equivalence, localization, borrowing, preservation, addition, omission, and adaptation.

Furthermore, domestication and foreignization can be relevant strategies in intercultural translation; domestication seeks to assimilate a foreign text into the target audience's culture; this latter is a dominant strategy in Anglo-American translations, whereas foreignization seeks to preserve the text foreignness by keeping its cultural origins. (Venuti, 1995, p. 16) That is to say, domestication tries to produce a fluent, natural and ethnocentric target text by reducing the strangeness of the original, whereas foreignization tries to retain the foreign features of the source text.

We believe that intercultural translation is quite challenging due to fundamental cultural differences among cultures, which may result in a cultural, semantic, syntactic, and stylistic loss that can be, sometimes, unavoidable, leading, eventually, to untranslatability. As for intercultural translation strategies, they are multiple and varied; domestication and foreignization are interesting options that should not be ruled out. Moreover, intercultural translation can foster interculturalism or undermine intercultural relations; that is the reason why cultural awareness and sensitivity are required.

7. Relevance Theory and Intercultural Translation

As culture and communication are closely linked, we discuss under this section the Relevance theory, which is one of the theories of great influence in the field of communication and pragmatics studies. The founders of this theory are Sperber and Wilson in 1986 and 1995, in their book *Relevance Communication and Cognition.* It focuses on the notion of relevance, which is central to this theory and: "stands as a radical attempt to redefine the foundations of pragmatics communication and to give an account of the theoretical shortcomings of the Gricean programme" (Maruenda Bataller, 2002, p. 29).

The basic idea of this theory is that "intentional communication gives rise to expectations which help us to decide what the communicator intends to convey" (Clark, 2013, p. 4). This means that understanding utterances is mainly based on expectations created by intentional communications. Communicators should assume that what they communicate is relevant to their audience to attract their full attention.

Clark further explains that:

> the key idea within relevance theory is that addressees begin by assuming that the communicator has an interpretation in mind which justifies the expenditure of effort involved at arriving at it which provides enough cognitive rewards for it to be worth expending the mental effort involved in reaching it. (2013, p. 7)

In other words, the communicator should say things that he/she expects will interest the receiver.

Relevance theory focuses on the inferential communication according to relevancy and the balance existing between the cognitive effect and processing effort. The cognitive principle of relevance is an exceptionless generalization that should not be followed by communicators. The communicative principle of relevance assumes that every ostensive communication act conveys the assumption of its relevance. (Maruenda Bataller, 2002, p. 9)

We believe that the cognitive principle of relevancy is relating to the fact that addressees are driven by their interests. The communicative principle of relevance presupposes that every communication content comprises relevant elements sufficient to attract the addressees' attention.

Relevance may be achieved in a given context through strengthening or contradicting contextual assumption or combining it with another contextual assumption to create implicature. (Maruenda Bataller, 2002, p. 19) That is to say, the relevance of an utterance requires the interaction of new and old information through adding more cognitive effect to the given context, which requires less processing effort to assimilate the meaning.

Moreover, intentionality is a principle that is widely dealt with in communication and pragmatics. It infers that all utterances vehicle intentions. (Gutt, 2000, p. 212) Thus, all communicators have obvious or hidden purposes they want to achieve through a particular use of words, which affirms the assumption that communication is intentional.

Another important principle is communication clues, which are of key importance within the relevance approach and enable addressees to understand how relevance is achieved. These clues may arise from semantic representations, syntactic properties (repetition, elision, word order, stress…) phonetic properties, and formulaic expressions. (Gutt, 2000, pp. 130-160). We believe that these clues should be taken into consideration for they represent keys to understanding the communicator's utterances, intentions, and relevance.

Additionally, communication clues are ways in which meanings are encoding. Special attention should be paid to word order, vagueness, direct and indirect communication, literalness (irony, for instance, is non-literal), metaphorical and literary use, disputed meanings. (Clark, 2013, pp. 18-29) In other words, linguistic, semantic, syntactic, pragmatic, stylistic, phonetic, and formulaic features have to be carefully analyzed to understand any given utterance and determine its relevance.

Gutt (2000) has tried to apply relevance theory to translation claiming that translation is an interlingual interpretative use of language since it occurs between two languages (or more) and requires interpretation skills. This is the reason why he distinguishes between direct and indirect translations. In this vein, we should remind that the translator conveys someone else's ideas, be it directly (through preserving all the original properties) or indirectly (through conveying the original's most relevant features), he/she is a communication mediator; thus, relevance theory principles can be of great benefit to translators in general.

Some principles of relevance theory may offer interesting tools to translators to understand the original meaning, its context and author's intentions. In addition, this theory provides flexible choices to translators, especially, in selecting the most appropriate translation strategies. The intercultural translator may have a variety of choices in relation to translation techniques, such as equivalence, borrowing, omission, addition, preservation, and explication, by choosing whether to translate every element of the original or just what seems the most relevant to his/her audience requiring the least processing efforts. Moreover, domestication and foreignization are interesting approaches that can achieve relevancy in intercultural translation in general.

8. Some Samples' Analysis

In this section, we will conduct a content analysis of some press articles' titles retrieved from the electronic portal "Qantara.de" in Deutsch, English, and Arabic. This portal is part of a project to promote intercultural dialogue with the Islamic world and combat discrimination and prejudice. The project is funded by the German Foreign Office as a response to the change in world relations with the Islamic world after the September 11th attacks in the United States. The "Qantara.de" has been launched in 2003 and is run by the German Federal Agency for Civic Education, Germany's International Broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW), the Goethe-Institute (GI), and the German Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations.

The choice of this electronic portal is not at random; it presents rich and varied contents as well as interesting discussions of controversial subjects in relation to society, religion, and politics and seeks to promote intercultural understanding and respect.

When we browse the Qantara site, we find many sections, such as: politics, society, culture, and essays. These sections display several articles, interviews, essays, and analyses which deal with a variety of topics and spark heated debates about Muslims, Arab countries, Islam, Arab women, Arab regimes, and Arab Spring. We present below some samples of articles' titles that seem relevant to our study and discuss their Arabic translations, available at www.ar.qantara.de website.

An article by Marian Brehmer under the title "Turkey's Aramaic Christians. Where they speak Jesus's language", published on 24.12.2019, dealt with Aramaic Christians' will to preserve their ancient culture and language although they suffered from exile in Anatolia. When reading the Arabic translation, we notice that the translator added "in East Anatolia" and paraphrased the whole sentence "Where they Speak Jesus's language". The Arabic version reads as follows "Preservation of Christian Syriac heritage in Mardin- Turkey". The translator chose not to literally translate the original version and preferred to refer to "Syriac Christian heritage" using a generalization strategy, which seemed more relevant to the Arab reader than the phrase "Jesus's language" that may raise heated debate as to the rituals and beliefs of this community. The translator used an interpretative model of translation, taking into account context-specific aspects and focusing on the communicative and cognitive processes that require, in this instance, the least processing efforts on the part of Arab readers to understand the message and to avoid intercultural misunderstanding since religious matters are highly sensitive.

Another article by Joseph Mayton under the title "Muslim youth in America- The "mipster" phenomenon", published on 12.06.2015, dealt with interesting aspects of interculturalism, antagonism towards Muslims, individuality and Muslim hipsters in America. When reading the Arabic translation, we saw that the translator added "Veiled women taking selfie on skateboards…Who are the Mipsters?" He completely paraphrased the article's title when referring to Arab veiled women, who were not

explicitly mentioned in the original title to attract Arab readers and give them a general idea about the article content. He built on the existing assumptions by using an interpretative model of translation and providing a relevant context to the Arab reader to be able to understand the term "Mipster". He ensured a successful intercultural communication since the original author's intentions overlapped with the reader's assumptions.

An interview by JannisHagmann, with the South African, imam Muhsin Hendricks-"Islam does give us leeway to think", published on 17.10.2014, in which the imam talked about homosexuality, which is not a sin according to his interpretation of Coran. The author decided that this title is, optimally, relevant to the Arab reader since it is implicit and does not, overtly, mention that homosexuality is tolerated in Islam. However, when we read the Arabic translation, we noticed that the translator paraphrased the original as such: "Coran does not forbid homosexuality" which may seem quite shocking to Arab readers who are well aware that Coran and Islamic precepts forbid homosexuality. Thus, the literal translation of the English title would have been more relevant to the Arab reader since it is relatively implicit, unlike the Arabic one. This translation is not appropriate and compatible with the deeply-rooted religious, cultural, and social assumptions of the Arab reader and appears to be a new assumption that needs more processing efforts; it may spark controversial debate, and lead to complete intercultural misunderstanding. The descriptive model would have been more appropriate to achieve relevance and acceptability in translation.

An article by Margot Badran under the title "Debate about Female Genital Mutilation in Egypt. The Ongoing Battle for the Female Body, published on 27.03.2013, dealt with the circumcision of females in Egypt. When reading the Arabic translation, we noticed that the translator used the term "circumcision" instead of "mutilation", adopting a lexical substitution as follows "Females circumcision in Egypt… The Ongoing Battle on Eve's Body". The translator opted for a term that is compatible with the social assumptions and practices of Arab readers to make the information, optimally, relevant and not to cause intercultural miscommunication that would arise from a negative lexical choice. In this context, the term "mutilation" has negative connotations and may cause intercultural clash since "female circumcision" is a deeply-rooted practice in some Arab and Asian countries. Arab readers will make the least effort to understand the Arabic title since it matches their cognitive environment by giving them an existing assumption and not creating a new one that would cause cultural resistance.

An article by Lena-Maria Möller and SerdarKurnaz under the title "Muslims and the COVID-19 pandemic. No pilgrims in times of coronavirus?" published on 22.04.2020, dealt with the decision to suspend pilgrimage by Saudi authorities. When we read the Arabic translation, we noticed that the translator added a whole sentence as follows: "No pilgrimage season because of coronavirus. Covid-19 Firm Islamic theological rules to avoid pandemics". The translator used explicitation strategy as part

of the interpretative model of translation to state the reasons for pilgrimage suspension from the very beginning and to highlight the fact that Islamic rules foster preventative health measures and pandemic control to preserve general benefit and collective interest. The translator deemed this additional information, which requires the least processing effort on the part of Arab readers, vital to avoid religious misunderstanding since a successful communication relies on a shared relevant context.

9. Conclusion

Interculturalism fosters cultural differences respect and acceptance since it values cultural diversity, multiplicity of perspectives, and social cohesion. Intercultural communication enables people from different cultural backgrounds to establish relationships, and is based on the combination of various contexts that should be taken into account in encoding and decoding the conveyed messages. As for Intercultural miscommunication, it is chiefly due to differences in cultural norms and linguistic backgrounds; this is the reason why cultural sensitivity and linguistic subtleties awareness are required along with intercultural competence development. Intercultural translation is a double-edged sword for it promotes interculturalism or undermines intercultural relations, which makes it a highly challenging task. Thus, the translator, as an intercultural mediator, should develop cultural awareness and sensitivity to deal with intercultural difficulties in translation. Some principles of relevance theory can be, effectively, applied to intercultural translation by providing flexible choices to translators, especially, in selecting the most appropriate translation strategies. The analysis of some examples with intercultural content reveals that both descriptive and interpretative modes can be adopted in translation, depending on the context, to achieve optimal relevance and reproduce the same communicative and cognitive effects. Finally, relevance theory provides a varied range of strategies, such as paraphrasing, generalization, lexical substitution, omission, addition, and explicitation to relevantly transfer intercultural content by building on existing assumptions that require less effort on the part of the reader, and avoiding the creation of new ones.

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