

**THE STRATEGIES USED FOR TRANSLATION OF CULTURE SPECIFIC
CONCEPTS: THREE PERSIAN TRANSLATIONS OF “PRIDE AND PREJUDICE”**

Fatemeh Abdolhamidi
Payam Institute of Higher Education, Golpayegan, Iran
Hamidi_f1387@yahoo.com

Introduction

“Language is the heart within the body of culture, and it is the interaction between them which results in the continuation of life-energy. In the same way that the surgeon operating on the heart cannot neglect the body that surrounds it, so the translator treats the text in isolation from the culture at his peril.” (Bassnet, 1980, p.14)

One of the most difficult problems facing a translator is how to find lexical equivalence for objects and events which are not known in the receptor culture. Because of the differences in cultures, there will be some concepts in the source language (SL) which do not have lexical equivalents in the target language (TL). This problem specially can be seen as one of the greatest problems of translators in translating literature. The readers of the TL may be completely unfamiliar with the events or things the particular work talks about. M. Snell-Hornby (1988) defines a translation problem as: “the problems don’t depend on the source text (ST) itself, but on the significance of the translated text for its readers as members of a certain culture” (p.42). So if translators should retain the original words mentioned in the SL when translating or use other words or concepts that are recognizable to the readers in the TL? The translator should search for strategies to cope with these problems and aims at finding a way to express the important meaning components of a word and a phrase.

Newmark (1988) believes that “culture is the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression” (p.94). He distinguishes *cultural* from *universal* and *personal* language. He believes that some words such as ‘die’, ‘live’, ‘star’, and ‘swim’ are universal, so usually there is no translation problem there. But some words such as ‘monsoon’, ‘steppe’, ‘dacha’, are cultural words, it means that there will be a translation problem unless there is cultural overlap between the SL and TL. Sometimes a speech community focuses its attention on a particular topic, and then some cultural words will be born. For example the English focuses on sport, so there are special words for cricket. Many cultures have their words for their focused topics. He doesn’t regard language as a component or feature of culture, because he believes that if it were so, translation would be impossible. He says that the more specific a language becomes for natural phenomena the more it becomes embedded in cultural features and therefore creates translation problems (Newmark, 1988, pp. 94-95).

Newmark (1988, p. 95) categorized cultural words and offered some typical examples:

1. *Ecology*

Flora, Fauna, Winds, Plains, Hills...

2. *Material culture*

- (a) Food
- (b) Clothes
- (c) Houses and towns
- (d) Transport

3. *Social culture*-work and leisure

4. *Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts*

- (a) Political and administrative
- (b) Religious
- (c) Artistic

5. *Gestures and habits*

The category of, *Proper Names*, are also considered here as a kind of CSCs because according to Ordudary (2007) Proper names, PNs, which are defined by Richards (1985, p. 68) as “names of a particular person, place or thing” and are spelled “with a capital letter,” play an essential role in a literary work. For example personal PNs may refer to the setting, social status and nationality of characters, and really demand attention when rendered into a foreign language.

For many years translators think that how to translate CSCs and how to make them more understandable for target audience. According to Newmark (1988) two translation procedures are normally used for translation of cultural words: first *transference* which usually in literary texts offers local color and atmosphere. Although transference is brief and concise, it blocks comprehension, it emphasizes the culture and excludes the message and does not communicate. The other procedure is *componential analysis*, the most accurate translation procedure in Newmark's point of view which excludes the culture and highlights the message. It has also some shortcomings. It is not economical and has not the pragmatic impact of the original. He also believes that in translation of novels, cultural words are often transferred from SL to TL to give local color, to attract the reader, to give a sense of intimacy between the text and the reader (p.96). In the classification of translation procedures, he also refers to these two procedures and also some other procedures for translation of CSCs and define them as a following way:

- ***Transference*** is the process of transferring an SL word to a TL text.
- ***Cultural equivalent*** is the replacing of a cultural word in the SL with a TL one.
- ***Descriptive equivalent*** is the explanation of the CSC meaning in several words.
- ***Componential analysis*** is the comparison of an SL word with a TL word which has a similar meaning by demonstrating first their common and then their differing sense components.

- **Through-translation** is the literal translation of common collocations, names of organizations and components of compounds. It can also be called *calque* or *loan translation*.
- **Paraphrase** is the procedure in which the meaning of the CSC is explained. Here the explanation is much more detailed than that of *descriptive equivalent*.
- **Couplets** occur when the translator combines two different procedures.
- **Notes** which are additional information may be added to the translation by a translator because of differences between SL and TL culture. (Newmark, 1988, pp. 81-91)

In Larson's opinions about translation of CSCs we can find some similarities with Newmark's point of views which are mentioned above. His classification for translation of CSCs is as follows:

- Equivalence by Modifying **a Generic Word**
- Equivalence by Modifying **a Loan Word**
- Equivalence by **Cultural Substitute**
(Larson 1984, p. 170)

According to Kussmaul (1995) "there are various possibilities for dealing with cultural implications. We can drop cultural allusions or references, we can replace them by target culture material and we can also make implied information more explicit" (p. 72). He also says that "when translating into distant cultures we must be even more aware of the fact that there may have to be modifications and changes of the original text." (Kussmaul 1995, p. 75)

Hariyanto (1997) studied further the appropriate procedures used to translate culturally-bound sentences, words, and expressions which are embedded in Javanese culture into English using the novel translation as a case. The result shows that to translate culturally-bound words or expressions, the translator used *addition, componential analysis, cultural equivalent, descriptive equivalent, literal translation, modulation, recognized translation, reduction, synonymy, transference, deletion, and combination*.

Katan refers to a point which can be confirmed by the above mentioned strategies. He says that, "A number of translation scholars have offered lists of translation procedures for culture-bound terms, all of which include 'borrowing'." (Katan, 2004, p. 111)

Method

This study is restricted to the comparison of three Persian translations of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, because as a social novel, it is full of CSCs. The Persian translators of this work are:

1. Shamsolmoluke Mosahab
2. Shahram Puranfar and Hadi Adel Pour
3. Reza Rezaei

The text contains 164 cultural-specific words and notions. After classifying these items in 6 groups, the frequency and percentage of each category is indicated in tables. They are compared with their equivalents in Persian texts to see which strategies are used in translation of CSCs. These strategies also are considered in some tables. The aim is to carry out an analysis and description of particular strategies applied by translators to cope with CSCs to know, whether all three translators use the same strategies or different ones and which strategy is the most common one.

Results and Discussion

First, the frequency and percentage of CSCs are shown in three tables. Table 1 is more general than the others.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of CSCs in “Pride and Prejudice”

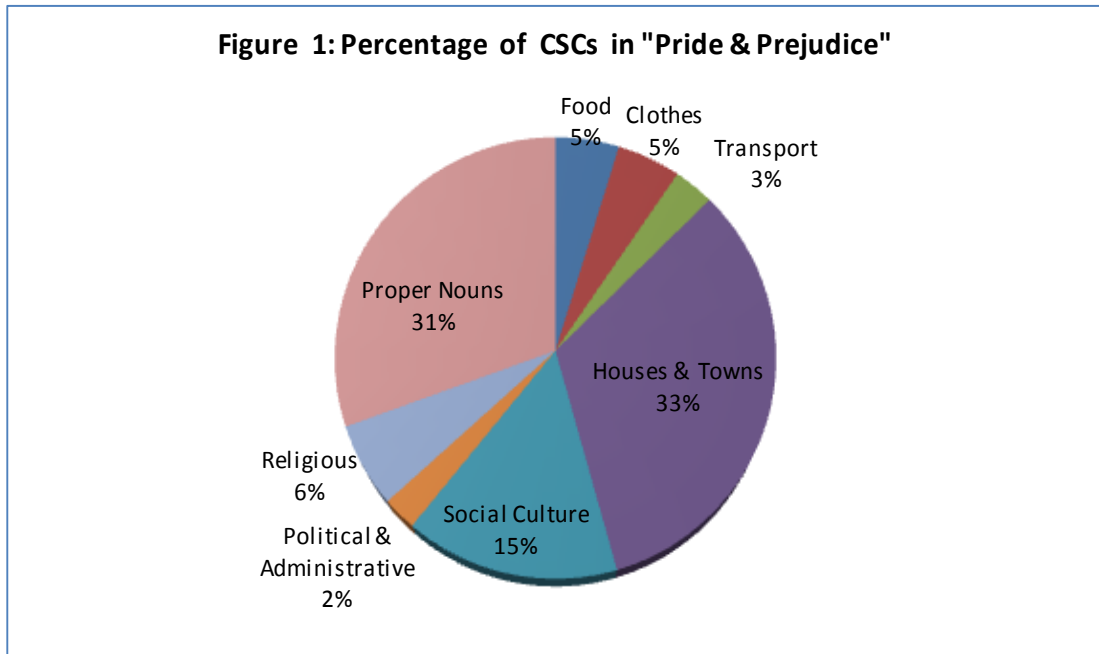
Culture specific concepts	Frequency	percentage
Ecology	0	0
Material culture	75	45.73%
Social Culture-Work and Leisure	25	15.24%
Organizations, Customs, Activities, Procedures, Concepts	14	8.53%
Gestures and habits	0	0
Proper Names	50	30.48%

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage of Material Culture

Material Culture	Frequency	Percentage
Food	8	4.8%
Clothes	8	4.8%
Houses and Towns	54	32.9 %
Transport	5	3.04%

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage of Organizations, Customs, Activities, Procedures, Concepts

Organizations, Customs, Activities, Procedures, Concepts	Frequency	Percentage
Political and Administrative	4	2.43 %
Religious	10	6.09 %
Artistic	0	0



In the second step, a table is shown for each category translation strategies and their percentages. Then the frequency and percentage of each translation strategy for all CSCs by individual translators are considered in separate tables. At the end the percentage of translation strategies totally is indicated in Figure 2.

Table 4: Percentage of Translation Strategies for Food

	General word	Componential analysis	Deletion
1st Translation	62.5%	37.5%	0
2nd Translation	37.5%	25%	37.5%
3rd Translation	50%	50%	0

Table 5: Percentage of Translation Strategies for Clothes

	General word	Componential analysis	Deletion	Transference
1st Translation	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%
2nd Translation	71.42%	0	28.57%	0
3rd Translation	50%	50%	0	0

Table 6: Percentage of Translation Strategies for Houses and Towns

	Transference	Couplet	Deletion	Componential analysis	General word
1st Translation	37.03%	33.33%	24.07%	3.70%	1.85%
2nd Translation	72.22%	0	14.81%	11.11%	1.85%
3rd Translation	77.77%	7.4%0	5.55%	7.40%	1.85%

Table 7: Percentage of Translation Strategies for Transport

	Componential analysis	Couplet	Transference	General word	Deletion
1st Translation	80%	20%	0	0	0
2nd Translation	60%	0	20%	20%	0
3rd Translation	40%	0	20%	20%	20%

Table 8: Percentage of Translation Strategies for Social Culture

	General word	Couplet	Componential analysis	Deletion	Cultural substitution	Transference
1st Translation	29.16%	41.66%	12.5%	12.5%	4.16%	0
2nd Translation	32%	0	36%	4%	4%	24%
3rd Translation	24%	8%	20%	4%	4%	40%

Table 9: Percentage of Translation Strategies for Political & Administrative

	Couplet	Componential analysis	Transference
1st Translation	50%	0	50%
2nd Translation	50%	50%	0
3rd Translation	0	0	100%

Table 10: Percentage of Translation Strategies for Religious Concepts

	Componential analysis	Couplet	General word	Transference	Deletion	Equivalence
1st Translation	50%	30%	10%	10%	0	0
2nd Translation	60%	0	10%	20%	10%	0
3rd Translation	10%	10%	10%	40%	20%	10%

Table 11: Frequency of Translation Strategies for Proper Names

	Transference	Couplet	Deletion
1st Translation	22%	68%	10%
2nd Translation	94%	0	6%
3rd Translation	100%	0	0

Table 12: Frequency & Percentage of Translation Strategies in the First Translation

Translation strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Transference & Note	61	37.42%
Transference	35	21.47%
Deletion	22	13.49%
Componential analysis	20	12.26%
General word	17	10.42%
Note & Cultural Substitution	5	3.06%
Cultural substitution	1	0.61%
Transference & Note & Cultural substitution	1	0.61%
Componential analysis & Note	1	0.61%

Table 13: Frequency & Percentage of Translation Strategies in the Second Translation

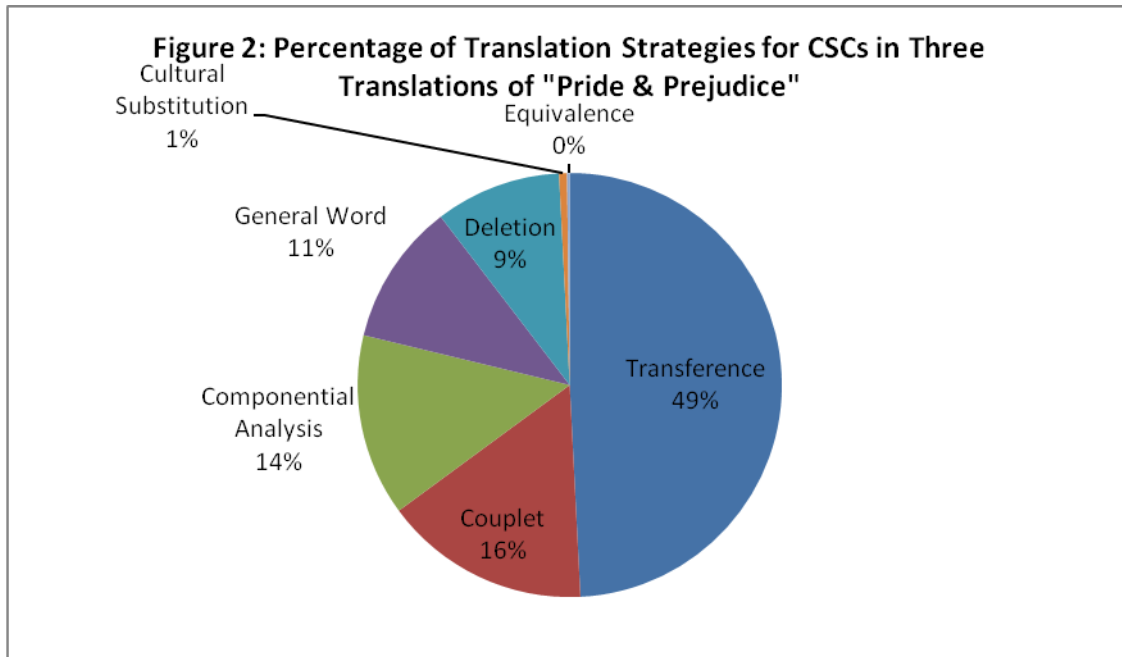
Translation strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Transference	95	58.28%
Componential analysis	28	17.17%
General word	19	11.65%
Deletion	18	11.04%
Cultural Substitution	1	0.61%
Transference & Note	1	0.61%
Transference & Cultural substitution	1	0.61%

Table 14: Frequency & Percentage of Translation Strategies in the Third Translation

Translation strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Transference	111	67.68%
Componential analysis	20	12.19%
General word	17	10.36%
Deletion	7	4.26%
Transference & Note	4	2.43%
Note & Cultural Substitution	1	0.60%
Cultural substitution	1	0.60%
Transference & Cultural substitution	1	0.60%
Componential analysis & Note	1	0.60%
Equivalence	1	0.60%

Table 15: Frequency & Percentage of Translation Strategies for CSCs in three Persian translations of “Pride & Prejudice”

Translation strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Transference	241	49.18%
Couplet	77	15.71%
Componential analysis	68	13.87%
General word	53	10.81%
Deletion	47	9.59%
Cultural substitution	3	0.61%
Equivalence	1	0.20%



According to Newmark (1988) *transference* and *componential analysis* are normally used as two translation procedures for translation of CSCs. Usually in literary texts the former offers local color and atmosphere, is brief and concise, blocks comprehension, emphasizes the culture and excludes the message and does not communicate. The latter, the most accurate translation procedure, excludes the culture and highlights the message, is not economical and has not the pragmatic impact of the original (p. 96). He also believes that in translation of novels, cultural words are often transferred from SL to TL to give local color, to attract the reader, to give a sense of intimacy between the text and the reader (Newmark, 1988, p.82).

Findings correspond with Newmark's opinions and indicate that the procedures '*transference*' and '*componential analysis*' would have a higher potential for conveying the concepts underlying the CSCs embedded in a text; moreover, it can be claimed that a combination of these strategies, *couplet*, would result in a more accurate understanding of the CSCs than other procedures. The data revealed most of cultural concepts were left untranslated, and transferred into the target text. This strategy has to be considered as unsatisfactory from a communicative point of view, since items which are unknown to translators of English would seem unlikely to be understood by average target text readers. The most frequent translation strategy for translating CSCs is *transference* at 49.18%. The second one is *couplet* or the combination of two or more strategies at 15.71%. The third common strategy in this study is *componential analysis* at 13.87%.

Conclusion

Cultural issues are inseparable parts of any text. The significance of the mentioned role lies in the idea that culture is an inseparable part of the minds of the persons, i.e. cultural issues enter in any matter of human acts. There is a close relationship between culture, language and translation. Translation = language + culture. Depending on different situations such as text type, purpose of translation, readership, and so on this formula may have different forms. Language and culture may thus be seen as being closely related and both aspects must be considered for translation. The most frequent translation strategy for translating CSCs here is *transference* at 49.18%. Then *couplet* or the combination of two or more strategies at 15.71% is the second one. The third common strategy in this study is *componential analysis* at 13.87%. *Transference* is the most frequently used strategy for translation of CSCs.

References

- Bassnett, Mc Guire. (1980). *Translation studies*. London & New York: Methuen and Co. Ltd.
- Hariyanto, Sugeng. (1997). An evaluation of the translation of an Indonesian novel: A case study on the translation of Maguwijaya's "Burung-Burung Manyar". Singapore: Unpublished Project Report for Diploma in Applied Linguistics, SEAMEO RELC Singapore. Retrieved from: www.translationdirectory.com/article634.htm.
- Katan, D. (2004). *Translating cultures an introduction for translators, interpreters and mediators* (2nd ed.). Manchester, UK & Northampton, MA: St. Jerome Publishing.
- Kussmaul, P. (1995). *Training the translator*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishing Company.
- Larson, L. M. (1984). *Meaning-based translation, A guide to cross-language equivalence*. New York: University Press of America.
- Newmark, P. (1988). *A textbook of translation*. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall.
- Ordudary, Mahmoud. (2007). *Translation procedures, strategies and methods*, *Translation*

UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**Proceedings of the 7th Malaysia International Conference on Languages, Literatures,
and Cultures, 2012**

www.fbmk.upm.edu.my/micollac/proceedings

Journal, 11(3). Retrieved from: <http://translationjournal.net/journal/41culture.htm>.
Snell-Hornby, M. (1988). *Translation studies: An integrated approach*. Amsterdam: John
Benjamin B.V.