

Language and Culture in Translation

*Dr. Suleman Ramadan Al-Dagel
7th October University*

O. Introduction:

It is properly useful from the commencement to assert that principal to this study is the reference to the historical background against which translation theory has developed, and consequently its impact in the notions of language and culture. However, before delving in this complex issue, an introductory step is to set up the relationship between language and culture.

1: The Relationship between Language and Culture:

Not a small number of works either in the past or in the recent times dealt with the extent of influence between language and culture. To prove this, for example, **Hoijer** (1953), **Whorf** (1956), **Sapir** (1958), **Lotman** and **Uspensky** (1978) and **Valdes** (1986) all were of the opinion that both language and culture can not be separated. **Humboldt** (1767-1835) viewed language as a dynamic activity and as an expression

of the culture and individuality of the speaker. This view was re-emphasized by **Whorf** (1956) and **Sapir** (1958), that ended up with their hypothesis of linguistic relativity. According to this hypothesis, language, which is the shaping force of people or a culture, modules all of its individual speakers in more or less the same way.

Although the views of **Humboldt**, **Sapir** and **Whorf** seem to meet on the role of language and culture in receiving the world, the implications of their hypothesis for translation, argues **Snell-Hornby** (1995:41) are contradictory. Taken to its extreme, the linguistic relativity hypothesis implies that translation is impossible, since language is embedded into the individual culture of its speakers. In contrast, **Humboldt's** theory, which is actually based on **Chomsky's** principle of language universals, again taken to its extreme, implies that everything is translatable. Thus, **Snell-Hornby** has reached a conclusion that is midway between the extremes. She presupposes that transability of a given text depends mainly on the degree to which it is steeped in a culture, and on the distance in place and time that exists between the source text (**ST**) and the target text (**TT**). **Ogawa** (1995) criticizes the **Sapir-Whorf** hypothesis as it results in "a closed-cultural ball which excludes other cultures and the sense components that belong to these other cultures". He affirmed that relevant cultures and languages have a common "**hard core**" of "**invariance**", as indicated by Malinowski (1960) in his "Scientific Theory of

Culture'. He suggested three theories: 1- Language presupposes interlingual priori, which shows what is common among different languages. 2- Culture presupposes an intercultural priori, which makes us able to identify similar objects and facts that lie behind differences of language and culture. 3- It is on the basis of the interlingual and intercultural relations that translation is possible. **Wilss** (1994) rejected the idea that the relation between language and culture determines every aspect of translation, since many texts transcend the purely cultural boundaries, particularly in the field of language for specific purposes (LSP), and have similar universal aspects in one way or another.

In spite of the controversy concerning linguistic relativity, translation theorists agree that language is part of culture. **Snell-Hornby** (1995 :39) said "Language is not an isolated phenomenon suspended in vacuum", but an integral part of culture". While **Bassnett** (1991:14), believed that language is "A heart within the body of culture". **Hungwi** (1999: 121) classified three types of cultures: material, institutional, and mental. To him, languages belong to the second type. "Language mirrors other parts of culture, supports them, spreads them and helps to develop others". He is of the opinion that "Language is the life blood of culture which is the track along which language forms and develops". (122).

2- The Linguistic –Based Approach to Translation:

Traditionally, translation has been described as a comparative

linguistic activity, whereby it has been tackled primarily from the perspective of the difference in language structures (Schaffner: 1994). Since the time of "Cierco", almost a century ago – until recently – a number of translation theorists – who are seen as authorities in the field – as **Nida** (1964), **Catford** (1965), **Newmark** (1981), and **Hatim** and **Mason** (1990) have approached translation as an operation basically performed on language. In such a linguistic view of translation, the word, phrase or sentence represented the basic unit of segment in translation studies. (**Hewson** and **Martin**: 1991; **Gannal**:1993; **Ezzat**:1993). This is ascribed to the fact that the linguistic view of translation deals with the semantic and syntactic transformations of words and word orders and on the problems they pose for the translator because of the lack of direct one-to-one correspondence between languages (cf. **Robinson**: 1997; **Heswon** and **Martin**: 1991). All cultural-bound terms, as idioms, collocations, and proverbs...etc, are linguistic categories typical of translation problems.

Fawcett (1997), explained that the relationship between linguistics and translation is twofold: The findings of linguistics can be applied to the practice of translation, and a linguistic theory of translation, as opposed to a literary one for instance, can be developed. He concluded that modern linguistics provides good tools for the analysis and understanding of language, which is part of the translation competence. Nonetheless, such tools are only diagnostic techniques that

explain" what has gone wrong in translation after the event" and not" during the event" (124). Accordingly, linguistics has to be seen as only one way but not the only one for accounting for the translation process. In the linguistic approach to translation, the notion of equivalence is instrumental at all linguistic levels (**Baker**: 1992). Equivalence is regarded the deceive target in translation and exclusive criterion for preferring the quality of translation as evident in "most translation treatises from "Tyler" to the late 18th century contemporary writers" **Garnal** (1993: 10).

The shortcomings of such approach were reached by a number of translation theorists as: **Lefevere** (1990), **Garnal** (1993), **Scheffner** (1994), **Wilss** (1994), **Nida** (1994) and **Snell- Hornby** (1995). **Alvarez** and **Vidal** (1996:7) concluded" It is no longer possible to limit oneself to the word as a translation unit. **Nida** (1994: 1) sums up the possible reasons behind such inadequacy:

"The meanings of verbal symbols on any and every level depend on the culture of the language community. Language is part of culture, and in fact, is the most complex set of habits that any culture exhibits. It reflects the culture, provides access to culture, and in many aspects constitutes a model of the culture".

In line with **Nida's** view is that of **Lefevere** (1990) who confirmed the impossibility of relying on linguistics as the only consideration in the translation process. **Arrojo** (1998) refers to this linguistic-based approach to translation as "the essentialist

approach". Its main goal is to impose ideal objective universal ethics for translation practice, disregarding the differences in culture, language and ideology involved. Thus, the essentialists undermine the political role of translation and translators in shaping source language and target language cultures.

Another reason that might have helped to reveal the inadequacy of the linguistic based approach to translation is the emergence of the theories of pragmatics in which language is viewed as an act of communication (Leech (1983) and Hatim (1999)). As Snell-Hornby (1995 :68) clarifies "The most fruitful interaction between linguistics and translation theory came with the pragmatic reorientation of the 1970s". Consequently, emphasis in translation was laid on the receiver as in Nida's dynamic equivalence effect and on his interface with the sender. With the pragmatic input in translation theory, culture has become a crucial element in carrying the message across in translation.

Probably, the awareness of the inadequacy of the linguistic approach, as Hatim (1999) speculates, lies in the new definition of culture itself. Two definitions, argues Hatim, are relevant to the study of language and culture in translation.

Agar (1992: 11) presented the first: " culture is not something that people have; it is something that fills the space between them. And culture is not an exhaustive description of everything; it focuses on differences that can vary from task to

task and groups to groups. **Snell-Hornby** (1995:50) provided the second, in which "culture is considered a totality of knowledge, proficiency and perception in which language is " not an isolated phenomenon suspended in vacuum; but "an integral part of culture".

3- The Cultural Turn:

Within the framework of the above definitions in which the key words are "difference" in the first, and "totality of knowledge" in the second, the research in the field of translation studies (theory & practice) faced and/ or encountered a dramatic change **Hatim** (1999). Famous translation theorists preferred to term this change "The Cultural Turn", amongst them: **Bassnett** and **Lefevere** (1990:4-5), **SnellHornby** (1990:84) and **Robinson** (1997:233). More obviously, **Bassnett** (1991 :14) argued this same idea (The transfer of meaning, contained in the set of language signs into another set of language signs through competent use of the dictionary, the process involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria". Other translation theorists did not disagree with the above notion as: **Vermeer** (1986), **Lefevere** (1990) and **Lambert** (1994).

The "Cultural Turn" has critical implications concerning the translation studies. It is well known, more recently, that the translator has to be both bilingual and bicultural. The advocators of this trend are many as **Vermeer** (1986) **Gamal** (1993) and **Aboussenna** (1998). This shift of emphasis from the linguistic to the cultural perspective high-lighted the role of hermeneutics in the framework of analyzing "cultural differences" which could be employed in the theory of translation.

Such cultural turn is characterized by its concern with target culture. The impact of this turn is summed up by **Snell-Hornby** (1995:43) in:

- 1- Change in orientation from the linguistic to the cultural transfer.
- 2- Translation is seen as an act of communication rather than a process of transcoding.
- 3- Orientation is directed towards the target text's function rather than prescription of the source text.
- 4- A text is seen as an integral part of the world and not an isolated specimen of language.

Simon (1996) explained that the cultural turn has initiated the process of investigating the different procedures, in which translation is enriched by cultural representation, particularly in science, fiction and novel. Such examinations no doubt bring about the understanding of the cultural factors at work in translation during a specific period. Moreover, emphasis is placed on the material reality of texts in translation, and not on the originals.

In addition, to use **Simon's** mere words, "the absence of a clear cut definition of the term culture represents a problematic area in translation studies". Even though

- translators are obliged to reproduce the cultural phase of the original, the meaning of culture is not identified, as is supposed to be unified and unproblematic. She added that the dictionary could not unravel the question of transfer of cultural meaning, but through the valid understanding of the real use of language in reality and in reconstructing the value of the cultural meaning in the target language. The question to be asked, she added, is "to what extent can we consider this concept equivalent to one which we can frame in our own terms?" "to which the answer lies in a "value judgement decreeing the degree of possible equivalence between the two cosmogonies". Based on the above, however, the translator has the right to engage with the values of a text, in order to determine appropriate cultural transfer of meaning.

Strait (1981) postulates that a successful translation is the by-product of "knowledge of the culture of language 1 and language 2, which is the objective of translation, and the intuition to whether or not the translation is satisfying". This knowledge enables the translator to vary his/her techniques, such as deleting, adding, paraphrasing.. etc, so that the final translation

outcome text is satisfactory.

Toury (1995) viewed translation as a sociocultural event comprising the various aspects of the communicative situation and the social background, the client, ...etc., that impinge upon the act of translation. Furthermore, he added, "the translator's decision on using a certain strategy and on producing a certain product in a certain way depends on the sociocultural situation, in which the translation is carried out, including the norms themselves as social facts expressing social notions of correctness. He expects the readers' acceptance rather than their rejection.

Nearly **Wilss** (1994:38) expressed the same ideas, who argues that translation is socioculturally linguistic behavior", and as such there is an impending need for adaptive strategies in order to reproduce the "same impact and appeal of the original" in the target text. Such adaptation can help to achieve a degree of functional equivalence with the source text, and the translator has to rely on knowledge-based operations and not on direct formal equivalence, in order to have satisfactory translations.

In line with **Wilss'** view is that of **Dingwaney** (1995) who is convinced that the translator, in search of equivalence, has to pay special attention to contexts "a world, a culture" in which words are used. He admits that both SL & TL in recet translation theory and practice have become so significant that they to be considered before a translator proceeds with his /her task. This is attributed to the fact that translations are " a means by which

cultures travel".

Another similar viewpoint is that of **Nida** (1998). He indicated that the old view of translation, which emphasized on the structures of SL and TL and their interrelations, are now replaced by the sociolinguistic approach whose main concern is the uses of language and the values associated with them. *Therefore, this trend accounts for assorted of culture and the way in which they are reflected in texts.*

Thus, culture has come to be approached differently, in terms of how cultural knowledge is shaped. For example, the role of "ideology" in constructing cultural knowledge and its political role in the transfer across cultures. In the late 1970s, in which "history" was the key word, the focus in translation was laid on the impact of the cultural system on translation, in the sense of how and why translation is used in the target culture.

4- Translation as Power:

In the 1980s, translation was seen in terms of power roles it plays in different periods of history. See: **Lefevere** (1990), **Wolf** (1995) and **Bassnett** (1996), Culture may have a subversive power, **Alvarez & Vidal** (1996) e.g., the case of Bible translating in the early Christian church (cf. **Smalley**, 1995; **Lefevere**, 1990) and it may have an innovative power, e.g. introducing new ideas through translation. Also, translation may have a radical power, e.g., struggling for asserting national identity (cf. **Bassnett**, 1996).

In the late 1980s and 1990s, new trends in translation studies

came to view, namely the feminist and the postcolonial approaches to translation, which had a great impact on the field. Translation reflected hegemonic power of the dominating culture (the colonizer) over the dominated ones (the colonies) particularly in the case of what is known to be "The First World" and "The Third World" countries. Such hegemony was discussed in as far as it controlled not only the economics and ideology of the Third World countries, but also their practice of translation. See: (cf. **Venuti**, 1992:1-17; **Dingwaney**, 1995:3; **Layoun**, 1995:264). In this sense translation has come to be addressed as cultural politics (**Venuti**, 1993), imperialism (**Cheyfitz**, 1991) and hegemony (**Jacquemond**, 1992). That is, translation is no longer treated in the strict sense of merely crossing boundaries across cultures, but in a much wider sense, particularly in the far-reaching effects of translation from the sociopolitical vantage points. Central to this sense is the formation of cultural identities and canon. See (**Venuti**, 1993,1998; **Lefevere**, 1990; **Alvarez** and **Vidal**, 1996; **Lambert**, 1994).

The postcolonialists, according to **Robinson** (1997), differ from descriptivists in two major aspects. First, the descriptivists are more scientifically oriented, and hence more objective. In contrast, the postcolonialists are more politically motivated and more emotionally oriented due to their sympathizing with minority cultures against colonialism. Second, whereas the descriptivists believe that the target culture controls translation,

the post colonialists do not hold the same view, as they find many examples in history in which the imperial source cultures have controlled the practice of translation..

Moreover, in the 1990s, the concept of equivalence, which was prevalent in the traditional linguistics-based approach (**Chesterman**, 1998), has been shaken and has become *imaginary* (**Ezzat**, 1993) *perverse* (**Holmes**, 1998) and *illusory* (**Hatim**, 1999). Equivalence has become no longer a priori requirement for translation; it has become a result of the translator's decisions as a reaction to **Toury's** descriptive model. (cf. **Chesterman**, 1998:93). When employed, equivalence has become addressed in terms of making this cultural difference or betweenness "visible", as visibility has become the key word in translation studies in the 1990s (**Bassnett**, 1996: 22). Such visible difference can be achieved by either of the two strategies: demonstration or foreignization. Demonstration is a strategy, which refers to "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target language cultural values, bringing the other back home". Foreignization in contrast, refers to "the ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad" (**Venuti**, 1995:20). In this modern framework, the translator's role is assessed on the basis of his/ her intervention in the process of transfer which illustrates the translator's exercise of "power" through his/her intervention in translation, a role crucial to the formation of cultures and identities.

This school which changed the cultural history of translation from the realm of linguistics to that of sociopolitical systems, is known as "polysystems, translation studies," descriptive translation studies, or manipulative school (cf. **Genzler**, 1993; **Bassnett**, 1996; **Shuttleworth**, 1997). Culture in this school, which encompasses belief structures, moral norms, linguistic conventions, and political experiences; not only shapes translation, but also shapes the notion of equivalence itself (**Robinson**, 1997).

From this overview, the researcher notes the following important remarks about language and culture in the theory and practice of translation. Language and culture in translation, in fact, function bi-directionally: a priori and posteriori depending on how culture is perceived in the various periods of history delineated above, with the "cultural turn" functioning as a hypothetical separating line that distinguishes the direction of translation. That is, in the linguistics-based orientation to translation, in which translation was treated as a distinct discipline in its own right, language and culture functioned a priori. They were addressed in as much as the interaction between linguistic categories and cultural backgrounds of SL and TL that influence the practice of translation. This is reflected particularly in the constraints on the lexical and structural choices in the translation, resulting from the conflict between confronting to SL/TL linguistic and cultural norms, or adapting to TL ones. In this sense, language and culture are crucial in

determining translation strategies as enantiic vs. communicative, in as far as they pose translation problems in the process of translation.

In contrast, in the post-cultural turn period, in the 1980s and 1999s, in which the concept of culture focused on world knowledge, and in which translation has come to be studied as an interdisciplinary activity, *language and culture function a posteriori*. The effect of translation on the receiver of a translated work, is studied in as far as it moulds cultural identities, manipulates the receivers' views and attitudes towards SLC. Language and culture in this orientation relate to the process of translation from without, in the sense of extending to the far-reaching effect of TC as a central point in translation, as well as to other interdisciplinary sciences such as politics and ethnography. In contrast, in the priori function, the effect of language and culture is studied from within the process of translation. Simply, in the first orientation, language and culture affect translation, but in the second approach, translation affects language and culture. (See Figure 1 below)

Figure 1

The Linguistic-Based Approach (Pre-Cultural Turn)

Language >>> Culture >>> Translation

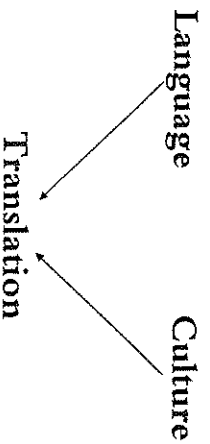
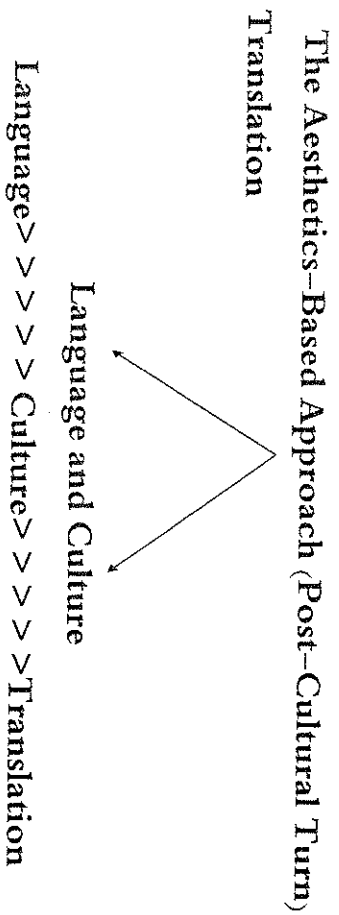


Figure 2



Such distinction of directionality of the effects of language and culture on translation and vice versa will be my point of departure in presenting the plethora of work on language and culture in translation. The following part of this research is divided into two sections representing the two ends of this continuum: The linguistic based orientation in the pre-cultural turn period, vs. the aesthetics-based orientation in the post-cultural turn period. Studies the major trends in both periods will be discussed in brief.

Nonetheless, this distinction between the two orientations should by no means be considered dichotomous. In fact, both represent the phases of development translation have undergone, in its way towards a descriptive comprehensible theory that can account for all text types and all aspects. Moreover, such distinction is an artificial one, and a simplification for the sake of organizing the data.

5-Language, Culture and Translation:

We move now to works that illustrate the interaction

between language and culture and their influence on translation in specific applied contexts.

The relationship between language and culture has been reflected in many translation studies. Some of these deal with idioms, others with cultural-bound terms, where some others deal with textual elements.

In the following, some of these studies are reviewed, particularly those dealing with Arabic/English translation.

Facweett (1997:120) indicated that cultural incompatibilities represent "the bread, and butter" of many works on linguistics and translation, as explained by **Bassnett** (1991) and **Pym** (1992). Such incompatibilities have bearings on the theory and practice of translation, as they usually result in translation loss. Linguistic translation theory has to provide translators with techniques for dealing with such instances.

5-1. Idioms and Proverbs:

Ezzat (1993:38) calls for the incorporation of the cultural element in translation. Like **Bassnett** (1991) and **Hatim** (1999) **Ezzat** views translation as belonging to semiotics, the science which studies sign system, structures, process and function. He argues, in light of Malinowski (1996) and Condon (1996), that the relationship between discourse units and their cultural environment have to be considered in translation to reach both correct understanding and accurate translation of the texts. Ezzat again finds equivalence imaginary since absolute meanings are not easily found in the same culture. This implies that the wider

the gap between the cultures, the more translation problems are encountered. He illustrated this point by attempting a translation of a large number of Arabic idioms and proverbs into English, taking into consideration the cultural framework of Arabic and English receivers as well as the wide cultural gap between them. To solve problems arising from intercultural differences in literary translation, Ezzat suggests two strategies:

1 Prefacing or appending the translated work with commentaries.

2- Annotating the translated work with footnotes and glosses as they help in having a deeper understanding of the target culture.

Ennani (1993 & 1995) discussed the cultural role played by language and linguistic change in translating metaphors and irony. He viewed the translator as an interpreter, a cultural medium performing "a cultural act" and argued that the novice translators are usually unaware of the pheno-menon of semantic change because of their reliance on dictionaries that do not actually point out such change. Consequently, this may result in misunderstandings and cultural distortions. Also, he distinguished three types of idioms that reflect problems in translation due to culture. These types are 1 – common phrases (fixed or unfixed) 2- pure idioms 3- collocations and metaphoric idioms. He suggested a pragmatic approach, a culture-based one to translating the first type of idioms, as the cultural occasion is more crucial to communication here rather

than the literal meaning of the idiom.

Metaphoric idioms are translated as metaphors and as they are to give the taste and culture of the original. Yet the element of acceptability is vital in this case. If the idiom is not acceptable in the TL, then an equivalent idiom has to be provided, and the last resort is to provide an abstract meaning. Nonetheless, a degree of cultural adaptation is required. As for proverbs, they are hardly translatable, although some of them may have near equivalents in another culture. Finally translating collocations is problematic because of their peculiarity to the language in which they are used.

5-2: Culture Bound Words:

Saad-Eldin (1995) overviewed the effect of the cross-cultural interaction on translation idioms in particular, and words that are culturally loaded in general. He asserted "The social significance of words and their idiomatic implications are so intricate, delicate and complex that a translation is apt to spoil part, if not the whole effect of the original". He presented the word "Sagja" as an example to clarify the problem of cultural connotations. This word is naturally translated "water wheel". It is a case of translation loss at the cultural level. In Egypt, he added, it is the place of relaxation and of lovers' meetings, connotations clearly absent in "water wheel". He offered strategies of translating idioms, as literal / communicative translation, and paraphrase, which are the available solutions a translator could employ.

Suleiman (1999) focused on the significance of the full array of linguistic, cultural and stylistic components in reaching acceptable translation. He indicated that cultural bound terms are impossible to translate solely through the linguistic mode. There are limitations on translatability of culture bound terms in Arabic/ English translations incurred by the absence of their counterparts in the target language expressions. He concluded that there is a correlation between the translatability continuum and the acceptability of translated texts. To him, paraphrase and avoidance of literal translations are the best strategies for translating culture bound terms. His study confirmed the role of cultural understanding in producing acceptable translations, the success of which relies on techniques and strategies used by translator, text domain and the interaction between the two.

Garnal (1993:7) is of the opinion that the translator is "a bilingual and bicultural communicator" who should have knowledge of various parameters in the translation process, yet such knowledge functions within the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural frameworks. He indicated that the relationship between SL and TL cultures determines the choice of the translation approach: a semantic approach for linguistically and culturally different / distant texts. He presented a number of concrete examples from various texts that resemble translation problems with regard to cultural differences with the English language. His solution to such translation problems is the establishment of a translation model that can account for the various aspects of

content and form. He placed cultural knowledge on the top of the content elements, which reflects his concept of translation as an intercultural–interlingual transfer in which the translator is a bilingual and bicultural mediator.

El-Sakran (1995) is consonant with the above linguists concerning the role of culture and language in translation. He contends that the sociocultural background of language plays an indispensable role in the correct interpretation of the communicative message. Ignoring such backgrounds result in misunderstandings and communication gaps. This is attributed to the fact that language consists of linguistic and cultural dimensions, which interact with the context of use, social variables and cultural values. Thus, linguistic meaning varies from practical meaning according to dimensions of culture and context of use. Furthermore, he explained that in cross-cultural interaction, the sociocultural background of the speakers conflicts with each other resulting in misunderstanding, since each speaker expresses him/herself according to his/her own cultural and linguistic norms.

5-3: Textual Aspects and Cross-Cultural Differences:

Hatim (1997b) discussed argumentation as a textual persuasive strategy in Arabic and English and the implications of the cross-cultural differences of utilizing this strategy on translation. He distinguished two types of argument.

- 1- Through -arguments preferred in Arabic.
- 2- Counter-arguments preferred in English. The first refer to "stating a

viewpoint to be argued through". It takes three steps. 1 – Stating the thesis to be supported. 2– Substantiation. 3– Conclusion. The second, in contrast, refer to "citing an opponent's thesis, then countering it". It takes four steps: 1– Citing the thesis to be supported. 2– Opposition. 3– Substantiation of counter-claim. 4– Conclusion. It should be clarified that **Hatim's** work applies only to academic writing among advanced users of the two languages.

In (1999), Hatim contends that the sociotextual practices set the communicative framework both within and across cultural and linguistic boundaries. He demonstrated this point by analyzing samples from Arabic in terms of **Venuti's** (1995) strategies of domestication and foreignization. He quoted an example from "خريف الحبيب" in which Arafat left the meeting with the president Saddam in Cairo saying "He has put the "ammanna" on my head. "وضع الامانة فوق رأسي" Hatim found that the use of transliteration has an effect of foreignizing, and hence would be misleading to the reader. Therefore, he suggests 'domesticating' foreign words and adapting them to the TL norms. Thus, he suggested translating this example as follows: "He forced me to put the soldier's form". Further, Hatim clarified that domestication at the sociocultural level results in preserving sociotextual practices in the foreign language.

Sager (1998) attempted establishing parameters, which determine strategies for translating three genre types: Literary, non-literary texts and the Bible. The significance of the role of

culture in translating these specific genres is apparently reflected in the parameters she sated for choosing a certain strategy.

Nida (1998) demonstrated sociolinguistic constraints in three text types: religious, legal and classical texts. He confirmed the use of notes in any cultural differences, which is refused by many particularly in sacred texts, as they are seen as human additions. An interesting example that illustrates these points is in the Bible, when people put branches in **Jesus'** path on his way to Jerusalem, which is a symbol of disrespect in West Africa. In the contrary to them, expressing honor is achieved in such culture by sweeping the path. Thus, **Nida** suggested that, since translators cannot change a historical event, they must provide a footnote putting out the crosscultural difference, a suggestion made earlier by **Ezzat** (1993).

Helmi (1999) studied problems of equivalence in translating works by post-colonial writers. She tackled three major issues, paratextual, textual and lexico-semantic problems. The major paratextual problem is that of "writing back", i.e., back at the center of the ex-colony or empire, which can be achieved only by using the language of imperialism. Once this medium is changed, the whole cultural system and the realities the language denotes will be subsequently changed, resulting in a different effect on the receiver. Another paratextual problem is that of imposing the SL value system on the TL culture. The TL culture of the post-colonialists has already been imposed on the TL culture, here English. Carrying this content across requires a

competent translator who is able to figure out new semantic innovations in order not to incur misinterpretations and mistranslations.

One of textual problems she discussed is introducing a new discourse by converting from oral folklore to written literature, which has its unique features. Theme and rhyme is another textual problem in post-colonial writings, which result in problems of equivalence, because of differences across Arabic and English. To her, the only possible strategy is to identify the function of the SL system in order to find a TL system that can account for a correct rendering of this function.

The translator's power, exercised in his/her interaction with the text, has been metaphorically described as a "turn" (**Robinson**, 1991). The translator's turn can bring about misunderstandings, misinterpretations and distortion, especially between "First and Third Worlds". Therefore, some recent translation theorists call for examining the practice of translation and the translated product (**Venuti**, 1992; **Johnson**, 1990). Such theorists focused on the translator's role, which they viewed as a political practice in obliterating and misinterpreting the SL culture.

Ezzat (1995) stressed the direct interaction between language and culture and its impact on translation. He advocated the developing cultural awareness and knowledge as a requirement for translators, since translation competence rests on both SL and TL cultures. Nonetheless, preserving one's own identity should

not be overlooked. He argued, quoting **Hammouda** (1994) that it is "A requirement in the face of impending annihilation". Moreover, **Ezzat** perceives culture as having a two-way-direction, and as such, Arabs have to begin with asserting their cultural identity in order to be able to influence the European culture. In this way, the dialogue between Arabic and English cultures, embodied in **Ezzat's** two-way-direction concept of culture, will be realized. Overlooking one's identity will end up in a one-way concept of culture that has its serious implications on cultural identity ranging from distortion to obliteration to total loss.

5-4: The Formation of Cultural Identities:

Translation may have far reaching effects on the TC. It can consolidate or challenge; existing power structures. Such effects may result from the picture of the source culture that translations present for the target culture. These translations stand for the original and replace it. Here is what Venmeer (1992:40) termed as "a culture transcending process", which is crucial to the formation of cultural identities.

Venuti (1993 and (1998) has also emphasized the role of translation in forming cultural identities. This impact of the translated text on the TC is determined by a number of diverse factors. On top of these, is the selection of a certain text for translation and publication by a translator or an institution, which in fact satisfies a particular domestic interest. Another factor is the way in which the translated texts are edited, read and

taught, which result in various cultural and political effects in varying degrees according to institutional contexts and social positions. Still a more important factor is that of the strategy used by translators, especially that of domestication of the foreign text, which brings about a process of "inscription" of the text by linguistic and cultural values that conform to TL domestic ones. The most serious effect of such inscription is the "formation of cultural identities". He provides examples of broad literary texts.

Many translation theorists share **Venuti's** conviction regarding the role of selection of texts for translation and publication in forming cultural identities. Some of these are **Lefevere** (1990), **Seguint** (1994), **Wolf** (1995), **Dingwaney** and **Maier** (1995), **Bagheri** (1998) and **Salama** (1999).

Saad Eldin (1995 :xxi) contended that the role of the translation in the globalization of culture is threatened because its expected effect is susceptible to the state of the publisher or translator, as they are the ones who make the choice of what to translate and for whom. Consequently, it is they who overrule other cultures. In this respect he echoes **Venuti** concerning the political role of the translator in the formation of cultural identities.

Lambert (1994) adopted the view that translation is modified according to editorial rules, or stylesheet, which pose constraints on translation practice. These constraints are cultural and social norms ranging from recommendations to taboos. Consequently, the final product reflects the publisher's identity,

which in fact could represent a multinational society and not the publisher as an individual. **Lambert** advocated that the brushing up of translation has a direct effect on reshaping the receiver's perception of concepts and phenomenon. He identified a serious problem in translation policy, which is that of the cultural organizational principles. For instance, what to translate or (not) to translate more, or to use a certain language, are all decisions made by publishers or translators. **Lambert** concludes that in order to understand translation principles, we need to know the cultural framework in which a specific work is translated.

Wolf (1995) holds the same view on the role of selection as a power indicator. She argues that selection has ideological implications since the publishers and editors impose the choice of translation strategy such as foreignization or domestication. She postulates that the processes of translation will aggravate asymmetrical power relations in the colonial framework. This is because translating into the languages of the "Third World" countries is characterized by their use of Western philosophical terms, which are then introduced in discourses of education and literature.

Lefevere (1990) again views translation as having a powerful impact on culture. Like **Venuti**, **Bassnett** and many others, he sees translation as an authority: the authority of the one who commissions the translation of the original writer and of the receptor culture. Translation creates an image of all those authorities in the translated text. It can influence the canon of world

literature, by subverting another culture of world, by introducing innovations into a literature, and by being conservative. To him, reflects the power of images and how authorities manipulate them. As such, **Lefevere** finds translation an unreliable source for the adequate knowledge of word literature and the real world. **Bassnett** (1996) supports this same view.

Translation also plays a powerful role in the cultural evolution of nations throughout history. The case was clear in Egypt. **Mohamed Ali** (1805-1848) brought to Egypt a systematic and a government-sponsored translation activity in order to translate text: for use in the newly established academies at that time. His mission to Paris, led by **Riffa'a Tahawi** organized "a mass translation scheme" and established an academy for foreign languages studies in Egypt. Irrespect of the tremendous efforts in this respect, i.e., translation in Egypt; as handling more than two- thousand-projects which tackled different disciplines, the process of translation in Libya seems to be moving in shyness. Positively looking, we discover an active movement in translation along the Arab states. There is also more than one project for translation, as well as the increasing theoretical awareness of translation, whether in the perspective of editing books in the theory of translation or in translating them from English in mot cases. In the negative side of the scene, we discover a number of shortcomings that we should take into serious consideration, which efforts should be unified in order to

formulate any effective national project in translation.

5-5 Random Efforts in Translation in the Arab States:

Loneliness is a synonym for random. The implication is the absence of a thorough planning, which takes priorities, formulates policies and defines what to translate or what "not" to translate. This trend in the process of translation in the Arab states is so obvious, *which leads to weakness in the process of translation and scattering of the efforts even within the one country. As a direct result, the same work could be translated more than once. The examples of this are so many. One is the translation the book "Lectures in General Linguistics", by the famous linguist Ferdinand De Saussier. It has four Arabic translations, by: You' el Aziz published by "Dar Affaq" 1985 in Baghdad, and by Saleh Elgermadi & Mohamed Al-Shaous & Mohamed Ajeena, published by "Dar Alketab AlArabi" in Tunis, the translation by Abdelkader Gunaini, published by "Dar Africa" in Morocco. Adding to them another translation in Egypt. Another example is the translation of Rolan Barts " Writing in the Zero Degree" by Naima Al-Hemsi, one of the publications of the ministry of culture in Damascus, 1970, and the translation of Ahmed Barrada to the same book, other cultures as we should be ready to be affected by theirs, but not to the extent that changes our splendid heritage in the Arabic or the Islamic scales. In this regard, the roles of translation in narrowing the gaps between cultures are outstanding. The first requirement is to have receptive minds, as translation's basic*

objective is to enlighten the people.

5-6: Conclusion:

This study suggests a number of important implications for translation theory, globalization, and translation status quo in the Arab States. As for translation theory, the development of language and culture and its two different orientations with respect to translation implies that translation theory is still in a state of flux. More over the interdisciplinary nature of the science of translation at present has enriched translation studies since the 1980s, nonetheless, translation theorists have to consider establishing boundaries for such interdisciplinarity. For translation can move on and on in a spiral, dealing with all other subjects of the humanities, which makes the task of the translator too enormous to be undertaken by anyone individual. The question that should be posed is how far should translation theory interact with and rely on other disciplines to gain knowledge needed for its development towards a systematized study of translation?

Moreover, the goal of translation theory is to establish descriptive rules for helping the novice translator how to translate, otherwise, translation would remain an art and not a science. Translation theory should be able to provide strategies for overcoming translation problems that can account for all text types. This being the case, it becomes obvious that a novice translator can hardly rely on other disciplines at an earlier stage of learning. Besides, the strategies of domestication and

foreignization cannot apply to all text types, but to literary texts only. A corollary to this fact then is the inadequacy of relying on either the linguistic or aesthetics based orientation, but a merger of the two would be more practical as far as translation theory and practice are concerned. Therefore, the researcher suggests that equivalence, though an imaginary and even a flabby concept may remain as an artificial parameter for educational purposes, and an aim to be sought at least at the early stage of learning. For how can a learner assess the aesthetics of a text, identify distortion or otherwise, without having the tool, here linguistic competence, by which he can carry out such assessment? Hence, equivalence could be developed as a way of developing mastery of translation skills. Only then can the learner move on to the later stage of using such competence to identify other translation roles, such as power. The rationale behind this suggestion is that equivalence was so central to the production of a good translation to the students of translation, which they would feel at a loss, if it is dispensed with.

As for globalization, the topic of translation comes to the surface, particularly, are living in an age of diversity and increasing cultural confrontation. Moreover, translation violently moves in space and time between cultures, languages histories and communities in the absence of agreed upon criteria for assessment or revision and with the swinging nature of equivalence, one's cultural identity becomes at stake. For how can a certain nation control the overwhelming power of

translated work which are no longer individual selections, but organizational ones, the spread of translated works threatens the objectivity of the globalization process.

Thus, the role of language and culture raises many questions, the answers to which are instrumental to translation theory and practice. It also extends to international communication, for as **Vogt** (1998:25) said "Translation must be viewed from linguistic, historical, and cultural perspective. Otherwise, translation studies jeopardize the international dialogue that produces peace and prosperity".

References

- 1- Agar, M. The Bicultural in Bilingual. Language and Society. 1991.
- 2- Alvarez, R. and Vidal, M.C.A (eds.) Translation, Power and Subversion. Clevedon: Multilingual matters. 1996.
- 3- Arrojo, R. The Revision of the Traditional Gap between Theory, Practice & Empowerment of Translation Studies in Postmodern Times. The Translator. 1998.
- 4- Bagheri, M. Ibn-Al-Mukaffa, The Translator. Proceedings of the International conference on: Al-tajamah WA Tafatul Al-Hadaraat (in Arabic). (Translation and Cross - Cultural Interaction). Egypt, Cairo, Al-Azhar University. Faculty of Humanities. 1998.
- 5- Baker, M. In Other Words: A Course book on Translation. London & New York: Routledge. 1992.
- 6- Bassnett, A.s. "Translating Islam: Islam and Linguistic Differentiation in the N Aminata Snow Fall". Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature. 1993.