



Short Communication

The Challenges of Language, Culture, and Translation in a Global Society

Alphonsa Diana Haokip*

Department of Education, Rajiv Gandhi University, Doimuck-791112, Arunachal Pradesh, India.

Abstract: Language and culture are like the two sides of the same coin. A language is part and parcel of any community, society, or ethnic group that embodies the culture and traditions of that community. Language, as a part of the cultural core, is at the heart of culture. It is the dominant tactic through which the members relate and interact. The translation occupies a significant role in reaching out to different languages and cultures as an acceptable medium through which to reach out to other cultures beyond the set limits. We know that translation plays a significant role in a voyage through different cultures and communication. Therefore, it is an effective and important means of sharing and reaching out from one culture to another, even amid many obstacles and constraints. The process of translating the cultural elements of one culture to another culture is a herculean task in spite of every effort from the translator, as each culture has its own unique meanings and symbols associated with the language they originated from. Translation serves as a bridge between languages and connects all units of the world in the global network. Further, the diversity of culture and language is so immense that it is challenging to do justice while engaging in translation. It entails that a keen devotion should be accorded to various aspects that exist in each culture and language while initiating and progressing in the translation without attenuating and garbling the original meaning. This paper attempts to study the challenges encountered in language, culture, and translation in a globalized society.

Keywords: Challenges, Languages, Translation, Culture, Global Society

I. Introduction

Change is the law of nature and culture too. However, what we consider to be sacred is also subject to change. The change affects every component of culture. Over the years, changes have taken place in the way people construct their homes, the way they dress, changes in marriage customs, social dimensions, and the way they move about. John Dewey rightly said, "Every good society gets encumbered with what is trivial, with dead wood from the past, and with what is positively perverse." As each society moves towards modernization, the more it realizes the need to preserve, promote, and transmit its language and culture and, in the process, unintentionally imbibes and adopts the language, culture, and tradition of other societies too.

*Corresponding Author: sr.alphonsahaokip@gmail.com

Received on: 07.08.2021, Accepted on: 08.12.2021

Cite as: Haokip, A.D. 2021. The challenges of language, culture, and translation in a global society, Dera Natung Government College Research Journal, 6, 27-33.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56405/dngcrj.2021.06.01.03>

The translation process is very often obstructed by the constraints of structure, lexical, and context. In addition to this, the flow of the translation is affected when it comes to idioms and proverbial expressions. He is in a dilemma about how to transfer the source language from the target language while maintaining its meaning intact. Language is so deeply embedded in the culture that it is difficult to find a word that is appropriate for the culture when considering the linguistic setting, the speaker's relationship with the words, and the circumstances in which the words were used and expressed in linguistic features and cultural practices prevalent in different parts of the world, translation plays the role of bridging and communicating for all. So it links all units in the world into a global network (Gelavizh Abbasi, 2012). Conducting a study on the challenges of language translation and culture is inevitable in this age of globalization in which the mode of communication has revolutionized, breaking through the boundaries of languages and fostering proactive cultural and knowledge exchange through the development of technology.

The objective of the Study

The goal of this study is to investigate the challenges of language, culture, and translation in a global society.

Language

All living languages and cultures change because the people who use the language change with civilization, modernization, and inventions in the process of associating with people of other languages and cultures. Language is a very important component of our lives. Lyons (1970) asserted that languages are the primary modes of communication used by specific groups of humans within the society of which they are members. It is a phenomenon and a factor that links different cultures and a way of expressing feelings and ideas that people try to convey (Gelavizh Abbasi, 2012). In written form, it functions as the long-term record of information and knowledge from one generation to the next. Likewise, in the spoken form, it functions as the primary channel to coordinate our day-to-day conduct with one another. Therefore, translating a language from one culture to another has higher demands than being a linguist or an expert interpreter.

Culture

According to Matsumoto (1996), culture is a set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, passed from one generation to the next. Culture encompasses the totality of society much more than what is tangible and observable. It embodies the values, beliefs, customs, and lifestyles developed by a group of individuals, and the baton is handed over from one generation to another.

Translation

Matsumoto defines translation as "the interpretation of verbal signs through the use of another language," while the Oxford Dictionary defines it as "the process of translating words or text from one language into another." Some scholars consider it a craft or art since every act of translation is an expression of the creative impulse, while others perceive it as science on account of the technical modalities involved in it. Further, to translate meaningfully the essence and the content of a text message to the target audience, the social and cultural factors of the original text should be given due importance as translation plays a crucial role in crossing different cultures (Karamanian, 2002). In every translation, there is an element of loss or gain, as there is the possibility of twisting the meaning during the process of decoding and encoding the message. Translation plays a vital role in making a culture universal and general (Gelavizh Abbasi, 2012) and is not an isolated enterprise which entails the transmission of culture and language beyond the horizons of cultural and linguistic frontiers.

Research Questions

An extensive review of the previous studies conducted similar to this study and considering the challenges of language, culture, and translation, the investigator has generated the following questions to facilitate getting into the heart of the problem. This will be helpful for translators in adopting a viable strategy while engaging in translation.

1. What are the pressing challenges of language, culture, and translation in modern times?
2. What are the strategies to be employed in translation?
3. Is global society a setback for the preservation of culture?
4. What are the limitations of translating a language?

Methodology

This study has been conducted using information obtained from digital library books, articles, papers, and online journals.

Significance of the Study

The translation is cumbersome and perilous too since the essence and meaning of the words contained in the source language could be altered in the translated language when it comes to figurative sentences, idioms and phrases, and culturally bound terminologies and expressions. Being able to translate a language from one

culture to another has higher demands than being a linguist or an expert interpreter. The purpose of the present study is to explore the challenges encountered in the translation of language and culture in a diverse global society and narrow the gap that exists between the languages and cultures.

Language Challenges in Translation

The job of translation is not a cup of tea for everyone. Because to do justice to translation, a translator must be well acquainted with the source and comfortable with the target language, as the language structure differs from language to language. When gaps between two languages and cultures exist, achieving a perfect transfer is very challenging (Guerra, 2012), and this requires extra effort from the translators either to add, remove, or rearrange the words to communicate meaningfully and efficiently in the targeted language.

Language is an expression of the culture and individuality of its speaker (Akbari, 2013) since language and culture are closely related to each other (Guo, 2012). Language is part of a culture and plays a very important role (Geng, 2013). Just as the cultures are diverse, so are the languages. Language is an integral part of the culture of people and the leading way by which the members of society communicate (Guo, 2012). The trend of translation has come to facilitate communication and mutual understanding between people (Marcel Kakpo, 2017). A: Translation is a meaningful enterprise that offers a common platform on which people of varied tongues, cultures, and nations can have a dialogue and share their views and thoughts. It realises the transformation and sharing of different languages and cultures (Geng, 2013). As Kramersch (1998) defines it, language is a system of signs that are seen as having cultural value.

Challenges of Culture in Translation

Cultural variety, as recognised through discussions, influences the way the speakers perceive the world. So, when translating from one language to another, the culture of both languages is to be given due importance (Akbari, 2013). Translation can be isolated from cultural factors. Therefore, without cultural knowledge, it is difficult to translate the original language into the target language accurately (Guo, 2012). A language is not free of cultural influences. A translator without understanding the culture cannot translate well (Geng, 2013). Translation, which is a serious business, should be approached sensibly to avoid poor results. Moreover, a translator must be able to write well and have an excellent command of the nuances of language use (El-daly, 2015). Because culture has such a strong influence on language, knowledge of cultural background is essential when translating words and phrases. Newmark (1988, p.3) stated that culture is a complex whole, including art, customs, belief, knowledge, and some other features and conditions obtained by inhabitants of society.

Sometimes the charge of translation is taken on a lighter note, which could have serious consequences in damaging the authenticity of the content of the source language and offering a distorted message in the target language. Therefore, a translator must be able to write well and have an excellent command of the nuances of language use (El-daly, 2015). A language is considered to be a system of communication used by a particular community of speakers with specific customs (Parinaz Akheshmeh, 2015). People of every society have their own language, which seems strange and mysterious to other cultures. Thus, every nation has its own culture and related cultural-specific items (Parinaz Akheshmeh, 2015). Translators should transmit the message, sense, and text (Siamak Babaee, 2014). The translator has to keep in mind not only the lexical equivalence but rather the importance of the cultural impact on the reader and make translating decisions accordingly (Siamak Babaee, 2014). The audience must perceive the culture and the otherness of another world in their interest and curiosity to know about different cultures and customs with a special language for every nation. Through this interest, the necessity for translation has been awoken (Parinaz Akheshmeh, 2015).

Impact of Global Society on Language and Culture

Today's world is more than ever before a world of communication (Marcel Kakpo, 2017). Communication heads the proceedings of business enterprise, which facilitates healthy relationships among the nations fosters peace talks and cultural negotiations, and embraces all peoples of different languages and countries. We know that a nation's culture flourishes by interacting with other cultures (Akbari, 2013). From time immemorial, language reflects culture, comprises their cultural background, the nature of their approach to daily life, and their form of organization and welfare. Cultural difference has a great impact on translation (Geng, 2013). This in a nutshell demonstrates the prominence of communication in all human activities and highlights that translation is inexorable in the world of cultural dissimilarities since no one can master all the languages of the entire world.

The modern world is condensed into a global village that is easily accessible to every means of modern connectivity, and where peaceful coexistence and universal harmony with one another are the needs of the day. In such a scenario, the role of translation is not only limited to a linguistic act (Saeed, 2015) but can be instrumental in eliminating misunderstandings and judgemental attitudes by fostering cultural interactions. This will enable us to accommodate diverse cultural communities across the margins of linguistic and cultural boundaries. Just as any civil society needs written and established laws and regulations to function effectively, so too can the cultural patterns, customs, and ways of life be smoothly expressed through language (Geng, 2013).

Conclusion

From the study, we can conclude that translation is faithfully affiliated with language and culture. The culture is vibrant, dynamic, and changes with the changes in people, geographical and historical events, and technological advances (Parinaz Akheshmeh, 2015). Hence, a translator is like a messenger who needs to comprehend the message fully and transfer it to the target language in a way that seems appealing to the reader with a creative and flexible mind (Siamak Babae, 2014). Greater diligence is called for when a language is translated because the language represents the sum and substance of what a community is, its culture, age-old traditions, and practises so that they do not get eclipsed by the maze of a modernised and globalised world.

References

- Akbari, M. (2013).** The Role of Culture in Translation. *Journal of Academic and Applied Studies*, 3(8), 13-21. Retrieved November 25, 2019
- Ali Poordaryaei Nejad, H. K. (2019).** Exploring Strategies Used by Costello in Rendering Cultural Elements while Translating 'The Blind Owl'. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*, 7(1), 99-106. Retrieved November 27, 2019
- El-daly, H. M. (2015).** Paradigm Shifts in Translation Studies: Focus on Linguistic, Cultural, Social and Psychological Turns. *Sino-US English Teachin*, 12(5), 369-386. Retrieved November 25, 2019
- Gelavizh Abbasi, S. S. (2012).** Language, Translation, and Culture. *International Conference on Language, Medias and Culture*, 33, 1-5. Retrieved November 24, 2019
- Geng, X. (2013).** Techniques of the Translation of Culture. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(6), 977-981. doi:10.4304/tpls.3.6.977-981
- Guerra, A. F. (2012).** Translating culture: problems, strategies and practical realities. *Art and Subversion*, 1(3), 1-27. Retrieved November 25, 2019
- Guo, H. (2012).** A Brief Analysis of Culture and Translation. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(2), 343-34. doi:10.4304/tpls.2.2.343-347
- Karamanian, A. P. (2002).** Translation and Culture. *Translation Journal*, 6(1), 1-2. Retrieved November 25, 2019

-
- Kuriačková, I. (2018).** Translation of Culture Specific Terms in the EU Legislative Documents. *Luxembourg*, 11-72. Retrieved November 26, 2019
- Marcel Kakpo, P. A. (2017).** Translation Challenges in the Translation of Ananse the Stomach Journalist. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*, 5(2), 32-41. Retrieved November 23, 2019
- Parinaz Akhesmeh, A. D. (2015).** Strategies of Translation of Culture-Specific Items from Azerbaijan Turkish into English: A Case Study of "Dede Qurqud". *International Journal of Applied Linguistic Studies*, 4(1), 8-16. Retrieved November 24, 2019
- Saeed, S. A. (2015).** Translation and its Role in Enhancing the Peaceful Coexistence of Cultures. *European Journal of English Language, Linguistics and Literature*, 2(1), 43-61. Retrieved November 27, 2019
- Siamak Babae, W. R. (2014).** Creativity, Culture and Translation. *English Language Teaching*, 7(6), 14-18. doi:10.5539/elt.v7n6p14