

ENGLISH ARABIC CULTURAL EFFECT IN TRANSLATION: A RELEVANCE THEORY PERSPECTIVE

Prof. Alaa Eddin Hussain¹ and Dr. Ahmad Khuddro²

¹Semantics and translation studies, St. Andrews University, formerly professor of linguistics and translation in MMU, Huddersfield University, and a number of several Middle East universities, currently postgraduate translation studies at Effat University.

²Translation & interpreting studies, formerly visiting professor at Bologna university, Italy and currently postgraduate translation studies at Effat University.

ABSTRACT: *This study is framed within a competence-oriented model which provides the target text (TT) receiver with communicative clues. These clues allow inference to be optimally captured. Hence, this approach looks at translation as an example of communication mainly based on the cost and effect model of inferencing and interpretations. Strategies adopted in this paper are determined by context-specific consideration of relevance, with special reference to cultural aspects. Applied to translation, one of the most appropriate strategies is to re-produce the cognitive effect intended by the source text (ST) communicator with the lowest possible effort on the part of the TT receiver. This study concludes that when there is a lack of isomorphism or symmetry between the cultural contents of the two languages, the translator will have to opt for content-cognitive effect or cultural transplantation. The translator would have to assess the relevance of content and form in a specific context in order to achieve the same effect in the TT. It has been emphasized, however, that translation as a special instance of human communication leads to the conclusion that various methods may be justified in their own right, if we take into consideration the differences in the text-types, the intention of the author, readership, and the purpose of translation. In a nutshell, however, translation remains a craft which requires not just training and skill but also continually renewed linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge, considerable imagination as well as intelligence and common sense, and most of all talent.*

KEYWORDS: Relevance, Translation, Communication, Cultural Effect.

INTRODUCTION

Translators always deal with source texts which have both existing and new assumptions presented by the text producer, which rely on the cognitive environment of the text receiver and therefore meet the receiver's expectation. These assumptions are supposed to be globally shared by all human beings and transgress language boundaries, regardless of their country of origin. However, some of the existing assumptions in one language it seems are not necessarily the same in another. Here the translator needs to ensure that such existing assumptions in the source language are also existing ones in the target language, and that is by addressing the text receiver's expected response to such SL existing assumptions. This is where the problem occurs and requires the deftness of the translator to provide a solution, i.e. rendering such existing assumptions after careful consideration and full understanding of the source text before producing the target text with meaningful content which carries the same or similar truth value which originally exist in the source text.

Before illustrating this concept, relevance theory with its various aspects needs to be defined. So a summary of that theory is necessary, as it will help to understand how it can be applied here effectively and appropriately with the optimum level of efficiency, i.e. the text receiver will be using a light load of attention in order to access the information/truth-laden in the target text.

BACKGROUND

Relevance

Relevance theory examines the cognitively processing information by the text producer and seeks mainly to make the minimal possible processing effort on the part of the text receiver, while at the same time achieving the highest possible cognitive benefit, i.e. functional-dynamic communicative effect. It is a cognitive-pragmatic approach to communication which depends on both the text-producer's two intentions: *to inform* and *to communicate* and the text-receiver's assumptions, and comprehension. It is a context-dependent approach; it depends on the interaction of two maxims: contextual effect and processing effort. The maximum contextual effect a text yields, the more relevant it is; the less processing effort the reader spends the more relevant the text will be. Furthermore, relevance is a rather graded notion, i.e. following a certain scale whether to be upgraded or downgraded depending on the degree of relevance that target language receptors obtain according to the amount of contextual effects that the text yields and the processing effort the text costs. These grades can be classified into three levels: optimal, strong, weak and irrelevant. (Zhou 2004: p.236) Optimal relevance for example can be achieved when the receptors obtain adequate contextual effects without making any unnecessary effort. A text is processed only when the addressee acquires consistent contextual effects with minimum effort. In addition, this approach provides a natural basis for an empirical account of evaluation and decision-making.

Therefore, "a context is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumption about the world" (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 15). More precisely the context employed in the interpretation of a text is part of the mutual cognate-communication and can require the use of quite specific assumptions. Applied to context selection this entails that the hearers will always start out with those contextual assumptions which are not most easily accessible to them. Thus the structure of memory provides the basis for a very effective constraint on the selection of context. Given the general principle that people will try to spend as little processing effort on supplying contextual information as possible (Gutt, 175). A context is part of the 'cognitive environment' (p. 49) that can be employed in the interpretation of a text. Relevance will determine the selection of context. A successful communication is fulfilled when the text-producer's/translator's intention and text receiver's/receptor's expectations overlap, (Gutt 1996, 241) and this entails achieving *maximum effect* with *minimum effort* exerted by the text receiver. So the scale is the greater the contextual effect the audience achieves while exercising minimum effort, the greater the relevance of the text, i.e. a truth-laden conclusion by the text receiver. This leads to a change in the receiver's awareness. It should be emphasised that the text producer usually attempts to bring a *new* assumption to the context or to strengthen an *existing* assumption in order to make the text optimally relevant by maximizing the number of contextual effects that the new/existing assumption can hold for the audience with the minimum effort on their part.

The principle of relevance is a presumption of optimal resemblance: what the report/translator intends to convey is (a) presumed to interpretively resemble the original. In other words, the main target of successful communication requires that the translator should produce a receptor language text in a way that its interpretation resembles the interpretation of the original in those assumptions that make it adequately relevant to the receptor language audience and to express himself in such a way that these assumptions are recoverable by the receptors without unnecessary processing effort. The translator's decision is based on his/her intuitions or beliefs about what is relevant to his/her audience.

It is a framework for the study of cognition in an attempt to provide psychologically realistic account of communication. The core of this theory is divided into two sets of assumptions. Assumptions relating to cognition in general as a trade-off between effort and effects, and the assumption that cognition tends to maximize relevance. Assumptions about communication claim that understanding an utterance is a matter of inferring the speaker's communicative and informative intentions which can be captured by dividing what is linguistically encoded – decoded between conceptual and procedural information.

This approach emphasizes the notion of a mutual manifestness, according to Sperber and Wilson, it is enough for the context assumptions needed interpretation to be mutually manifest to communicators and the addressee in order for the communication to take place. Manifestness is defined as:- a fact which manifests itself to an individual at a given time if and only if he/she is capable of presenting it mentally and accepting its representation as true or probably true (Sperber & Wilson 1995, p.29). The addressee does not have to be aware of all the sets of assumptions stored in his/her memory. He/she must simply be able to construct them either on the basis of what he can perceive in his/her physical environment or on the basis of assumptions already stored in his/her memory (Adrian Pilkington, 2000). Relevant mutual manifestness, therefore, depends on the interaction of two dimensions: contextual effects and processing effort. In brief, it is a trade-off between effort and effects, and cost-benefit approach.

There are two modes of processing this information across cultures: the descriptive mode (direct translation) and the interpretive mode (indirect translation). The first is used when it is intended to be taken as a true of a state of affairs in some possible world, while the second one is intended to *represent* what someone said or thought (Gutt 1999, p.44). It is usually difficult for an individual to receive a new assumption and respond to it without building on pre-conceived/existing assumption. A text is relevant to the receiver only when its processing in a context of existing assumptions yields positive cognitive effect, which means a truth-content conclusion.

Translation

Applied to translation, it is the clues-based interpretative use of language across language boundaries (Sang Zhonggang 2006), it is an empirical account of evaluation and decision making. It is a shift from a descriptive approach to an explanatory truth-laden value one. Hence the main purpose of translation is to convey the optimal truth value of the source language (SL) within the cognitive environment of the target language (TL). A truth value can convince an individual/text receiver to accept a certain attitude or assumption, or decline it. This can be fulfilled only when the TT is both informative and communicative.

Also, translation is an interpretative use of language and to be precise it is an interpretative use of language across cultural boundaries (p.44). Hence, translation as a special instance of human communication sometimes needs an eclectic approach if we take into consideration the differences in the type of text, the intention of the author, readership, the purpose of translation and some other relevant text linguistic and extralinguistic features in an attempt to create a common ground and to activate mutual communicative models of manifestness.

It remains true that translation relates to successful communication, for translation is a cross cultural event and an act of communication. In fact, it is an event in which people share their world of thought with each other. "Translating in fact is not a science but a technology for it is built on a number of scientific disciplines, including psychology, linguistics, communication theory, anthropology and semiotics" (Gutt, p.185). Hence, translation is interpretive use of language across these cultural boundaries. We as human beings process our thoughts in two ways: descriptively, in virtue of being true to some state of affairs and interpretively in virtue of the interpretive resemblance they bear to some other thoughts.

Translation is more or less varieties of interpretative use that fall into direct and indirect translation, where direct translation corresponds to the idea that translation should convey the same meaning as the original, i.e. the semantic approach; whilst indirect translation involves lesser degree of faithfulness, i.e. the communicative approach. Direct translation requires the receptors to familiarize themselves with the context of the SL, whereas indirect translation meets the receptors' relevant expectation.

Also, the task of the translator as text producer is to produce already established notions by the original author. Understanding the final product by text receivers is accomplished only when communicative and optimal informative intentions are processed with minimum cost and ultimately fulfilled. When these two intentions (of informativity and communicativeness) are fulfilled, the cognitive environment will be accomplished too, and a context is selected accordingly and not given (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 132).

Translation and Relevance

Applied to translation, the translator has then a dual role: first as text receiver of the original source text (ST) with all its new and existing assumptions, and then as text producer who is keen to convey or relay these assumptions as they are to his/her own text receivers truthfully. The translator will try to use various strategies in order to achieve optimal relevance; this is done by reproducing the optimal cognitive effects intended by the original writer with potentially the lowest possible processing effort by the target audience.

This approach looks at translation as an example of communication based mainly on the cost and effect model of inferencing and interpretations. Therefore, a successful communication depends heavily on the communicators ensuring that the informative intention is grasped by the TT receiver by employing the stimuli (words or expressions) optimally relevant to the extent that the receiver expect to derive adequate, consistent and simple contextual effects with minimum effort. That is the communicator provides the text receiver with communicative clues that allow the inference to be optimally captured.

The translator can facilitate this cognitive process, by deciding whether and how it is possible to communicate the informative intention and whether to translate it descriptively or interpretatively, and the degree of dynamic equivalence resemblance. Surely, these decisions

are based on the translator's evaluations of the cognitive environment to achieve a success, the translator's and the receiver's basic assumptions about that dynamic equivalence resemblance *should overlap* and the translator's *intention* needs to agree with the receiver's *expectations*.

Application

An interesting example of the significance of relevance theory in translation is well presented in the translation of certain geographical locations in the ST such as the Persian/Arab gulf. The linguistic expression "Persian gulf" is an existing assumption by non-Arab text receivers that requires no high degree of cognitive processing. As mentioned earlier the translator plays the dual roles: as text receiver of the original ST with all its new and existing assumptions and as text producer who should build on the assumptions of the target language culture to capture the selective assumption which is the "Arab gulf".

Arabic-speaking audience or text receivers have existing assumptions of where the Arabian Gulf is but not where the Persian Gulf is; the latter appears only to this Arab community to be a new assumption, when in fact it is not 'new' assumption in the ST as it refers to the same geographical region, therefore the text producer needs to decide that the Arabian Gulf is optimally relevant, and the same can be said about the translation of 'Arabian Gulf' into English as 'Persian Gulf'.

It seems that successful communication hinges on the potential context that is mutually shared by the reader and the communicator. However, at one time the two controversial terms - the 'Persian Gulf' and 'Arabian Gulf' – were involved in a heated debate about what that area of the world is called. That debate in the first decade of this current century became a highly sensitive issue in the Gulf region and created certain tension at one time between the two sides of the Gulf waters.

The Associated Press writer Robert H. Reid on 3rd October 2008 once wrote,

A relatively stable Iraq would have all the cards necessary to emerge as a major player in the Persian Gulf, where Saudi Arabia and Iran are competing for leadership.

فحينما ينعم العراق بالاستقرار نسبياً تكون بحوزته جميع الأوراق الضرورية للظهور كلاعب رئيسي في الخليج العربي حيث تتنافس السعودية مع إيران على قيادة المنطقة.

[Back translation: A relatively stable Iraq would have all the necessary cards to emerge as a major player in the **Arabian Gulf** where Saudi and Iran are competing for leadership.]

The phrase 'Persian Gulf' in the ST is rather incompatible with the Arab people's assumption, because that gulf is deeply rooted in the Arabs' cognitive environment as being 'the Arabian Gulf'; therefore the translator has the task of employing the interpretative model of translation to achieve the factor of relevance in translation, because a successful translation can only be achieved when the communicator's intention and the receptor's expectation overlap. "Persian Gulf" is irrelevant to the Arabic-speaking audience as it is considered as new assumption, mistakenly thought to be a new area which the target audience are not aware of or unknown to. In other words, the descriptive mode is to translate into Arabic that linguistic expression as 'Persian Gulf' but the interpretative mode (indirect translation) is to translate it as 'Arabian Gulf'. As for the degree of relevance, the former is weak or even irrelevant to the target audience; the latter translation reaches the optimal degree of relevance (See tables at the end of the paper).

Here the translator has to focus on the communicative process and cognitive process of the target language with the minimum effort on the part of the target receiver, i.e. use the Arabian Gulf. Ironically only recently the Arab Gulf states and Iran have started a dispute in the media, mainly Arabic newspapers, about this particular name for the Gulf. (See [Al-Jazeera Blog](#))

A witty diplomatic talk is what Sir Richard Dalton, a former British ambassador to Tehran, did when he said about the US Secretary of State Mrs. Hilary Clinton:

She's implying that, if Iran became a nuclear weapon state, then the US would develop their existing defence commitments and that the US would contemplate nuclear deterrence to protect **Persian** Gulf states.'

إنها تقصد ضمناً أنه في حال أصبحت إيران دولة تمتلك السلاح النووي، حينها ستطوّر الولايات المتحدة من التزاماتها الدفاعية الحالية وقد تفكر في استعمال قوة نووية رادعة لحماية دول الخليج العربي.

[Back-translation: *She is implying that if Iran became a nuclear weapon state, then the US would develop their existing defence commitments and that the US would contemplate nuclear deterrence to protect **Arabian** Gulf states.*]

A crucial part of the target language (TL) context is the receiver's expectation which is the Arabian Gulf and not the Persian one. The same scenario of finding a 'communicative resemblance equivalence' can be seen with the name Channel Tunnel, which is known in England and to all English-speaking communities and Le Manche Tunnel known in France and to all French-speaking communities. It is clearly the same location used to cross from France to England or vice versa. The decision of which term to select lies with the translator's criterion of optimal relevance, i.e. if the text receiver is French, then the French version should be adopted, in order to reproduce optimal cognitive effects intended by the ST communicator with the lowest possible effort on the part of the target (French) receptor, i.e. Channel Tunnel for the target (English) receptor and Le Manche tunnel for the target (French) receptor. It is obvious that the translator has opted for the best choice which would achieve context-specific considerations of relevance.

Here is another example of similar nature, heavily pregnant with political implications, the term "Israeli Defence Force" (**IDF**), which is discussed above where the SL term serves a political agenda but much less known a term in the TL (Arabic) and often used in the TL as 'Israeli Army', which is the 'domestic norm'.

The following statistical data shows how relevance can be seen in the eyes of the text receivers. A simple search in google in UK shows:

Search Engine	Term	No. of results
Google.co.uk	Persian Gulf	14,400,000 entries
Google.co.uk	Arabian Gulf	3,760,000 entries
Google.co.uk	(equivalent) الخليج العربي [<i>The Arabian Gulf</i>]	1,340,000 entries
Google.co.uk	(equivalent) الخليج الفارسي [<i>The Persian Gulf</i>]	718,000 entries
Google.co.uk	IDF (Israeli Defense Force)	47,000,000 entries
Google.co.uk	(equivalent) جيش الدفاع الإسرائيلي [<i>Israeli Defense Army</i>]	1,322,000 entries
Google.co.uk	(equivalent) الجيش الإسرائيلي	1,950,000 entries

[<i>the Israeli Army</i>]
<i>The terms in bold are the ones favoured, based on the number of entries they have compared to their alternatives in Arabic</i>

Based on the above statistics, it is obvious that the Arabic equivalent of the English expression ‘Persian Gulf’ is الخليج العربي [*the Arabian Gulf*]; this way the translator achieves the optimal degree of relevance using the interpretative mode embedded in cognitive environment and therefore meets the receptor’s relevant expectation. The same can be equally applied to the English translation of الخليج العربي [*the Arabian Gulf*] which is optimally ‘Persian Gulf’. The same can be said about the term IDF.

Similarly, Reuel Marc Gerecht’s ‘The Koran and the Ballot Box’ in *Herald Tribune* on 22 June 2009 stated,

Iran now produces brilliant clerics who argue in favor [sic] of the separation of church and state as a means of saving the faith from corrupting power...

...في إيران حالياً رجال دين أذكيا يطالبون بفصل الدين عن الدولة كوسيلة لإنقاذ ديانتهم من السلطة الفاسدة...

[Back-translation: Iran now produces brilliant clerics who demand the separation of religion and state as a means of saving their own faith from corrupting power....]

It is obvious that the ‘church’ has no say in Iran’s political affairs, so that linguistic expression ‘church’ clearly means ‘religion’ to non-Iranian text receiver. The psychological construct and the hearer’s cognitive environment in this context are the set of facts which are manifested to him/her as the optimal relevance which is ‘religion’ but not ‘mosque’ as the latter is not used to refer to the institution. Obviously, the translator has no choice but to opt for the interpretive use of language across language and cultural boundaries (see cultural effect in Bassnett 2001). Here the translator will have to decide whether content is more relevant than the cultural effect produced by the SL, or the other way round. In the above example, ‘religion and state’ in the target language is the most relevant. The reason being that the text producer’s ‘the separation of church and state’ totally contradicts the *cost and effect* model of inference and interpretation which aims at capturing the informative intention and making it optimally relevant to the text receiver. The translator has no choice but to use a lexical item like ‘religion’ as an adequate and contextual equivalence resemblance which will have the *least* effort on the part of the receiver with *maximum* effect.

Another interesting culturally related example is the concept of the word ‘dog’. This linguistic item has a certain implication in English, as a loving and friendly creature, but in Arabic it means an aggressive vicious animal which can only be used to guard one’s property. So the TL audience (Arabic-speaking communities) would instinctively fear the dog, as it could attack them; whereas a western society perceives a different cultural image of the dog. (See Gunilla Anderman, 2007) In a joint press conference transmitted live on television and attended by the former US president Mr. George W. Bush and Iraqi primer Mr. Al-Maliki in mid-December 2008, Mr. Muntazer Al-Zaidi an Iraqi journalist stood up in the conference and threw his shoes at ex-president Mr. Bush in protest and said, ‘This is a farewell kiss from the people of Iraq, you dog...’. Problematic items are ‘this’ and ‘dog’. ‘Pig’ or ‘animal’ is more optimally relevant in this context. But using the word ‘dog’ is rather amusing to a western audience, hence the TL audience’s cool response, Mr. Bush’s, when he commented jokingly that these shoes were size ten.

Relevance theory can also be seen applied mainly to book titles. For instance, the Arabic version of the well-known classic book in Arabic *Alf laylah wa laylah* (its literal translation *One thousand and one nights*) is translated into English many times. Encyclopedia Britannica also calls this book in English two totally different titles: *The thousand and one nights* and *The Arabian nights*. But there are different English versions of the title appearing in print: the Oxford version *One thousand and one Arabian nights* by Geraldine McCaughrean (1999); *The Arabian nights* translated by Sir Richard Francis Burton (2004), Modern Library Paperbacks; the Penguin Classics version of Malcolm C. Lyons' new translation (2008) *The Arabian nights: Tales of 1001 nights*; and finally *The Arabian nights* by Hussain Haddawy in the same year (2008). The addition of the adjective 'Arabian' to some of the English titles makes the message more effective from the text receiver's perspective, as it will reach the TL audience with the least effort and cost but with the maximum benefit. This addition makes the message optimally more relevant as it is put in context, with its cognitive environment; as such title gives the text receiver an existing assumption, and not a totally new assumption, and that is the aim of the adjectival addition. If the English translation opts for the literal title *The thousand and one nights*, or *the Thousand and one nights*, then this title might carry a new assumption in the minds of the text receivers, which is not intended in the original.

Another example culturally sensitive and requires relevance is the sound 'shhh' in the TL (Arabic). This English sound which means 'to be quite' is rather rude in Arabic, and is often used to make 'animals' stop; certainly this meaning is not intended in the SL, in English. The close equivalence of that sound is translated as 'sss' or 'quiet'. Semiotic signs can at times 'offensive' in the TL. For instance, raising two fingers can be to indicate a sign of victory but turning the back of one's hand towards the SL audience can be rather rude in English but not so in Arabic. In fact, raising two fingers with the back of the hand towards the TL (Arabic-speaking) audience indicates that one is just counting two things, but in an English-speaking country it is rather a rude sign.

A further example related to relevance theory, in practical terms in translation, is the localization of television programmes, mainly children programmes. Few clients give instructions to change the titles of their programmes such as the television show *In the Night Garden* to *the Play Garden حديقة المرح*. Also, the names of main characters are also changed, localised or become optimally relevant to the cognitive environment. Names in English such as Igglepiggle and Upsy Daisy are made more optimally relevant in Arabic by giving them new names even Jo-Jo and Rihana respectively (the latter name being a direct translation of a sweet-smell daisy). These Arabic names of the cartoon characters are more fun in the TL for the children of the target culture and therefore more appropriate. Transliterating the original names – Igglepiggle and Upsy Daisy – would have been less popular by the target audience – Arabic-speaking children. One of the reason is that if they were to be transliterated they would have been more difficult to pronounce and/or relate to. However, in general terms transliterating SL names is usually the norm in the TL.

Another issue closely connected to relevance is the use of deictic or 'pointing words' such as 'I', 'you', 'this', 'that', 'these' and 'those'. These words are exophoric, i.e. referring to elements outside the text. The following example has de Beaugrande's intertextuality. In a press conference held by the pop singer Michael Jackson on 4 March 2009 on Sky satellite channel and other television stations, he said, **'This is it. When I say this is it, I really mean this is it.'** First, intertextuality is in the title of his concert announced in that press conference. In that concert, he would play ten gigs entitled "This Is It" at the London O2 Arena

in July 2009 and hinted he would then retire from performing. Understanding the text is the first step with all its exophora. The interesting and challenging part is how to translate such ambiguities and produce a coherent and cohesive TT. Here is the TT,

"هذا هو الحفل الأخير. حينما أقول هذا هو، فإنني أقصد ما أقول."

[Back-translation: *This is **the last concert**. When I say this is it, I do mean what I say.*]

It is clear that the relevance theory plays a part here, through intertextuality where the addition of 'the last concert' highlighted above in bold is vital to convey the same effect and with the least cost on the part of the text receiver.

Advertisements provide another interesting example of the employment of relevance theory. Advertising requires the significant role by the addresser in making novel assumptions sufficient to his receptors. In so doing, he/she attempts to bring new assumptions to the context of the target language as an optimally relevant by maximizing the number of the contextual effects that the new assumption can hold for the audience in the particular context in which it is processed with minimum effort and maximum effect.

Here is an advertisement which is displayed inside a shopping centre in Bromley, London displayed in August 2015 for shoppers to see:



Picture taken by the author, August 2015.

Translating the text "**Psst!.. great places to eat, great places to shop. Pass it on!**" is the first challenge.

"أنشر الخبر! لدينا مطاعم فخمة ومحلات راقية."

[Back-translation: *Spread the news! We have posh restaurants and classy shops.*]

The notion of this advert is in itself context-dependent. This is evident in the use of the utterance or sound 'Psst' which is nonsensical in Arabic if it is to be transliterated, i.e. يست, therefore the use of deictic 'you' which is an exphora, a sign outside the text, is needed to achieve the optimal relevance effect. So 'you' is most relevant in this context, as it can be used in Arabic to draw someone's attention to an important event or occurrence.

One should convey the implicit information such as graded communicability, context-dependence, truth-laden value of the text, the correlation among the implicit information the 'piece of news' is used instead of the pro-form 'it' in the sentence 'pass it on!'

As translation is clues-based interpretative use of language across language boundaries, some elements in the advertisements need to be considered as clues which need to be interpreted.

This also applies to the previous phrases 'great places to eat, great places to shop', in English lexical repetition is needed for emphasis, but its Arabic equivalents if the structure to be mirrored, would be rather overloaded with monotonous repetition, therefore the interaction of the contextual effect and processing effort can be achieved because as it has been argued translation is clues-based interpretative use of language across cultural communication, these clues are represented by words such as 'great places to eat' and 'great places to shop' whose cognitive environmental equivalents are relevantly مطاعم فخمة [posh restaurants] and محلات راقية [classy shops].

Here this advertisement brings in a new assumption when rendering it into Arabic and making it optimally relevant by the images or visual material on both sides of the advertisement, and the actual source text which needs to be rendered into Arabic. Pictorially, there is a young man walking up the escalator on the one side and a couple of people going down on the escalator on the other. Also, pictorially, there is another important visual factor which is the use of font colour (red and black) and font size. In addition to the text, and in order to make the interaction of the two dimensions, contextual effects and processing effort more easily accessible by the use of pictures provided alongside the text, the more textual effects the advert yields, the more relevant it is; the less processing effort the reader spends the more relevant an advert is too.

Here the utterance "Psst" being written in the largest font, and "Pass it on!". Also the phonological aspect being used here with the first utterance is counterbalance the advice "Pass it on!" the significance of punctuations (exclamation marks, commas and full stops).

Here is another advertisement which is displayed outside the same shopping centre in Bromley, London displayed in August 2015 for shoppers, pedestrians and passing traffic. Interestingly, this advertisement is placed close to the pedestrian crossing with traffic lights (the yellow box to stop the traffic and allow pedestrians to cross):

Here is yet another advertisement which is displayed outside the same shopping centre again in Bromley, London displayed in August 2015 for shoppers, pedestrians and passing traffic:



Picture taken by the author, August 2015.

The text is "We hope to leaf an impression".

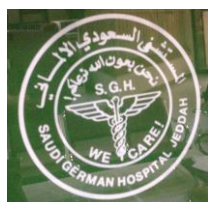
من خلال مساحاتنا الخضراء نأمل بأن نترك انطباعا مؤثرا.

[Back-translation: *Through our green spaces we hope to leave a powerful impression.*]

Again the visual tool which appears in the form of a circular image next to the text indicates that some green areas are under construction behind this boarded fence. The addition of من

خلال مساحاتنا الخضراء [through our green spaces] provides a cost-benefit relation, as the cost in this context is determined by the amount of processing effort required to interpret the picture and the text with the unusual use of the word 'leaf' as a verb. Here the pay-off is determined by the contextual effects achieved by the unusual use of the word 'leaf', which facilitates a great deal the processing effort and reduce the cost to the minimum. Its most appropriate equivalence is the phrase مساحات خضراء [green areas] which will achieve the cost-benefit relation approach.

The following example consists of two signs used originally in English and Arabic. One of them is a sign showing the logo of a hospital displayed on its wall in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The task here is to do a comparative text analysis, pointing out any translation loss and gain and how the loss is compensated whether by omission and/or addition. Here is the logo of the Saudi German Hospital:



Picture taken by the author, September 2015.

The sign reads in English, "Saudi German Hospital (S.G.H.) Jeddah – We Care!"

The sign in Arabic reads,

"المستشفى السعودي الألماني. نحن بعون الله نرعاكم!"

[Back-translation: *The Saudi German Hospital. We with God support care for you all.*]

Contextual effects and processing effort have been achieved by the addition of the acronym for English-speaking receptors, while the addition of a religious phrase and the pronoun 'you' in the Arabic version help a great deal in the processing effort Arabic-speaking receptors will spend.

Within the same context, the sign below in both Arabic and English shows a similar technique:



[Back-translation: *In case of fire happening, God forbid, call this telephone 998*]

Picture taken from a fish shop in Jeddah (KSA) in 2015.

The Arabic sign can be translated as "in the case of fire, God forbid, call this number 998". Here relevance theory applies where the utterance 'God forbid' is not relevant in the TL (English). Therefore, it is possible to drop it from the TT.

Again it is possible to omit the utterance 'God forbid' from the TL. Here is a similar English sign:



The English sign can be translated with the addition of that utterance as it is relevant to the target culture; therefore, it is

' في حال حدوث حريق لا سمح الله، اتصل بـ '

[Back-translation: *In case of fire happening God forbid, call...*].

It is obvious that this Arabic rendering fulfils the interaction of contextual effects and processing effort optimally. As the phrase God forbid لا سمح الله is deeply rooted in the Arabic cognitive environment.

Similarly, the commonly used expression 'overseas students' or 'overseas investors' with its equivalent طلاب أجنبية [*foreign students*] or مستثمرون أجنبية [*foreign investors*]. This refers to students or investors coming from abroad. The adjective 'overseas' is only used by people living in an island, but does refer to any foreign person coming to their country. When translating such an expression in the TL as 'students from overseas' or 'beyond the seas' من وراء البحار [*from behind the seas*] or ما وراء البحار [*what is behind the seas*], a mutual manifestness and cognitive effect will be the adjective 'foreign' and its Arabic equivalent 'أجنبي' [*foreigners*]; it would sound strange and unusual to use the former equivalence as it costs more mental effort on the part of the text receiver in processing it, and eventually be efficiently weak and hardly relevant in this context. Having its equivalence as 'foreign students/investors' seems optimally and efficiently relevant to the target receptor.

Another example of relevance is when one says, 'British holiday makers travel to the continent to spend their summer holidays'. Here the expression 'the continent' requires high cost and attention from the receptor due to the fact the explicature has a weak degree of relevance, in comparison with the expression 'Europe'. The implicature of the term 'the continent' is an existing assumption in the minds of British people and not those outside the UK. Here are two versions of this sentence in the TL:

1. يسافر السياح البريطانيون إلى القارة لقضاء إجازاتهم الصيفية .

[Back-translation: *The British tourists travel to the continent to spend their summer holidays.*]

2. يسافر السياح البريطانيون إلى أوروبا لقضاء إجازاتهم الصيفية

[Back-translation: *The British tourists travel to Europe to spend their summer holidays.*]

In version 1, Arabic-speaking receptors would have to spend a lot of mental energy to process the term 'القارة' (the continent) but not so much energy when receiving the second version. A better example is the well-known expression about offering 'continental breakfast'. When translated into Arabic as 'فطور قاري' [*continental breakfast*] it would not be effective and the cost and benefit trade-off will be high. Obviously, the equivalent فطور أوروبي [*European breakfast*] is certainly much more effective. Here in the TL the descriptive mode and interpretative mode optimally overlap.

Also a translator rendering the following sentence might have a hard task for him or her to do: 'we have having an Indian summer this year'; its most relevant equivalent is *نتمتع بصيف حار هذا* [Back-translation: *We enjoy a hot summer this year.*]. Choosing its relevant equivalence of 'an Indian summer' is vital to achieve maximum effect with minimum cost; so the benefit is attained. The equivalence derives adequate contextual effects for the minimum necessary effort on behalf of the receptors.

In 10 May 2007, in his resignation speech the ex-prime minister Tony Blair,

I ask you to accept one thing. Hand on heart, I did what I thought was right. I may have been wrong. That's your call.... I have been very lucky and very blessed. This country is a blessed nation. The British are special, the world knows it, in our innermost thoughts, we know it. This is the greatest nation on Earth. It has been an honour to serve it.

(BBC website http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/3750847.stm)

أطلب منكم أن تتقبلوا شيئاً واحداً. أقسم أنني قمت بكل عمل اعتقدته عملاً سليماً. لعلني كنت قد أخطأت. لكن ذلك هو قراركم... لقد كنت محظوظاً وحلت عليّ البركة. هذا البلد هو أمة مباركة. الشعب البريطاني شعب عزيز، والعالم يعرف هذه الحقيقة، بل نحن في قرارة أنفسنا نعرفها. فهذه أعظم أمة على وجه الأرض. وكان يشرفني أن قمت بخدمتها.

[Back-translation: *I ask you to accept one thing. I swear that I did all the work which I believed to be a right one. Perhaps I was wrong. But that was your decision... I was lucky and bathed with the blessing. This country is a blessed nation. The British people are dear people, and the world knows this fact, but we deep down in ourselves know it. So this is the greatest nation on the face of the earth. I was honoured to have served it.*]

Blair was saying this of his ten years in power. When translating such speech, one finds a number of expressions which can be problematic in translation such as 'hand on heart' أقسم [I swear], 'that's your call' ذلك هو قراركم [that is your decision], 'the British are special' الشعب البريطاني [The British people are dear people], and 'in our innermost thoughts' في قرارة أنفسنا [deep down in ourselves]. An adequate to the occasion rendering would be the above TT, as it is most communicative in order to achieve the cost and benefit effect. The presumption of optimal relevance in this context is the current TL interpretation of the phrases mentioned above. This interpretation of أقسم [I swear] resembles the interpretation of the original; however, if the translator were to go for a different interpretation with the verbal manifestation i.e. يدي على قلبي [my hand on my heart], then the translation would have been completely off the mark; as this disjuncts with the adequate contextual assumption intended for the TL audience.

Another culturally truth laden expression is in this idiom. In one of the films, the male character says, 'she looks like a million dollars [in that dress]', with its closest relevant equivalent "هي كالبيدر" [She is like the full moon.] هي البيدر ليلة 14 [She is the full moon on the 14th night]. This indicated in the target language that she is so beautiful. Here the stimulus designed to achieve optimal cognitive effects in the SL, i.e. linking beauty with dollars, is not the same as that in the TL, where the stimulus in the TL can only resemble that of the original when the link is between beauty and the 'full moon'. Incidentally, the environmental cognitive stimulus regarding this term 'full moon' can be confusing if it is to be back-translated into English as it connotes mythical and negative image of the girl and the 'werewolf'.

The deeply rooted relevant orientation of Arab human cognition would be هي كالبدن [She is like the full moon.] or هي البدن ليلة 14 [She is the full moon on the 14th night.] (14th day of the lunar month according to the AH calendar). The psychological subsets of the Arab hearer's assumptions and the cognate-communication are totally dysfunctional in this context with the environmental cognitive assumption of dollars in the SL.

In the music industry, there are films about 'rock hard music'; this is yet another example with the adjective 'hard' meaning 'noisy' or 'loud', these two equivalents are most relevant in this context, if 'hard' is to be translated as 'rough', i.e. the translator not respecting the interpretation of the original, then the cost on the part of the text receiver would be way too high, so موسيقى الروك الصاخبة [the noisy rock music] would achieve optimal relevance.

Finally one of the female characters in the film 'Bogus' (1996) says, "I don't have a motherly bone in my body" meaning that 'she does not feel motherly towards children' or 'childbearing'; so a translation of this with maximum effect and least effort on the part of the text receiver in the TL is certainly لا أحس بمشاعر الأمومة بتاتاً [I do not feel motherly at all.]. As the successful communication in the intended interpretation and as it needs to be recoverable with ease and achieve adequate contextual effects, it is vital that the interpretation of the original as a presumption of optimal resemblance can be seen in the interpretation of the TL, i.e. seen in the rendering of لا أحس بمشاعر الأمومة بتاتاً [I do not feel motherly at all.] which is an adequate relevant correspondence to the occasion.

CONCLUSION

The analysis carried out in this paper is based on several well-selected examples containing heavily-loaded cultural truth-value problems. The strategies of relevant two dimensions, contextual effects and processing effort, and cost-benefit balance have been followed in order to achieve optimal relevance. These strategies have been used by the translator to render the same effect. The selection of these strategies is determined by the communicative principle of relevance, i.e. to achieve the maximum benefit from the TT with the minimum effort by the text receiver. As shown above, both the text producer and text receiver should pursue optimal relevance in communication.

A crucial point is that every translator should consider whatever he/she does in translation matters primarily not because it agrees with or violates some principles or theory of translation but because of casual interdependence of cognitive environment, stimulus and interpretation, not in virtue of any special theoretical status, but simply as contextual assumptions used in the interpretation process that will influence the interpretation of the text. In brief, communicative success of translation is not determined by conformity to any stipulations of translation theory, but by the casual interaction between stimulus, context and interpretation rooted in the relevance-orientation of human cognition.

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