CULTURAL CHALLENGES IN TRANSLATING FOR MUSEUMS
FROM ENGLISH INTO ARABIC


A THESIS IN TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING
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## ABSTRACT

Museums assert that they can work alongside other cultural institutions, such

as schools and universities, to contribute to social development. In that sense

museums can be considered as educational and cultural platforms which offer

information alongside entertainment. It is widely assumed that any one with two

languages is a bilingual, and that bilinguals are necessarily bicultural. However, this

simplistic equation is challenged by the fact that many daunting cultural and

ideological challenges arise during the process of transferring from one language to

another especially in translating for museums. This is because different languages

represent different societies, different mentalities and different cultures. This

sometimes puts the translator in difficult situations particularly when decisions have

to do with cultural sensitivity to social norms, religious conventions, ethical standards

and other features of language in social life. To this end a number of texts taken from

tourist guides and brochures, translated from English into Arabic are examined

and analyzed. This thesis will focus on the importance of applying the notion of

cultural and ideological shifts (and not only linguistic shifts) in moving from source

text (ST) to target text (TT).

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

# DEDICATION

To my family
Your love guides my steps.

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Overview

At first glance, museums seem to be about objects**. Essentially, however, they** are about people, their languages and their cultures. Museums are cultural institutions which, to contribute to social development, work hand in hand with other educational institutions in society such as schools and universities. In that sense museums can be considered not only cultural platforms providing information and entertainment, but also educational forums which transmit knowledge. Catering for a dual focus on culture and education necessarily involves dealing with ideology since what necessarily comes to the fore are issues of nationhood, value and belief systems, and the need to preserve heritage and present it in the best possible light.

There is, then, a close relationship between museums and the communities in which they happen to be. Whether global, national or local, this 'people' dimension is the fundamental test of whether a museum is truly effective in realizing its ultimate objectives of interpreting the meanings and values of its holdings to its visitors. Thus it is essential that museums put people first in their planning.

In a museum, it is usually not enough to put objects on display, and ask people to look; interpretive texts or panels should (and often do) accompany these objects to give the visitor an idea about the origin and the historical background of the collections on display. Brochures flyers and booklets must thus be available to encourage and facilitate the visitors' access to what museums have to offer.

In a multilingual and multicultural society like that of the United Arab Emirates, which consists of a cosmopolitan mix of different people, different languages and different cultures, a choice has to be made regarding how these interpretive texts might best be presented. We are here into 'compositional' strategy. This includes choice of language and choice of style. In the context catered for by this dissertation, the decision that they are written in the major languages of the UAE, that is, Arabic and English, has been both sensible and practical to reach the vast majority of people. As for style, this raises issue of text compositional plan and of appropriate genre, matters that will be discussed in greater detail subsequently.

**1.1 The Translation Angle**

This dissertation is based on the author's experience as a translator in the Sharjah Museums Department, translating into Arabic interpretive texts, panels, brochures, flyers and booklets written in English about museum's holdings. The first issue to

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deal with is choice of translation strategy. Of course, literal translation is the obvious first option, and this works in many (if not the majority of) cases. As Fawcett (1997) rightly points out, the bulk of what translators do is literal and it works. Indeed, this is seen most clearly in the case of scientific texts which form a huge portion of what we translate in the Natural History Museum, Botanical Museum or the Aquarium.

However, more problematic are so-called 'cultural' texts used by other kinds of more heritage-oriented museums. Such texts address issues of culture and religion and are usually found in such establishments as the Heritage Museum or the Museum of Islamic Civilization or some of the restored historical houses. What compounds the difficulties is that (at least in the context with which I am familiar), such texts are fairly highly specialized and tend to be written in English by experts in the various fields. The implications of these practices for translation have to do with the need carefully to interpret, re-interpret and re-construct these texts by the translator to convey an appropriate message to the Arab visitor or reader whose culture is what is being discussed, and in whose language these texts should have been written in the first place but were not.

The texts may refer to issues that are sensitive for different reasons, historical, political, religious or cultural. As we will see in analysis presented in this dissertation, intercultural challenges (such as discussing the concept of 'death', for example) require the translator to be well informed about both source and target cultures, to do considerable research, and to understand the wider implications well enough to be able to deliver the message in the best way possible.

For this study several texts of the kind described above will be analyzed. The issue of culturally sensitive translation illustrates how museums and their audiences can no longer afford to take their relationship for granted. Particularly in the context covered by this study, museums are reconsidering communication from every angle: intellectual, cultural, educational, political and aesthetic. If we accept that the purpose of museums is to be of service to society, then it is crucial that they be responsive to their social environment in order to remain relevant to changing social goals and needs.

**1. 3 The Dissertation**

Following this Introduction, Chapter Two starts with a historical review of translation theories moving from word-for-word translation to forms of equivalence based on substituting the message in one language not simply by separate code-units but by entire messages in some other language. Within the early 'formal equivalence' paradigm, J.C. Catford and his translation shift techniques to achieve formal correspondence and textual equivalence are discussed. Eugene Nida's work on 'dynamic equivalence' is then considered, and Koller's five types of 'pragmatic equivalence', with the hierarchy of values to be preserved in translation, examined. Hatim & Mason's text type theory will then be dealt with to show that each text type has special characteristics and thus requires a particular translation strategy. This builds on discourse and register analysis originally proposed by Halliday and

colleagues. In addition to discourse and register analysis, pragmatics, is certainly the key element in modern theories of translation. This will occupy us next when we refer to Gutt's Relevance Theory of translation where relevance in processing language is seen in terms of the cost-benefit correlation between the effort needed to process a stimulus and the contextual effects to be expected as a reward (Gutt 1991). Chapter 2 ends with a brief consideration of foreignization and domestication within a framework proposed by Venuti (1995).

Chapter Three focuses on issues and theories of immediate relevance to our study. Since translation for museums is a distinct genre which involves both culture and ideology, the chapter discusses culture, from the earelier views of Snell- Hornby and Goodenough, to more recent views by Faiq on beliefs and value systems, and finally to Hatim and Mason's distinction between socio-cultural objects and socio-textual practices, all seen within a Hallidayan theory of context. Then Venuti's domestication and foreignization theory is examined in greater detail because of its relevance to the dissertation topic. This will take us to the communication in translation with Toury and Jean Jaque Lecercle. The last consideration in Chapter Three is given to ideology as it is one of the key factors influencing translation for museums.

Chapter Four discusses museums and their importance as cultural institutions. The chapter also considers the specificity of Emirati society regarding cultures and multi-languages used in daily life. The researcher then presents 17 examples taken from texts written in English for seven museum booklets and translated into Arabic. The examples capture some of the cultural challenges that translators face in working for cultural institutions which address and host a wide range of readers with different educational, religious and political backgrounds.

The examples and their translations will be carefully examined to see how the translator has managed (or failed) to bridge the gap between the Source Text and the Target Text. Each example is given in English with its Arabic translation, followed by a short commentary to clarify the process of translation.

## CHAPTER TWO

## TRANSLATION STUDIES

This chapter is a selective review of translation studies presented by issues felt to be of immediate relevance to the present study, ranging from word-for-word (i.e. literal) translation to pragmatics and Relevance Theory. Some attention is also given to Hallidayan discourse and genre analysis which is foundational to text-type translation models developed in recent years by such scholars as Hatim & Mason. The chapter also sheds light on cultural and ideological aspects of translation, opening translation to the influence of such factors as identity and belief systems.

### 2.1 Jakobson:  Linguistics

The distinction between word-for-word (i.e. literal) and sense-for-sense (i.e. free) translation goes back to Cicero (first century BCE) and St Jerome (late fourth century CE) and forms the basis of key writings on translation in centuries nearer to our own. But the study of translation in a practical sense started in the second half of the twentieth century. Roman Jakobson, the Russian-born American structuralist, considers the thorny problem of equivalence in meaning between words in different

languages. He points out that there is ordinarily no full equivalence between code units: interlingual translation involves "substitute[ing] messages in one language not for separate code-units but for entire messages in some other language" (1959/2000:114).

The translator re-codes and transmits a message received from another source. Thus translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes. Jakobson's approach to meaning stipulates that "there is no signatum without signum" (1959:232) and that both the signifier and the signified are combined together to form the linguistic sign. To deal with such linguistic signs across language boundaries, Jakobson introduces the notion of 'equivalence in difference' and suggests that there are three kinds of translation:

> 1. Intralingual translation or *rewording,* which is an
>
> interpretation of a linguistic sign using other signs in a
>
> same language.
>
> 2. Interlingual translation or *translation proper* which
>
> is an interpretation of linguistic signs by
>
> equivalent signs of another language

3. Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation*

which is an interpretation of verbal signs by

means of signs of non-verbal sign system

.

(1959/2000:114)).

Which form of translation is used, and when, ultimately depends to a

large extent on the nature of the text where the translator has to decide

on the translation strategy to be used.

## 2.2 Catford 's shifts

According to Catford (1965:20) " the central problem of translation practice is that of

finding target language translation equivalents", with  Equivalence defined  as: "The

replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent material in another

language" (qtd in Fawcett, 1997:54).

Equivalence is thus one of the most critical concepts in translation theory, in fact, the

core of translation theory. Catford sees Equivalence in terms of two basic types.

Formal Equivalence involves conforming closely to the linguistic form of the source

text. In other words, it is the "closest possible match of form and content between

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source text and target text" (Hatim & Mason, 1990:7). This is distinguished from Textual Equivalence. Formal Correspondence can be perceived as a *langue* related issue whereas Textual Equivalence is perceived as a *parole* related issue.

Formal Equivalence can be achieved through the replacement of the linguistic form, while the Textual Equivalence can be achieved through four types of *translation shifts*: structure, class, unit and intra-system (Catford 1965). Many years later, this is echoed by Shuttleworth & Cowie (1997:49) who define equivalence as "the nature and the extent of the relationship which exist between SL and TL texts or smaller linguistic units". Baker (1992) disparagingly points out that the term equivalence is used for the sake of convenience because most translators are used to it rather than because it has any theoretical status.

## 2.3 Nida: Dynamic Equivalence

For Nida, "kernels are the basic structural elements out of which language builds its elaborate surface structures" (Nida and Taber 1969:39).  Formal equivalence, according to Nida (1964) focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content. That is, with Formal Equivalence, one is concerned that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language.   Dynamic Equivalence, on the other hand, is based on what Nida

calls ' the principle of equivalent effect', where "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptor and the message" (Nida 1964: 159).  Nida explains this further in the following terms:

"This receptor- oriented approach considers adaptations of grammar, of lexicon and of culture references to be essential in order to achieve naturalness; The TT language should not show interference from the SL, and the 'foreignness' of the ST setting is minimized".   (Nida 1964:167-8)

Nida argues that, except in those cases where we deliberately choose to focus on the form itself, any form-by-form translation is a kind of literalism that rarely works (Nida1964:159). This is simply because, at the strictly formal level, there can never be absolute correspondence between languages. The issue of correspondence is also an important consideration in judging extreme forms of dynamic equivalence and the kind of response it is supposed to elicit. Such a response can never be identical with that which the original has elicited from its readers, "for no two people ever understand words in exactly the same manner" (Nida 1969:4).

Translation works well at levels deeper than surface similarities and differences of structure or behavior. Translators working within the framework of dynamic equivalence would thus be more concerned with the need to conjure up in the reader

of a translation "modes of behaviour relevant within the context of his own culture" (Nida 1964:159). The same may be said of the motivated variety of formal equivalence which, in its own peculiar way, also focuses on context. In either kind of equivalence, there will be much less concern with matching the TL message with the SL message, a procedure typical of most literal translations.

Nida considers that the Dynamic Equivalence translation involves a number of 'formal adjustments' which involves three areas. First, special literary forms, e.g. poetry  requires higher level of adjustments. Second, semantically exocentric expressions may require adjustment from 'exocentric' to 'endocentric' type of expression especially when the phrase in SL denotes a meaningless phrase in TL if translated literally. Third, intraorganismic meaning probably suffers the most in translation and forms a real challenging limitation as it is deeply rooted in their culture and totally depends on their cultural context.

These ideas have received some serious criticisms over the years. Lefevere (1993: 7) feels that equivalence is still overly concerned with word level, while Van den Broeck (1978:40) and Larose (1989:78) consider equivalent effect or response to be impossible (how is the 'effect' to be measured and on whom?). Newmark (1981:38) departs from Nida's receptor-oriented line, feeling that the success of the equivalent effect is 'illusory' and that 'the conflict of loyalties, the gap between emphasis on source and target language will always remain as the overriding problem in translation theory and practice'.

To Newmark (1981:39) "Communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original. Semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original". In communicative as in semantic translation, provided that equivalent effect is secured, the literal word-for –word translation is not only the best, it is the only valid method of translation.

## 2.4 Koller: Pragmatic Equivalence

German theorist Werner Koller (1979/89) considers the issue of equivalence from a pragmatics point of view and recommends maintaining a hierarchy of values, to be followed by a hierarchy of equivalence relations:

> With every text as a whole, and also with every segment of text,
> the translator who consciously makes such a choice must set up a
> hierarchy of values to be preserved in translation; from this he
> can derive a hierarchy of equivalence requirements for the text or
> segment in question. This in turn must be preceded by a
> translationally relevant text analysis. It is an urgent task of
> translation theory- and one on which no more than some

preliminary work has so far been done- to develop a

methodology and conceptual apparatus for this kind of text

analysis, and to bring together and systemize such analysis in

terms of translationally relevant typologies of textual features.

Koller (1979/89: 104)

Koller recognizes five types of equivalence influenced by five factors:

1. Denotative equivalence which is influenced by the extralinguistic

content transmitted by a text.

2. Connotative equivalence which relates to the connotations transmitted

by lexical choice.

3. Text- normative equivalence which relates to text types and language

norms meaning; the 'usage norms' for given text types.

4. Dynamic equivalence is related to the receiver of the text to whom the

translation is turned.

5. Formal equivalence is related to the aesthetics and norms of the source

text and to its stylistic features.

(Koller, 1979)

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Sometimes translators are compelled to use all five kinds of equivalence because they would be translating a particular text for a range of different purposes and for different audiences.

This kind of pragmatic input is seen by Bassnett (1980/91) in terms of translating involving far more than replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages …Once the translator moves away from close linguistic equivalence, the problems of determining the exact nature of the level of equivalence aimed for begin to emerge.

## 2.5 Textuality: Text type theory

Text type, according to Hatim and Mason (1990:140), is a 'conceptual framework which enables us to identify texts in terms of communicative intentions. Building on this assumption, Hatim (2001) argues that the text and not independent words is the minimal unit of translation
In advocating this position, Hatims takes his lead from Katherina Reiss who in her pioneering studies of text types and translation considers the text, not the words or sentences, to be the authentic level of communication:

Each text type denotes special characteristics and requires a particular

translation strategy. The 'plain communication of facts' denotes an

informative text type and involves the transmission of information where

the 'topic' is the main focus and the TT in such a case must transmit the

same content of the ST i.e. 'plain prose'. The creative composition is an

expressive text type where the rhetoric aspect of the language is used and

the translation method should cater for the 'aesthetic and artistic' aspects

of the TT to the ST. The operative text type has the appellative function

of persuading the text receiver. As such, the translator should follow the

'adaptive' strategy to maintain the same effect on the TT receiver that the

ST has on its receiver. Audiomedial texts, e.g. films and visual

advertisements, require a 'supplementary' method in translation,  that is,

supplementing written words with visual and audio images.


(Reiss 1977: 108-9)


This can be seen clearly in translating for the museums of Sharjah. A worksheet

written for school children who visit the Natural History Museum about the

characteristic features of rocks, for example, cannot be approached in the same way as

a text written for the wall panels at the Museum of Islamic Civilization which

discusses the pillars of Islam. These texts differ according to purpose and receiver.

Similarly a newspaper or television advertisement for the museums requires the use of

simple terminology in order to reach as wide an audience as possible, whereas an

article written for a museum journal may make use of jargon understood by all

museum professionals but not commonly understood by the general public.

But there is always the thorny issue of 'text type hybridization'.According to Hatim &

Mason (1990), any text will display features of more than one type and this is what is

referred to as multifunction. Any useful typology of texts has to accommodate to such

diversity.

## 2.6 Relevance theory

Relevance theory may be seen as an attempt to work out in detail one of Grice's

central claims, namely that an essential feature of most human communication, both

verbal and non-verbal, is the expression and recognition of intentions (Grice 1989:

Essays 1-7, 14, 18; Retrospective Epilogue). According to Levy (1967/2000:156) the

translator resolves for that one of the possible solutions which promises a maximum

of effect with a minimum of effort. That is to say, he or she intuitively resolves for the

so-called MiniMax Strategy (Munday 2001).

Languages differ not only in the patterns of structure employed but also in the values

assigned to what could be a similar pattern (e.g. repetition). From the perspective of

relevance theory, the effect of these structures is seen in terms of "the cost-benefit

correlation between the effort needed to process a stimulus and the contextual effects to be expected as a reward" (Gutt 1991: 140). Gutt explain this phenomenon further:

"If communication uses a stimulus that manifestly requires *more* processing effort than some other stimulus equally available to him, the hearer can expect that the

 benefits of this stimulus will *outweigh* the increase in processing cost-otherwise the communicator would have failed to achieve optimal relevance".  (Gutt 1991:140)

Hatim (2001) summarizes the issue of 'relevance' in the following terms:

> The principle of Relevance is derived directly from effort and benefit principles. We choose, from context, those assumptions that satisfy two requirements, first having the largest contextual effect or benefit and second, requiring minimum processing effort.

> The notion of relevance connects to the ability of the receiver to interpret contextual assumptions which are marked by their' variable degree of accessibility'. Such assumptions might be limited by other factors such as the function of a particular language item and the incident of using it. However, the retrieval of contextual assumptions, inevitably, requires

effort to decode. Hence, users of language resort to the contextual

assumptions that will lead to the maximum benefit or reward with the

minimal effort.

(Hatim, 2001:37).

To narrow down the enormous potentiality of such assumptions we resort to the two

elements of ' effort' and 'benefit'. That is narrowing the contextual assumptions to

satisfy two requirements which are maintaining the largest 'contextual effect' by

exerting the 'least processing effort'. (Fawcett, 1997). According to Hatim (2001) the

translation is marked *interpretive* when it is viewed in terms of its relation with the

ST. And the translation is viewed as *descriptive* if it stands on its own apart from the

ST. With this distinction in mind, two types of translation emerge: *direct* and *indirec*t

translations where direct translation relates to the interpretive mode while indirect

translation relates to the descriptive mode. (Hatim, 2001)

**2.7 Discourse and Register:**

The term register was first used by the linguist Thomas Bertram Reid in 1956 and

was brought into general currency in the1960s by a group of linguists who wanted to

distinguish between variations in language according to the *user* (defined by variables

such as social background, geography, sex and age), and variations according to *use*, "in the sense that each speaker has a range of varieties and chooses between them at different times" (Halliday et al, 1964).

Register, or context of situation as it is formally termed, "is the set of meanings, the configuration of semantic patterns, that are typically drawn upon under the specific conditions, along with the words and structures that are used in the realization of these meanings" (Halliday, 1978:23).

Register variables are important yardsticks with which to assess how far text identity is preserved in the translation process. Register is concerned with the variables of field, tenor, and mode in relation to variations of social context. Each of the three factors relates to what Halliday calls the ' meta functional' aspect of language use, subsuming the ideational, interpersonal and textual dimensions. The field covers what the text is about and relates to the ideational meaning realized by patterns of transitivity. The tenor of a text, which relates to formality, is closely bound up with interpersonal meanings realized by modality patterns. The mode, or whether the text has written-like or spoken-like quality, deals with the textual meaning which is realized by elements of cohesion and Theme/Rheme patterns.

To Hatim& Mason (1990:73) "texts are the basic units for semiotic analysis…Texts concatenate to form discourse which is perceived with given genres". Discourse often refers to the speech patterns and usage of language, dialects, and acceptable

statements, within a community. It is a subject of study in peoples who live in secluded areas and share similar speech conventions.

Hatim & Mason (1997:216) represent discourse in its wider sense, defined as:" Modes of speaking and writing which involve social groups in adopting a particular attitude towards areas of sociocultural activity" (e.g. racist discourse, bureaucratese, etc.) Hatim & Munday ( 2004: 303) maintain that "Texts, genres and discourses are macro-signs within which we do things with words. Words thus become instruments of power and ideology".

## 2. 8  Foreignization and Domestication

According to Shuttleworth & Cowie (1997) the term foreignization was used by Venuti who sees its role as being to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, thus sending the reader abroad. The basic effect of foreignizing is to provide target language readers with "alien reading experience" Shuttleworth & Cowie (1997:59).  As for Venuti (1995)," fluent translation should be capable of giving the reader access to great thought to what is present in the origin".

Venuti, according to Munday (2001), talks about two strategies of translation: Domestication and Forignization. Domestication to Venuti requires a fluent translation where the translator is invisible in order to minimize the vague peculiar elements of the ST and make it as natural in style as the TT. So the aim of domestication is bringing the text to the reader.

Foreignization is a translation style where the translator is visible trying to highlight

the ST's different cultural identity so as not to give up the source culture presence for the sake of the target culture. Thus foreignization is in simple, bringing the reader to the text. Foreignization techniques respect the linguistic and cultural differences of the ST. (Venuti 1998).

## 2.9 The Pragmatics Turn

We have touched on Pragmatics in our review of Koller above. We have also dealt with Relevance which is a Pragmatics issue. But because Pragmatics is the single most important discipline from which translation theory has derived its impetus, this section contains a closing statement on the matter of intentionality.

Fawcett defines pragmatics as "the relation between linguistic forms and the participants in the communicative act"(Fawcett 1997:123). Pragmatics to Baker (1992:217) is the study of language in use. It is the study of meaning, not as generated by the linguistics system but as conveyed and manipulated by participants in a communicative situation. Baker (1992) points out that as translators, we are primarily concerned with communicating the overall meaning of a stretch of language. To achieve this, we need to start by decoding the units and structures which carry that meaning.

Many of us think of the word as the basic meaningful element in a language. This is not strictly accurate. Meaning can be carried by units smaller than the word. More often, however, it is carried by units much more complex than the single word and by various structures and linguistic devices Baker (1992).

# CHAPTER THREE

## CULTURE AND IDEOLOGY IN TRANSLATING FOR MUSEUMS

### 3.1  Museums: A Universe of Discourse

This study is about the world of museums, the objects and artefacts, the texts they generate and the perspectives they convey. The world of museums has never been static. Let us first note with Kaplan that "the roots of museums are conventionally traced back to the ancient western world, where art was first shown as the booty of conquest in the splendour of private villas". (Kaplan 1983: 172-8). But the forms and functions of museums have changed over the years. Nowadays we can define museums as central institutions of civil society.

Museums are no longer taking their relationship with their audiences for granted. They are reconsidering it in every dimension; intellectual, cultural, educational, political and aesthetic. Indeed, the sources of power are derived from the capacity of cultural institutions to classify and define peoples and societies. This is the power to represent and to reproduce structures of belief and experience through which cultural differences are understood.

Since museums are above all else concerned with conveying a cultural message to their audiences, culture is necessarily one of the most important aspects of translating

for museums and is thus one of the many fields on which to focus in the present research study.

## 3.2 Culture

In a museum, it is not enough to put objects on display, and ask people to look; interpretive texts or panels should accompany these objects to give the visitor an idea about the origin and the historical background of the collections on display. Brochures, flyers and booklets must be made available to encourage and facilitate the visitors' access to the museums. We know that there is a certain kind of genre (indeed a variety of sub-genres) used in writing these booklets and brochures. This was alluded to in Chapter 2 and will be taken up in greater detail in this Chapter and throughout the analysis. Here, the focus will be on translating these texts and the cultural challenges that may face the translator during the translation process.

Translation is defined by Toury (1978:200) as "a kind of activity which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions." For Snell-Hornby, "culture is not only understood as the advanced intellectual development of mankind as reflected in the arts, but it refers to all socially conditioned aspects of human life." (cf. Snell-Hornby, 1988: Hymes, 1964). On this point, Faiq (2004:1) argues that culture refers to "beliefs and value systems tacitly assumed to be collectively shared by particular social groups and to the positions taken by producers and receivers of texts, including translations, during the mediation process". Karamanian takes this a step further into the practical task of translating:

Translation, involving the transposition of thoughts expressed in one language by one social group into the appropriate expression of another group, entails a process of cultural de-coding, re-coding and en-coding. As cultures are increasingly brought into greater contact with one another, multicultural considerations are brought to bear to an ever-increasing degree.

**Karamanian (2002)**

Intercultural contacts between civilizations have been made possible through translation. There is a difference between the changes that occur on the language level and that on the culture level. To Faiq (2004:1) "this has meant a good deal of exchange, naturally through language. But while languages are generally prone to change over time- phonologically, morphologically, syntactically and semantically- cultures do not change fast".  Temple (2006) substantiates this translation perspective thus:

> The solution to many of the translator's dilemmas are not to be found in dictionaries, but rather in an understanding of the way language is tied to social realities, to literary forms and to changing identities. Translators must constantly make decisions about the cultural meanings which language carries, and evaluate the degree to which the two different worlds they inhabit are (the same).
> Temple (2006)

In other words, languages are not mere words; they reflect societies and societies reflect cultures. In that sense Karmanian rightly advocates that:

We are not just dealing with words written in a certain time, space and sociopolitical situation; most importantly it is the "cultural" aspect of the text that we should take into account. The process of transfer, i.e., re-coding across cultures, should consequently allocate corresponding attributes vis-a-vis the target culture to ensure credibility in the eyes of the target reader.

Karamanian (2002)

To conclude this rapid survey of the various ways of defining culture, it is helpful to cite Goodenough who, as a sociologist, approaches 'culture' in terms of the distinction 'static' vs. 'dynamic':

By definition, we should note that culture is not material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models of perceiving and dealing with their circumstances. To one who knows their culture, these things and events are also signs signifying the cultural forms or models of which they are material representation.

Goodenough (1964: 36)

This distinction between static 'products' and dynamic 'practices' will be highlighted further in the following discussion.

### 3.3 Translation for Museums

Translation for museums is a special genre that has its own features and in which culture, both as products and as practices, is very much involved. According to Samovar & Porter (2004:160), translators build bridges not only between languages but also between the differences of two cultures. . . . Language is a way of seeing and reflecting the delicate nuance of cultural perceptions, and it is the translator who not only reconstructs the equivalencies of words across linguistic boundaries but also reflects and transplants the emotional vibrations of another culture".

Snell-Hornby (1988: 40), establishes the connection between language and culture first formally as formulated by Wilhelm Von Humboldt. For this German philosopher, language was something dynamic: it was an activity (energia) rather than a static inventory of items as the product of activity (ergon). At the same time language is an expression of culture and individuality of the speakers, who perceive the world through language. In terms of Goodenough's notion of culture as the totality of knowledge, this formulation sees language as the knowledge representation in the mind.

Hatim& Mason approach these issues in terms of a distinction between ' socio-textual practices' and socio-cultural objects':

Socio-textual practices is the whole set of rhetorical conventions that govern texts, genres, and discourses, Socio-cultural objects, however, are entities with which the

social life of given linguistic communities are normally identified"' (Hatim& Mason, 1997:223).

## 3.4 Directionality

A thorny issue to tackle at the outset is that of Directionality: Is the translation from English into Arabic or the other way round, for example. Texts for museums are usually written in the language of the country where the museum is located, For instance, texts for the British museum are written in English because they should reflect the British culture through displaying the British national heritage. These texts are then translated into the major languages of the world to build bridges between different cultures and to make the information accessible to a wide range of nationalities.

The first complication in our work arises when we find that this is not the case for Sharjah museums. In Sharjah, because museums are fairly new in the area and because of the lack of writing centers and research institutions, texts for museums which record Emirati history and heritage are usually written in English by western experts. Although these western researchers and text writers are well informed about the local culture in particular and the Arabic culture in general, the western influence can still be detected in their texts. One example is in a booklet written for Sharjah Heritage Museum about marriage rituals in Sharjah, The writer uses the term "bridal shower" for "Leylat el Henna" (night of henna) because she had the English speaking reader in mind and was trying to make things clearer to him/her. Here the interference of the translator becomes a must, Alejandra Patricia Karamanian puts it this way:

Culture expresses its idiosyncrasies in a way that is 'culture-bound':

cultural words, proverbs and of course idiomatic expressions,

whose origin and use are intrinsically and uniquely bound to the

culture concerned. So we are called upon to do a cross-cultural

translation whose success will depend on our understanding of the

culture we are working with. Thus translation studies are

essentially concerned with a web of relationships, the importance

of individual items being decided by their relevance within the

larger context: text, situation and culture.

(Karamanian 2002)

Halliday (in Halliday and Hasan 1985: 5) states that there was a theory of context

before a theory of text. In other words, context precedes text. Context here means

context of situation and culture (Halliday and Hasan, 1985: 7). "This context is

necessary for adequate understanding of the text, which becomes the first requirement

for translating. Thus, translating without understanding text is non-sense, and

understanding text without understanding its culture is impossible."

We do not translate languages; we translate cultures. Earlier, translation's primary

attention was towards 'equivalence' in terms of grammar and linguistics as elements of

language. Now, with the urgent need for cross-cultural communication, it has become necessary to involve attitudes, values, experiences, and traditions of people in translation.

We cannot translate one's thought which is affected by and stated in language specific for a certain community to another different language because the system of thought in the two languages (cultures) must be different. Each language is unique. If it influences the thought and, therefore, the culture, it would mean that ultimate translation is impossible.

## 3.5 Domestication and foreignization

Museums are products of their social context, and it is proper that they should be so. If we accept that the purpose of museums is to be of service to society, then it is vital that they be responsive to their social environment in order to remain relevant to changing social needs and goals.

Museums collect, record and present the meanings and values we find in life and in art, history and science. In translating for museums, especially when the original texts are written in a language other than the language of the country where the museums

are located, (in the author's research the original texts are written in English to be used in museums located in Sharjah) the translator has to domesticate the original text in an attempt to bring the foreign author home.

According to Venuti (1998) there is a difference between the translator who domesticates his method of translation of the foreign text to target cultural values bringing the author home, and  the translator who foreignizes his text thus sending the reader abroad - a very complex issue in translation today.

Hatim& Mason (1997) argue that when Venuti distinguishes between foreignization and domestication, he shows that the predominant trend towards domestication in Anglo- American translations over the last three centuries had a normalizing effect by depriving the source text producer of his voice and re-expressing foreign cultural values in terms of what is familiar to the dominant culture.

To Venuti (2000:486),  therefore, "translation never communicates in an untroubled fashion because the translator negotiates the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text by reducing them and supplying another set of differences, basically domestic, drawn from the receiving language and culture to enable the foreign to be received".

The domesticating process can be said to operate in every word of the translation long before the translated text is further processed by readers, made to bear other domestic meanings and to serve other domestic interests. When the translator is well-informed of both cultures, the credibility of the text can be maintained to the foreign reader. Quoting Schleiermacher, a prominent German translator in the 18th century, Venuti (1997:101) has this to say:

> The translator must therefore take as his aim to give his reader the same image and the same delight which the reading of the work in the original language would afford any reader educated in such a way that we call him in the better sense of the word, the lover and the expert […] .. he no longer has  to think every single part in his mother tongue, as schoolboys do, before he can grasp the whole, but he is still conscious of the difference between that language and his mother tongue, even where he enjoys the beauty of the foreign work in total peace.

The translator seeks to build a community with foreign cultures, to share an understanding with and of them and to collaborate on projects founded on that understanding, going so far as to allow it to revise and develop domestic values and institutions.

In translating a flyer about  Hag el Leyla (an Emirati event celebrated in Mid of Shaaban) , the foreign text is rewritten in domestic dialects and discourses, registers

and styles, and this results in the production of textual effects that signify only in the history of the domestic language and culture. The translator may produce these effects to communicate the foreign text, trying to invent domestic analogues for foreign forms and themes.

To Venuti (2000) "the very impulse to seek a community abroad suggests that the translator wishes to extend or complete a particular domestic situation, to compensate for a defect in the translating language and literature, in the translating culture". Focusing on domestic values and beliefs in translation helps in showing solidarity with communities. In translating a text about daily life in the Emirates the original English text mentioned "washing" before prayer, the translator used (ablution) instead which helps to bind a Muslim reader with the text.

According to Venuti (2000) "The interests that bind the community through a translation are not simply focused on the foreign text, but reflected in the domestic values, beliefs, and representations that the translator inscribes in it. And these interests are further determined by the ways the translation is used".

To translate is to invent for the foreign text new readerships which are aware that their interest in the translation is shared by other readers.

Museums with relevant messages and high- quality, eye- catching communication can be effective as public forums for informal learning and entertainment.

To Krautler (1955) "If ' communication' is truly the aim, it can only be achieved by active and genuine empathy with the public as partner, through continuous efforts and an institutionally reflected 'language'". Toury (1995) shifted the emphasis away from exploring an equivalence between the translation and the foreign text and instead focused on the acceptability of the translation in the target culture. The source message is always interpreted and reinvented, especially in cultural forms open to interpretation, such as literary texts, philosophical treatises, film subtitling, advertising copy, conference papers, legal testimony and also texts written for museums. The source message is always reconstructed according to a different set of values and always variable according to different languages and cultures.

## 3.6 Ideology

As pointed out above, museums can be defined as central institutions of civic society, and when we talk about societies we mean cultures and ideologies. Translation needs to be studied in connection with society, history and culture. According to Xiao-Jiang (2007:63), "the factors that influence translation are not only language but also transmission of ideology between different nations and countries. Ideology plays an important role in translation practice, but translation only receives influences from ideology to a certain extent". Ideology has always been, and will remain, one of the key factors influencing translation. Calzada Perez (2003:2) and Schaffner (2003:23) claim that "all language use is ideological" and "any translation is ideological".

According to Venuti translating is always ideological because it releases a domestic

remainder, an inscription of values, beliefs, and representations linked to historical moments and social positions in the domestic culture. In serving domestic interests, a translation provides an ideological resolution for the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text.

Venuti (2000)

During the translation process the translator conveys a certain ideology that can function in the target society. Andre Levefere (1992: preface) says, "Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way"

Faiq (2004:2) goes further to say that culture and ideology form the"starting point " for some theorists who urge that "the act of translation involves manipulation, subversion, appropriation and violence". Nord (2001:29) has this to say: "translate/interpret/speak/ write in a way that enables your text/translation to function in the situation in which it is used and with the people who want to use it and precisely in the way they want it to function.

In the frame of this theory, one of the most important factors determining the purpose of a translation is the addressee. The first function of translation is social function rather than linguistic function. So adapting the addressee's ideology is necessary to ensure the translated text speaks to the target audience. According to Xiao-Jiang (2007:64)

The patron is the link between the translator's text and the audience he/she wants to reach. To make a foreign work of literature acceptable to the receiving culture, translators will often adapt it to the patron's ideology. If translators do not stay within the perimeters of the acceptable as defined by the patron, who is the absolute monarch, the chances are that their translation will either not reach the audience they want it to reach or that it will, at best, reach the audience in a circuitous manner. Therefore translators create images of a writer, a period, a genre, sometimes even a whole nature under a certain control of ideology.

Xiao-Jiang (2007:65)

In recent years translation studies have moved on from endless debates about "equivalence" to broader issues of society, history and culture. Museum collections are displayed and interpreted for a number of reasons, not least of which is for public enjoyment and education. Silas Okita (1997,129-39) argues "Museums must help strengthen ethnic and national identities, but also should nourish collective humanity and equip the world's peoples to meet the contemporary challenges of human existence." It is on this and related points that the analysis in the next Chapter will focus.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## ANALYSIS OF TEXTS WRITTEN FOR MUSEUMS

### 4.1  Importance of Translating for Museums

As they represent civilizations and people, museums, which are centres for conservation, study and reflection on heritage and culture, can no longer stand aloof from the major issues of our time. From this perspective, museums should be established in a way that makes them accessible to all. By accessibility we do not only mean physical accessibility but also psychological and intellectual accessibility i.e trying to make visits both informative and enjoyable. To achieve this purpose, the information about the objects on display or about the historical sites should be written clearly and should address a wide audience of different ages, cultures and educational backgrounds.

Because museums all over the world are supposed to be tourist attractions, brochures, booklets, panels and labels should be made available in the major world languages of the visitors. In the UAE the language issue becomes even more important because the society itself is multilingual and multicultural. The museums' audiences do not consist of ordinary tourists and Emarati visitors only, but the population itself, which comprises, a large number of different nationalities speaking different languages and practising different cultures.

Of the total number of visitors to Sharjah museums, statistics show that UAE nationals form the largest group representing 16% of total visitors. Indians comprise 14% followed by the British 8% then the Germans and the Americans with 7% each. Visitors from China account for 5%. The number of languages spoken by the visitors thus suggests the need for museum publications that are multi-lingual, or at least bilingual (Arabic and English at a minimum).

The emphasis on developing museums in Sharjah is relatively recent with the Sharjah Museums Department (SMD) only established in 2006. The lack of qualified and experienced staff in museum management within Sharjah and the UAE has led to the appointment of many foreign experts to SMD and also to the museums. Foreign experts have been recruited to assist with the construction of new museums, the renovation of older museums, with artifact collections, conservation and documentation and with designing and writing the interpretive information about the buildings and the objects on display. As discussed earlier, the informative texts are generally written and edited in English and then translated into Arabic, as Arabic and English are the two major languages used in Sharjah museums publications and text panels.

Translating for the museums includes translating for publication, for long interpretive texts about objects on display and also for shorter texts for labels, which are restricted to the type of object, the title, date or period, materials and techniques, measurements, inscriptions and markings.

## 4.2 Cultural Challenges

In translating for museums, and given the peculiarity of the present context with literature being almost exclusively written in English, the translator should be aware of the specificities of the two cultures and must try to mediate and sometimes domesticate the English original text to make it closer or less shocking to a sensitive Arabic reader.

This study will focus on texts written for the Sharjah museums' booklets. Seven English booklets were examined and compared with their seven Arabic translated texts. In addition 17 further examples will be analyzed containing tricky cultural challenges which will be highlighted. A commentary always follows to illustrate the translator's endeavour (or failure) to bridge the cultural gap between the Source text and the Target text.

The cultural challenges can be detected mostly in religious sensitive texts and sometimes in historical or political texts.

Example 1

This example is taken from a booklet written for the Sharjah Heritage Museum. The museum and the booklet both focus on the Emirati heritage, costumes, marriage rituals, popular medicine, herbs, coins, stamps and jewelry.

| | |
|---|---|
| The Motawa served the community in many ways and was certainly a busy person acting as judge, faith healer, psychologist and religious and social educator. He would perform marriages, prepare bodies for burial and act as the intermediary between the ruler and his subjects. Today the Motawa's role is one of a religious scholar, educating both children and adults in the teachings of the Holy Quran. | كان المطوع يوظف نفسه لخدمة الناس والمجتمع في نواحٍ عدة، ومنها تولي مهام القضاء والوعظ والإرشاد والعلاج بقراءة القرآن علاوةً على دوره في التعليم وإعداد الأجيال. ولم يقتصر دور المطوع على هذا فحسب، بل كان يقوم بعمل إجراءات الزواج وعقد القران وتجهيز أجسام الموتى (الغسل) للدفن وكان وسيطاً بين الحاكم ورعاياه ولكن انحصر دور المطوع اليوم على التعاليم الدينية وتحفيظ القرآن للصغار والكبار. |

**Analysis**

This example is rich with cultural problems. Compared is the role of Al Mutawa (a religious man) in the past with that of today, hence the need to mention some of the rituals involved in marriage, burials and some aspects of social life.

Translating terms like "faith healer" and " teachings of the holy Quran" literally as

معالج ايماني و تعاليم القرآن الكريم

does not stimulate the same effect in the mind of an Arabic reader with Islamic cultural background as using:

العلاج بقراءة القرآن وتحفيظ القرآن

As for "psychological", it was deleted from the Arabic text because of the sensitivity of the word in the Arabic culture and the word "washing"

(الغسل)

was added in Arabic to the translation of "prepare bodies for burial"

because washing dead bodies is one of the Islamic burial preparations

which may not exist in other religions. Here both deletion and addition were used to take care of semantics and, more importantly, to satisfy the semiotics as well as pragmatics of the text.

| Example 2 From the same booklet | |
|---|---|
| Those who memorized the Holy Quran | |

| | |
|---|---|
| would demonstrate their skills in a one week long ceremony, during which time they would parade through the narrow streets reciting the words of the holy book. Boys who could not learn would leave the class to follow in their fathers' trade. | وأخيراً عندما يختم أحد الطلاب القرآن يقام له حفل يستمر لمدة أسبوع يدورون الطرقات مرددين (التحاميد) ومن يخفق في ختم القرآن يذهب للعمل مع والده |

This is an extension to the previous example. Here the writer moves from the

Mutawa's role to the celebrations that follow the children's memorization of the

Quran.

For "reciting the words of the holy book" the translator , in an attempt to domesticate

the word "recites"

ترانيم

used the word:

"تحاميد"

(tahameed)

which is the word used for this kind of celebration recital in the region.

Again, semantics and semiotics are at work, and the signs in question are optimally

preserved

| Example 3 | |
|---|---|
| The desert tribes developed their own practical treatments and medicinal uses for many wild plants, some scientifically proven, others probably for psychological help only. | طورت قبائل الصحاري أدويتهم العملية والاستخدامات الدوائية لعديد من النباتات البرية ولقد أثبت علمياً فعالية بعضها، أما النباتات الأخرى فمن المحتمل أنها للاستخدام الروحاني فقط. |

In example 1 we had the ST word "psychologist" and the translator then deleted it because of its sensitivity to the Arabic reader since anything to do with psychology is

popularly (though of course not academically) somehow frowned upon . Here, in example 3, the translator also opted for a modification into

روحاني

(Spiritual)

instead of:

نفسي

(Psychological).

Culture is at work here, including myth and superstitions. But to find expression, culture mobilizes the entire semantics (and syntax) of the language, and essentially view the linguistic items as signs (the domain of semiotics).

| | |
|---|---|
| **Example 4** | |
| This example is taken from a booklet written for Bait Khalid bin Ibraheem in Sharjah which is one of the restored historical houses. The text describes the rooms and the furniture of the house. | |
| The living rooms downstairs were allocated to family members with Khalid and Abdullah having private rooms. Each bedroom has a raised bed, limited furniture, alcove shelves for storage, cushions for seating and an adjacent washroom (*qetiy'a)* where tea and coffee | كانت غرف المعيشة في الطابق الأرضي مخصصة لأفراد العائلة ، حيث كانت لخالد الأب وعبد الله الإبن غرف خاصة . تحتوي كل غرفة على سرير مرتفع، وقطع أثاث محدودة، وأرفف شكلتها فجوات الجدران لأغراض التخزين، ووسائد للجلوس، علاوة على غرفة تسمى "القطيعة" وفيها جزء يسمى "الزوية" للاستحمام والوضوء |

| would be prepared. In the master bedroom displays of pearl chests, swords and daggers reflect the means and the ways of life. | والجزء الآخر مخصص لتحضير القهوة والشاي. تعكس معروضات غرفة النوم الرئيسة من صناديق اللؤلؤ والسيوف والخناجر، وسائل وطرق الحياة في ذلك الوقت. |

For"an adjacent washroom (*qetiy'a)*" the translator added

فيها جزء يسمى"الزوية" للاستحمام والوضوء

 (a part called Zewyya for washing and ablution). These words were added to define the usage of the room but the word (ablution) in particular was added to domesticate the text and generate a sense of religious atmosphere in the context.

| Example 5<br>From the same booklet | |
|---|---|
| Once the daily chores around the home were done the ladies prepared lunch, usually a fish and rice, to be ready after the midday prayer or whenever the men returned. Afternoon prayers would follow the siesta, with an early supper of again | وما أن تنقضي الأعمال اليومية بالبيت حتى تبدأ النساء في إعداد وجبة الغذاء وعادةً ما كانت تتكون من السمك والأرز وتكون جاهزة بعد صلاة الظهر أو حالما يعود الرجال. تتبع القيلولة بصلاة العصر ثم يأتي وقت وجبة العشاء المبكر التي تحتوي أيضاً على السمك والأرز أو |

45

| | |
|---|---|
| fish and rice or mutton for a treat. The oil lamps would be extinguished soon after the evening prayers around 9 pm. | لحم الضأن للوليمة. تُطفأ مصابيح الزيت بعد صلاة العشاء مباشرةً حوالي الساعة 9 مساءً. |

This text is about the daily life in the Emirates in the past, three out of the five prayers' names were mentioned in this example as midday prayer, afternoon prayers and evening prayer which were translated in Arabic as:

صلاة الظهر وصلاة العصر وصلاة العشا (Dhohr, Asr, Isha )

On the lexical level words like midday, afternoon and evening would not stimulate the same effect (ie conjure up the same semantics/ semiotics) in the mind of the Arabic Muslim reader as Dhohr, Asr and Isha, so again the domestication here brings the reader home.

Example 6

The text is taken from a booklet written and translated for Sharjah Heritage Museum. The piece is about popular medicine.

| | |
|---|---|
| Allah (The one God of All) says in the | |

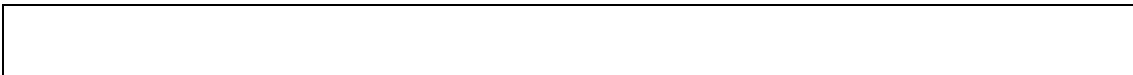| | |
|---|---|
| Holy Quran, *"There may be a thing decreed for you that you do not like that is good for you; and things that you like that are not good for you"*. | قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: (ما أنزل الله داءً إلا أنزل له شفاء). |

The English text cites a verse from the Holy Quran and uses it in a context about popular medicine. The writer, however, could not delve deeper. In Arabic this verse is:

" وعسى أن تكرهوا شيئاً وهو خير لكم وعسى أن تحبوا شيئاً وهو شر لكم " .

It conveys a message to Muslims saying that one does not have to panic when things go wrong because it may turn out later that this was arranged by God for one's good. To translate the text and in an endeavour to bridge this cultural gap, the translator replaced the verse by an interpretation given by prophet Mohammad (PBUH) *Hadeeth,* related in a way to the popular medicine saying:

" قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم : ما أنزل الله داءً إلا أنزل له شفاء"

Which means God creates the illness but He also creates the medicine, which is more relevant to the context.

| Example 7 | |
|---|---|
| The example is taken from Bait Khalid bin Ibrahim's booklet. | |

| | |
|---|---|
| The baby is welcomed into Islam and by the family in many ways. On the day of birth, a softened date is rubbed gently along the upper palate of the baby's mouth. Up to seven days later the baby is named under specific guidelines, either after a prophet or a martyr, or by a name expressing servitude to Allah. | تستقبل العائلة المولود الجديد بطقوس إسلامية عديدة. في يوم الميلاد يُمسح أعلى حنك الطفل بحبة تمر لينة برفق، وبعد مرور سبعة أيام يأخذ الطفل اسماً وفق إرشادات محددة، ومنها التسمية باسم الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم ، أو أحد الشهداء أو اختيار اسم يدل على عبادة الله أو تحميده. |

This text is about birth rituals in the Emirates. For "The baby is named under specific guidelines, either after a prophet or a martyr". This sentence could have been translated as:

يُعطى الطفل اسماً بناءً لارشادات محددة ومنها التسمية باسم أحد الأنبياء أو الشهداء"

Especially that other prophets' names like Musa and Issa are popular in the Arab world but of course not as popular as the name Mohammad. The translator thus opted for the most popular name in the Islamic world and translated the sentence as:

ومنها التسمية باسم الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم

Example 8

This text is taken from a booklet written and translated for Bait Al Naboodah, a restored house in Sharjah.

| | |
|---|---|
| During the restoration period it is rumoured that a 'guardian' of the house with a mischievous but not malevolent nature appeared regularly to check, and on occasion to hinder, the progress of construction. A lady in white carrying two babies was seen to roam silently around the house but quickly vanished when approached. Watchmen later reported beds levitating, voices and footsteps running up and down the stairs and this lady at the centre of it all. It is believed that she frequents the Traditional Games Room on the ground floor, which coincidentally has the only original door of the house.<br><br>As written in the Holy Quran, "I have | دارت الشائعات أثناء فترة الترميم عن وجود حارسة للبيت ذات طبيعة لعوبة، قال الله تعالى في كتابه الكريم " وما خلقت الجن والإنس إلا ليعبدون" (الذاريات، 56) |

| only created jinns and mankind, that they may worship Me". (Chapter No. 51 Adh-dhariyat, Verse No. 56) | |

As this example shows, a big chunk of the English text was not translated for reasons to do with the sensitivity of the subject. The text is telling a story about a ghost used to haunt the house. For an English reader this can be an attractive mysterious story whereas to an Arab reader who believes in jinn, this can be a scary story which may stop people from visiting this tourist attraction especially with their children. The translator thus preferred to leave out most of the text and suggestively keep the last part only which is a Quranic verse.

قال الله تعالى في كتابه الكريم " وما خلقت الجن والإنس إلا ليعبدون" (الذاريات، 56)

This is interesting simply because the problem demonstrates that adapting the addressee's ideology can be and often is necessary to ensure the translated text speaks with more immediacy to the target audience.

Example 9

This text is taken from a booklet written and translated for Sharjah Heritage Museum. It is about musical instruments of the past.

| | |
|---|---|
| In the past, a singer or musician would often make up part of the dhows crew. There were songs for all sorts of tasks from hauling the yard to raising the sail, the tempo set by the drum and the song. Drums were also used in the case of illness or infirmity to summon a spirit to resolve the problems. | في الماضي كان المطرب أو الموسيقار هو أحد أعضاء طاقم سفينة الدهو وكانت هناك أغانٍ لجميع أنواع المهام من تغير الاتجاه إلى رفع الشراع وكانت تنتظم حركة اللحن بالطبول والطرب. |

This example is about the uses of drums, the translator chose not to translate the last part which talks about using drums for illness or infirmity to summon a spirit to resolve problems. This ritual is still followed by some people in a few Arab countries, to kick out the evil spirits or ghosts (called Zar in Egypt for example). The ritual prevails among uneducated people. The translator preferred to delete this sentence because museums are supposed to work alongside schools to educate visitors. To this end the translator preferred not to mention such a ritual which at best looks pagan.

| | |
|---|---|
| Example 10<br>From the same booklet. The text is about popular medicine. | |
| Prophetic medicine or cupping (*al-* | |

| *hijama)* is a long practiced method of healing in the emirates, as is faith healing or *al-mahou* (way of erasing), which followed a strict preparation and procedure. One treatment in cupping used air cups placed around the body; in the other cure, the healer sucked bad blood from the head, legs or back of the patient through a goat's horn. | الطب النبوي أو الحجامة هي طريقة علاج تمارس منذ وقت طويل في الإمارات للتداوي بالروحانيات الإيمانية التي تتبع إعدادات وإجراءات دقيقة. من أحد سبل العلاج بالحجامة أو الكؤوس الهوائية على أجزاء الجسم وفي طريقة علاج أخرى يُمتص الدم الفاسد من الرأس أو الأرجل أو ظهر المريض من خلال قرون الماعز. |
|---|---|

This example is also taken from a text about popular medicine in the UAE. This time for "faith healing or al mahou (way of erasing)"

the translator used:

التداوي بالروحانيات

Arabic word al mahou could have been used simply but it may not explain clearly the function of this kind of treatment. The translator's interference here was to add more clarification to enhance meaning.

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Example 11

The following text about coins is from a booklet written for the Sharjah Heritage Museum.

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| | |
|---|---|
| The External Rupee or Gulf Rupee, as it became known, replaced the Indian Rupee in 1959 as the official currency of the Trucial States. India chose to issue these special notes for use in the Arabian | حلت الروبية الخارجية أو روبية الخليج، كما كانت معروفة ، محل الروبية الهندية في عام 1959 م كعملة رسمية للإمارات المتصالحة. أصدرت الهند هذه الأوراق النقدية الخاصة للتداول في منطقة الخليج |
| Gulf to reduce the drain on its foreign reserves caused by the large movements of gold from the Gulf to India. | العربي لتقليل استنزاف الاحتياطي الأجنبي الناجم عن حركة تجارة الذهب المزدهرة من الخليج إلى الهند. |

In my research about the history of the Emirates in this period, I came to know that large gold smuggling operations from the United Arab Emirates to India used to take place. I even had the chance to interview some merchant mariners who had amazing stories to tell about their adventures while dealing with this illicit trade. When I checked with the writer of the English text she confirmed what they had said, and added that she had to hint at the subject by using the words "the large movements of gold" instead.

The translator diplomatically and properly in my opinion used

تجارة مزدهرة

for large movements of gold which removed all traces of illegality and depicted the smuggling process as a legal trade.

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Example 12

The text is from the Heritage Museum's booklet, it is about jewelry.

| | |
|---|---|
| "The head of a Bedouin family put his wealth in silver on the wrists, ankles and neck of his wife. She felt appreciated by the jewellery bestowed on her, while he had his wealth under his eye and hand if he needed it<br>." From Omani Silver Jewellery by Marycke Jongbloed. | "كان شيخ العائلة البدوية يدخّر ثروته من الفضة في معاصم يد وأرساغ قدم وأعناق زوجاتهن، حيث يشعرهن بالتقدير والهيبة لارتدائهن الحلي، وفي نفس الوقت تكون ثروته نصب عينيه وبين يديه ومتاحة في وقت الحاجة".<br>من مقالة حلي عمان الفضية، ماريكي جونجبلويد. |

The head of a Bedouin family was translated as:

شيخ العائلة البدوية

(Sheikh of a Bedouin family)

This is to do with the fact that the word sheikh is commonly used in the area and it is a better usage than:

رأس العائلة أو كبير العائلة

54

Example 13

| | |
|---|---|
| The sounds of boys playing tag, donkeys braying and fisherman chatting mingled with the gentle lapping of water along the shore. Vibrant patches of green from the palm oases scattered along the coast, created splashes of colour into the white, sand desert scenery whilst camels peacefully rested under the shade. There were no vehicles or motorboats in those days, and no electricity or running water. | استمع إلى أصوات الأولاد في لعبة المطاردة وحديث الصيادين الممزوج بأصوات أمواج المياه المتلاطمة برفق على طول الشاطئ رقع من واحات النخيل الخضراء النابضة بالحياة، راسمةً تداخلات لونية على الأرض البيضاء وعلى خلفية رمال الصحراء، بينما ترقد الجمال في سلام تحت ظلال الأشجار. لم تكن هناك سيارات أو مراكب مزودة بمحركات في تلك الأيام ولم تكن هناك كهرباء أو حتى مياه جارية. |

The translator ignored translating donkeys braying because the word donkey

حمار

in Arabic denotes stupidity and is used as an insult in the Arabic dialects so he

preferred not to use it.

Example 14

| Exquisite gold jewellery from the emirate and worn from the head to the toe, includes the distinctive necklace known as *mortaisha,* a multi tier arrangement with ornamental chains and gold discs, fringed with Gulf pearls and hung to the waist. The bride is adorned in such a decoration at her marriage ceremony or on other special occasions. The *shinaf*, an elaborate piece of jewellery worn on the head and embellished with precious stones and Gulf pearls in another favoured wedding accessory, and one worn at graduation. | حلي ذهبية فاتنة من الإمارة تلبس من الرأس إلى القدمين بما في ذلك قلادة فريدة تسمى مرتعشة عبارة عن نسق مصفوف متعدد مع سلاسل مزخرفة وأقراص من الذهب مهدبة بلآلئ خليجية ومعلقة على الخصر. تأخذ العروس زينتها بهذه الحلي في حفل زواجها أو في المناسبات الأخرى. من حلي الزفاف المفضلة الأخرى الشناف وهي عبارة عن حلية ذهبية تعلق على الرأس وتتدلى على الجبين ومطعمة بزخارف من الأحجار الكريمة واللآلئ الخليجية وقد ساد ارتداؤها من جيل إلى آخر. |
|---|---|

Explaining what she meant by (graduation) in the text, the author explained that she had interviewed some elderly Emirati ladies who told her that they used to go to

school and they were given this piece of accessory when they finished school so she

used the word (graduation) . But the translator chose to ignore translating the word

تخرج

and replaced it by:

ساد ارتداؤها من جيل لآخر

(this piece of jewelry was worn and moved from one generation to another)

because the graduation concept wasn't familiar at the time and for an Emarati reader,

in particular, who knows about the relatively young educational system in the country,

a word like:

تخرج

used for women finishing school 50-60 years ago would be anachronistic.

| Example 15 | |
|---|---|
| Death/ There is no official service, the burial site need not be marked and the mourning passes quietly in prayer. According to tradition, Abdullah's eyes would be closed and his body washed and covered by his family, in sheets of clean white cloth, ready for burial the same day. | تتم الصلاة على المتوفى في المسجد وتمر الجنازة بهدوء. حسب الطقوس الدينية يُغسل جثمان الميت ويُغطى بكفن من القماش الأبيض النظيف المخصص للدفن في نفس اليوم. |

For this text about the burials in the Emirates, the English source gives some details which the English writer thought would give a better idea about death rituals in Islam to a Non Muslim reader as they are different from Christian death rituals for example:

" There is no official service, the burial site need not be marked, Abdullah's eyes would be closed " All these were not translated, the translator wrote instead:

تتم الصلاة على المتوفى في المسجد وتمر الجنازة بهدوء

(Prayers take place in the mosque and then the funeral goes on peacefully)

The word:

كفن

(kafan)

in Arabic was added which is totally different from the English word coffin which means the wooden box used for putting the dead in, in a Christian burial. (kafan) is a white cloth used for covering the dead in Muslim burials, so adding words like:

(مسجد وكفن)

(kafan and mosque)

would stimulate a stronger effect on the Arabic Muslim reader. We are here in the domain of 'relevance' and the need to maintain minimax.

| Example 16 |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

| | |
|---|---|
| Whilst death is a very painful and emotional time, Muslims believe this life on earth is merely a journey that tests ones faith. If you are a good practicing Muslim you will enjoy the rewards of heaven in the afterlife. Abdullah's family would have prayed for God to forgive his sins, have mercy on him and reward him with paradise. | وفي حين أن الموت وقت مؤلم وعصيب على أفراد العائلة ولكن المسلمين يؤمنون بأن الموت ليس نهاية حياة الانسان ويدعو أهل الميت له بالمغفرة ودخول الجنة. |

As in Example 15 the English writer is trying to give the Non Muslim reader a clearer idea about the Islamic faith, whereas there is no need for all these details in Arabic. For that reason the chunk: "Muslims believe this life on earth is merely a journey that tests one's faith. If you are a good practicing Muslim you will enjoy the rewards of heaven in the afterlife", was not translated and was replaced by:

الموت ليس نهاية حياة الانسان

(Death is not the end).

| |
|---|
| Example 17 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Traditionally, the bride is not seen for 40 days except by family and close friends as she rests at home in preparation for her wedding day. The *Laylat Al Henna,* similar to a bridal shower, is a fun gathering where friends of the bride decorate her hands and feet with henna to symbolize good fortune, health and beauty. | لا يرى العروس إلا أفراد عائلتها ورفيقتها لمدة أربعين يوماً، حيث تمكث في البيت تحضيراً ليوم الزفاف.يوم الحنة مناسبة تجتمع فيها صديقات العروس لقضاء وقت ممتع معها والرسم على يدها وقدميها بالحنة للتعبير عن مستقبل وصحة وجمال دائم. |

This text is about marriage preparations in the Emirates but we can notice the western influence in "a bridal shower". The writer gave this example to clarify the concept of Laylat Al Henna for a Non Arab reader so the translation of bridal shower was neglected as the Arabic reader already knows what laylat al henna is like.

The question could be asked about the liberty exercised by, in this case the Sharjah Museums' translators, to change, add and delete things in the source text. Our response would be: To make a foreign work of literature acceptable to the receiving

culture, translators will often adapt it to the patron's ideology. If the translators do not stay within the perimeters of 'acceptability' as defined by the patron (addressee), their translation may not reach the audience they want to reach. But maybe a caveat should be added in the future to each booklet saying that some amendments were introduced in the translation for more clarity.

## CHAPTER FIVE


## CONCLUSIONS


5.1 **The Present Work**

Translation for museums can be a very delicate process which puts certain demands

on translators. This dissertation discussed the importance of dealing with the cultural

and ideological issues that may arise in translating from English into Arabic a text

written by a non-Arab about Arab heritage or culture for museums that are located in

an Arab country.


Chapter one was an introduction in which the dissertation problem and purpose of the

study were stated. The chapter demonstrated the significance of the dissertation by

talking about the intercultural challenges in translating for museums. Chapter two

presented a review of the theories of translation by considering some important

scholarly claims to provide the reader with some background.  Chapter three

concentrated on the specialized theories related to the dissertation topic and included

an overview on culture, Venuti's domestication and foreignization, communication in

translation and finally ideology. In Chapter four the analysis was presented focusing

on museums as cultural institutions, then moving to translating for museums which includes texts written for panels, labels, brochures, booklets, guides etc… Seventeen examples which constituted the study samples were examined. Each example consisted of an English source text with its Arabic translation followed by an analysis written by the researcher to clarify the tricky sections and to shed light on the translation strategy used for bridging the cultural gap between the ST and the TT.

5.2 **Major Issues**

This dissertation stressed the point that, whether global, national or local, the community served by a museum is the yardstick for judging whether a museum is truly effective in realizing its ultimate objectives of interpreting the meanings and values of its holdings to its visitors. One way of serving a museum's audience in this way is through so-called 'interpretive' texts or panels that accompany objects to give the visitor an idea about the origin and the historical background of the collections on display.

The first issue tackled in this dissertation is choice of translation strategy. It is amply demonstrated that literal translation works most of the time, but translators have to be vigilant to points where a literal rendering does not deliver full equivalence. The point was made that the literal success is seen most clearly in the case of scientific texts which form a huge portion of what we translate. However, more problematic are so-called 'cultural' texts used by other kinds of more heritage-oriented museums. Such texts address issues of culture and religion and are usually found in such establishments as the Heritage Museum or the Museum of Islamic Civilization or some of the restored historical houses.

This necessitated moving away from Catford's Formal Equivalence which simply involves replacing one form in the ST by another form in the TT, towards Nida's Dynamic Equivalence which relies on ' the principle of equivalent effect'.

One of the important conclusions of this dissertation points to the supremacy of Pragmatics. Koller is introduced in this context and his five types of equivalence explained and used: Denotative, Connotative, Text- normative, Dynamic, and Formal (with the latter restricted to the aesthetics and norms of the source text and to its stylistic features). This kind of pragmatic input highlights the fact that translating involves far more than replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages.

The issue of text types has also occupied us in this dissertation. The point is underlined that different text types display different characteristics and these require different translation strategies. An informative text type involves the transmission of information, and is different from an operative text type which has a strong appellative function of persuading the text receiver. As we have seen in the analysis, the latter type calls for an 'adaptive' strategy to maintain the same effect on the TT receiver that the ST has on its receiver.

The dissertation then moved on to the issue of Culture and the view endorsed suggests that culture is best seen not as a material phenomenon but as what people have in mind, their models of perceiving and dealing with their circumstances. Translation for museums is a special genre that has its own features and in which culture, both as products and as practices, is very much involved.

A thorny issue tackled in this dissertation is to do with Directionality: whether the translation is from English into Arabic or the other way round. But the dissertation dealt with the complication that arises when we find that texts about Arabic heritage are written in English and have to be rendered back into Arabic.

Thus, what makes our case special is that the interpretive texts are written for the museums of Sharjah by Western museum experts. In spite of careful research, some western influence can still be found in their interpretative writing about Emirati heritage because issues are seen from the writer's rather alien perspective. An equivalent situation arises if an Egyptian were to compare writings about the pyramids in Arabic to that of a westerner or even another Arab.

5.3 **Future Horizons**

The suggestion here is that these interpretive texts, especially those dealing with heritage, religion, and traditions should in future be written by Emirati writers and researchers who have first-hand knowledge of U.A.E history in general and Sharjah's in particular. Many knowledgeable Emirati historians live in Sharjah and they are capable of performing this task admirably. It would seem appropriate that they should write their own interpretative texts which could then be merely translated into English and other languages whilst still maintaining an Emirati perspective.

Museums bear out a relationship with the past that attaches value to tangible traces left by our ancestors, and aim to protect them and even make them essential to the functioning of human society. Side by side with the monumental heritage, such

collections now constitute the major part of what is universally known as the cultural heritage.

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APPENDIX

The booklets

- Sharjah Heritage Museum

- Al Mahatta Museum- The First Airport in the Region

- Bait Al Naboodah – An Insight into Gulf Architecture & Lifestyle

- Khalid Bin Ibrahim House – Reflections of Trade & Traditional Lifestyle

- Majlis Al Midfaa & Al Eslah School Museum – Living & Learning

- Sharjah Calligraphy Museum – The Art of Heritage

- Sharjah Hisn – The Al Qassimi Legacy

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