CULTURAL LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATION

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ABSTRACT: *Cultural Linguistics is an interdisciplinary sub-branch of linguistics that explores the relationship between language and cultural conceptualizations (Sharifian, 2015). Based on the principle of the Cultural Linguistics theory and Frame Semantics theory this research offers a descriptive comparative content analysis of translation of humor in literary humorous books. More precisely based on Lopez's analytical framework (2002), which centers in the frames and cultural conceptualizations activated in the humorous texts, the present research explores and explicates the various translation problems which may arise in translating humorous elements in two of Woody Allen's books: "Side Effects" and "Getting Even". The present research also discusses various critical translation challenges under six comprehensive categories: Visual Frames, Situational Frames, Text-Type Frames, Social Frames, Institutional Frames and Generic Frames.*

KEYWORDS: Cultural linguistics, Translation, Humorous texts, Frames

INTRODUCTION

Translation studies and humor studies are two disciplines that have been long established but have seldom been looked at in conjunction. This research looks at the intersection of the two disciplines as found in literary books.

The translation of humor is a stimulating challenge. It requires first the accurate decoding of humorous speech in its original context, then the transfer of that speech in a different and often disparate linguistic and cultural environment, and finally its reformation in a new utterance which successfully recaptures the intention of the original humorous message and evokes in the target audience an equivalent pleasurable and paly full response.

Based on the above mentioned perspectives and the overdeveloping prominence of cultural translation, the present research studies and explicates the various translation problems which may arise in translating humorous elements in two of Woody Allen's books including "Side Effects" and "Getting Even". I carried out a descriptive comparative content analysis on the basis of the texts and the corresponding translations of two books: "Side Effects" and "Getting Even". My analysis implements Lopez's analytical framework (2002), which focuses on the frames and cultural conceptualizations activated in the humorous texts, to discuss various translation challenges under six comprehensive categories: Visual Frames, Situational Frames, Text-Type Frames, Social Frames, Institutional Frames and Generic Frames.

A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

The term 'Cultural Linguistics' may be used to refer to the general area of research on the relationship between language and culture, which dates back at least to the eighteenth century and the work of influential scholars such as Wilhelm Von Humboldt (1767–1835), and later Franz Boas (1858–1942), Edward Sapir (1884–1939), and Benjamin Whorf (1897–1941).

However, in this research the term 'Cultural Linguistics' refers to a rather recent multidisciplinary area of research that explores the relationship between language and conceptualizations that are culturally constructed and that are instantiated through features of languages.

Cultural Linguistics grew out of an interest in the general principle subscribed to by cognitive linguistics that meaning emerges from the interaction between human perceptual and conceptual faculties. While cognitive linguistics has often adopted a universalistic tone, Cultural Linguistics emphasizes the role of culture in conceptualizing human experiences of various kinds and the interrelationship between language, culture, and conceptualization.

Gary B. Palmer, a linguistic anthropologist formerly from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, proposed a synergy between cognitive linguistics and linguistic anthropology in Toward a Theory of Cultural Linguistics (1996).

In his book, Palmer argued that Cognitive linguistics can be directly applied to the study of language and culture. Palmer's proposal for Cultural Linguistics paved the ground for further theoretical advancements (Sharifian 2011) and empirical investigations (Yu 2009a, 2009b; Wolf & Polzenhagen, 2009) as well as applied research in areas where the interaction between language and culture proved to be paramount (Sharifian & Palmer, 2007). On the theoretical front, the model of cultural conceptualizations and language (Sharifian, 2011, 2015) is an attempt to provide a broader frame for understanding the relationship between language, culture, and conceptualization.

Accordingly Fillmore (1976, as cited in Lopez, 2002) seems to be the first scholar to introduce the notion of cultural conceptualizations through the Frame Semantics theory. He argues that the analysis of a language system cannot be based only on a mere description of lexis and grammar. Fillmore (1976) believes "any analysis of language system should necessarily incorporate the description of the cognitive and interactional frames speakers use to interpret their environment, formulate and understand messages and create their own model for the world."

Considering the above mentioned survey the present research adopted the analytical model proposed by Lopez (2002) rooted in Palmer's (1996, 2007) Cultural Linguistics theory and Fillmore's (1976) Frame Semantics theory as a theoretical framework to overcome linguistic barriers and incorporate cognitive and cultural conceptualizations to the study of the translation of humor in two of Woody Allen's aforementioned books.

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This research was focused on the analysis of the problems posed by certain elements characteristic of a given culture when translated into another language in a different cultural context. Overall, it can be claimed that the research had two basic aims: (1) showing the contributions of a Cultural Linguistics theory and Frame Semantics theory to the translation of humor; and (2) examining the contributions certain types of frames and conceptualizations can make to the analysis of humor and its translation.

Type of Research

The present study was a descriptive comparative content analysis on the basis of the texts and the corresponding translations from two of Woody Allen's books including "Side Effects" and "Getting Even". As a theoretical framework the researcher used the typology of frames for the translation of humorous elements proposed by Lopez (2002).

Source Materials

Bearing in mind that this study was focused on the translation of cultural elements; I concentrated on the two of Woody Allen's literary books as the corpus for the analysis, considering that these books strengthen the link between linguistic elements and the cultural context they belong to. Furthermore, I gave priority to the humor, since humor is often a source of cultural conceptualizations.

Moreover, the corpus selected for this research was a bilingual (English-Persian) parallel one. It included two books originally written in English and their corresponding translations into Persian. The selected books were as follows:

1. Side Effects by Woody Allen (1980), published by Ballantine Books.

2. Getting Even by Woody Allen (1978), published by Random House Publishing.

And their translations (the book "Getting Even" was consisted of seventeen short stories, however, one of its stories "Death Knock" was omitted in the selected Persian translation. Therefore, this story was analyzed using another translated book by Hossein Yaqubi):

1. حال بی حساب شدیم، نگار شاطریان، (1388)، نشر بیدگل.

2. عوارض جانبی، لادن نژاد حسینی، (1388)، نشر بیدگل.

3. مرگ در می زند، حسین یعقوبی، (1388)، نشرچشمه.

Data Collection and Analysis

In this section in order to establish an appropriate theoretical framework for the research, I described three basic concepts necessary for the selection and analysis of the humorous elements of the source materials: (1) translation unit, (2) functional equivalent and (3) context.

Then as part of the methodology I explained the collection and analysis procedures in detail and finally I elaborated Lopez's analytical method (2002) comprehensively.

Translation Unit

According to Lopez (2002, p.313) "the definition of the unit of translation has ranged between the tendency to atomize of those seeking lexical equivalence and the more holistic attitude of those looking for textual equivalence." She believes that the former often leads to somehow an "artificial translation" and the latter to a translation which is "too vague and not very practical to work with the whole text." To solve these problems, Lopez (2002) clarifies that the translation scholars have tried to establish units of analytical nature by comparing ST and TT after the translation process which are defined as posteriori. Santoyo (1986) and

Rabadan (1991) call these units 'translemas' and define them as units of a relational nature that do not exist a priori, since they are only valid for the compared texts.

As Lopez (2002, p.313) proposed in her model "the hypothesis that acts as an intermediating instrument between ST and TT is the notion of frame." She defines frames "as structure of knowledge that represent the world view of a particular society, that is, its beliefs, values and emotions, prototypes of people and things, of sequences of situations and events, social scenarios and the metaphorical and metonymical structure of thoughts."

In Lopez's model (2002, p.313) "these units have been labeled cultural elements and include any word, expression or textual segment that activates a frame because it denotes, implies or symbolizes any cultural aspect of human life, its environment, its relationships or its products."

Therefore, it seems inevitable to give a definition of cultural words in this part of the research. Newmark (1988, p.95) believes that 'cultural words' mainly refer to aspects of the so called 'material culture'; however, for the purpose of this research based on Lopez's (2002) ideas the definition of 'cultural element' also comprises all those linguistic categories that need to be interpreted in the cultural environment of the ST, even if they do not refer directly to a cultural dimension. They are mostly contextualized stylistic resources whose interpretation depends on the reader's ability to activate certain cultural frames; which means numerous cases of idioms, colloquial and taboo expressions, play on words and even metaphors and metonymies.

Functional Equivalence

For the purpose of this research from the Cultural Linguistics perspective I presented the notion of equivalence based on the concept of frame and the function carried out by each cultural element. As Gutt points out (1991), the function of text or textual fragment has surely been one of the criteria most frequently used to define translation equivalence. Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997, p.64) define 'functional equivalence' as "a term used to refer to the type of equivalence reflected in a TT which seeks to adapt the function of the original to suit the specific context in and for which it was produced".

Therefore, the type of equivalence which is meant in this research is not that of "total equivalence", but rather "correspondence" that may or may not be 'acceptable' by the target audience within the target language and culture. Then, what is crucial here is to focus on whether the translation's textual function as activators of knowledge is equivalent to that of the original ST elements or not, rather than focusing on mere lexical or holistic textual equivalence between ST and TT.

So considering the above mentioned criteria and based on Lopez's (2002) ideas the cultural elements of the TT are considered as functional equivalents of the ST elements if only they comply with the textual function carried out and if there is a high degree of correspondence between the semantic, pragmatic and stylistic loads of the source and target texts' frames.

Context

Translation unit proposed in this research was interpreted within its relevant context. The definition of context proposed in this study was in accordance with Martin's (1995) observation. He believes that the context is 'the mental contribution of the person who

interprets an utterance.' Therefore, from the cognitive point of view of Cultural Linguistics proposed here, the context is a psychological conceptualization that exists in the speakers' mind. More precisely based on Lopez's (2002, p.315) ideas, we may claim that "the cognitive context includes information from the physical environment, information that can be retrieved from our mental stores and information that can be inferred from other domains of cultural conceptualizations." In this way, the 'cognitive profile' of the ST cultural element constitutes a norm which serves as a framework to determine the adequacy of the TT element based on the frames and conceptualizations it activates.

Collection Procedure

Before proceeding to data analysis section, the cultural elements that appear in Woody Allen's books were extracted and compared with their Persian translations. The selected issues were examples of translations which illustrated some problems according to the frames they activated in the target language and culture in comparison with the original ones.

All the analyzed examples were presented in three separate parts: The first paragraph contained the source text of woody Allen's books with the cultural element in italics. The source was indicated with the related initials and the number of the page where the example was found. The second paragraph showed the translation with the analyzed element again in italics. In this paragraph the source was also indicated with the related initials and the number of the page where the example was found. Finally, in the third paragraph I described why the translation of the humorous element in italics is not considered an adequate functional translation and why it failed to reproduce and activate the same frames in the target language and culture as the originals.

To sum up, translation of humor in an anthology of Woody Allen's books was studied under six general frames: Visual, Situational, Text-Type, Social, Institutional and Generic frames.

Analysis Procedure

Lopez cites Nash (1985, p.12), who believes that, "humor characterizes the interaction of persons in situations of cultures, and our response to it must be understood in that broad context" (2002, p.34). This follows her idea that we need to use both cognitive and interactional frames. She states that prototype plays an important role in humor because, to understand a certain concept, we need to be able to access what she refers to as our "stored repertoire of prototypes in our memory" (2002, p.35).

Bearing in mind the assumption that the translation of a cultural element should be compared to the 'cognitive profile' of the ST cultural element (that is, to the cultural frames it activates), then the crucial step was the analysis of the function carried out by such cultural element in the ST. In this way, the 'cognitive profile' of the ST cultural element constitutes the norm which serves to determine the adequacy of the TT element based on the cultural frames it activates. For this purpose I used Lopez's (2002) typology of frames for the translation of humor as the theoretical framework. She outlines six types of frames:

1. Situational frame, which refers to "information chunks related to conventional situations" (2002, p.320). Lopez provides the example of a commercial transaction (2002, p.36). Words like "buyer", "seller", "goods" and "money" all activate that particular frame. The stereotypical nature of the frame triggers the entire process associated with that frame. Therefore, in a transaction example, the mere description of

a man walking into a shop (the initial frame) triggers a number of subsequent frames: the client picking an item up from the shelf; the owner standing behind the counter; the process of the client handing over money in exchange for the item; the owner giving the client a receipt, and packing the item into a plastic bag etc.

In this way, we can see that one frame triggers a cognitive process in which we use one image from our "repertoire" to create a chain of actions related to that event. It is the reader's ability to access those frames that is important, and those frames include idioms, colloquial and taboo expressions, metaphors, puns and metonymies. In addition to situational frames, Lopez draws on five other types of frames: visual, text-type, social, institutional and generic (2002, p.318).

2. Visual frames refer to frames that evoke a series of images, such as that of a farm: we respond with related images like a barn, a farmhouse, a chicken-coop, farmyard animals and grazing fields. Visual frames also refer to words used to describe gestures, or movement, where the audience is able to build up subsequent frames describing sentiments and attitudes, based on the initial word.

3. Text-type refers to a reader's implicit knowledge of the way a text is structured in her mother-tongue, and the frames within the text that activate this. Examples of this would be limericks and knock-knock jokes, where the form of the text activates the type of joke ("Knock-knock"), and the kind of response that should be given ("who's there?"). Text-type frames are the equivalent of Raskin's Narrative Strategy, which deals with the organization of humor.

4. Social frames are those that "describe the cognitive structures that organize our social knowledge" (2002, p.326). This is important because it includes knowledge of the type of register that is appropriate to different types of roles and interpersonal relationships. For example, dialect, geographical position and relationships are all elements of social frames that will govern how people respond to each other: how an employer addresses an employee; how a peasant addresses an aristocrat; or even how a parent addresses her child. Different social norms will govern interpersonal relationships, and the frames that are activated by each type of interaction.

5. Institutional frames refer to 'material culture' and 'institutional systems' which relate to both public and domestic life and to a particular political, legal, economic and educational system (Lopez, 2002). 'Material culture' conjures up things such as house objects, food habits, clothes, means of transport, mass media, etc. Woody Allen uses many of these terms to activate the cultural knowledge he shares with his readers and to create certain humorous effects. So these frames play an important role in the process of translation.

6. Finally, Lopez describes generic frames as "prototypes of people" (2002, p.343), such as an evil person, or an innocent one. These frames are particular types of social frames and refer to the type of knowledge an individual has about people in society. This includes things like behavior, physical features, manner or commonly used expressions. Each aspect activates a specific frame, with a net which leads us to have a character sketch of the person in question.

FINDINGS

This part presents the findings as well as the data analysis and discussions of the present research under six general categories including: (1) Visual Frames, (2) Situational Frames, (3) Text- Type Frames, (4) Social Frames, (5) Institutional Frames and (6) Generic Frames. In the following parts the Persian translations were given according to UN system of transliteration. Due to the space limitations of this article, only three examples, one for each top three frames with the highest frequency have been presented. Those interested in this research may contact the author for the full version of the research. Furthermore, for the purpose of brevity the names of the books were abbreviated as follows (the book "Getting Even" was consisted of seventeen short stories, however, one of its stories "Death Knock" was omitted in the selected Persian translation. Therefore, this story was analyzed using another translated book; مرگ در می زند):

G.E.: Getting Even

S.E.: Side Effects

ح.ب.ش.: حال بی حساب شدیم

ع.ج.: عوارض جانبی

م.د.م.:مرگ در می زند

Social Frames

CUPCAKE

"How you doing, *cupcake*?" he said to Emma. (S.E., p.69)

Be Emma goft: "Hālet chetoreh *kūlūcheh*?" (ع.ج.، ص.97)

This conversation takes place between a lover and his beloved. The ST signals an intimate close relationship between the two. Not using the verb reflects a very informal conversation and the term 'cupcake' also refers to the intimacy of the relationship. Therefore, it can be claimed that the TT does not show a functionally equivalent interpersonal relationship. First, because syntactically speaking, the speech doesn't reflect the informality represented in the ST. Second, the word "Kūlūcheh" cannot be considered as a functional translation. Although the TT reader has access to the intimacy frame, but unlike the ST, it is not very familiar word according to the TT reader's frame. The word "'Asalam" or "Golam" would seem to be more functional.

Visual Frames

PROWL

Then the moment of darkness comes, and through some miraculous instinct the fiend emerges from the safety of his hiding place and, assuming the hideous forms of the bat or the wolf, *prowls* the countryside, drinking the blood of his victims. (G.E., p.39)

In hayūlā bā gharīzeyī mojeze āsa az amnīyate makhfīgāhash khārej shode va dar sovar holnāke khoffāsh va yā gorg, bīrūn az shahr *qadam mīzanad*, va khūn qorbānīyānash rā mīnūshad. (م.د.م.، ص.123)

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Prowl (of an animal) means: to move quickly and carefully around an area. In this example, the ST reader can easily see the frame, which refers to an animal; however this image is not reflected in the Persian version. The ST term implicitly refers to the character's purpose of hunting, a frame that is absent in the TT term.

Institutional Frames

VALET PARKING

And of course we'd need *valet parking*. (S.E. p.16)

Albateh barāye ***pīshkhedmathā*** parkīnge ezāfi ham dorost mīkardīm. (ص، .ج.ع 33)

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Valet refers to a person who parks the car for you in a hotel or a restaurant. The term 'valet' clearly shows the frame that when all the people decide to visit one of the characters of the story, his house would become so crowded that there should be a valet to park the cars. Whereas the TT term implies an extra parking space by the valet.

DISCUSSION

Having analyzed the corpus developed for the purpose of the present study, a total of 140 cases were detected and then categorized according to the six general sub-frames i.e. Visual Frames, Situational Frames, Text-Type Frames, Social Frames, Institutional Frames and Generic Frames.

The frequency of the cases in each category in the order from the most frequent frame to the least frequent one; are as follows:

1) Social Frames: 58 cases

2) Visual Frames: 50 cases

3) Institutional Frames: 19 cases

4) Situational Frames: 6 cases

5) Generic Frames: 5 cases

6) Text-Type Frames: 3 cases

Based on the result of the study, Social Frames category ranked the first, with 58 cases out of a total of 140 examples, which approximately accounted for approximately %41 of the total examples. Generally, it could be concluded that the translators' failure to render Social Frames of the ST into equivalent ones in TT results in an imbalance in the level of formality of TT in comparison with that of the ST. The next category was related to Visual Frames with 50 instances accounting for approximately %35 of all the examples found. The translators' failure in this case led to a poor mental image of the visual information incorporated in the text, i.e. the gestures, movements, scenes, images etc. The third category went to Institutional Frames with 19(≈%13) instances, in most cases of which the distortion of the frames resulted in blockage of the TT readers' access to ST frames and consequently incomprehension of the text. The next category was that of Situational Frames with 6(≈%4) instances, the wrong

translation of which resulted in a confusion or misunderstanding of the text. Generic Frames comprised 5 (≈% 3) general instances, the distortion of which prevented the translator to achieve similar prototypes similar to the ones created by the ST narrator. And finally, Text Type Frames with 3(≈%2) instances. Although other frames outnumbered this type of frame, it is significant to consider that ignorance of their existence distorts the humorous effect to a great extent.

The study concludes that, since "Cultural Linguistics" and more specifically "Frame Semantics" goes beyond the word level and the linguistic limitations of the traditional theories; it can be regarded as a very useful framework in translation and analysis of humorous texts. In short, considering the fact that Translation Studies has already gone through the Cultural Turn, we con not simply expect a pure linguistics approach towards translation and its teaching to result in an efficient functional translation. Therefore, many scholars may find the model applied in this research as worthwhile to be taught to translation students in order to disclose and comprehend the processes involved in the interpretation of cultural and humorous elements which can lead to a more systematic and functional translation of these challenging elements.

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