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TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES AND ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES IN RENDERING CULTURE-BOUND PROVERBS

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Abstract: Translation is considered not only a linguistic activity but also a process of intercultural communication. Among various linguistic units, proverbs represent one of the most complicated elements to translate because they reflect the cultural identity, historical experience, traditions, and worldview of a particular society. Culture-bound proverbs contain meanings that are often hidden behind metaphors, symbols, and culturally specific references. Therefore, their translation requires special techniques and adaptive strategies that allow translators to preserve both the original message and cultural significance.

This thesis explores the main translation techniques and adaptive strategies applied in rendering culture-specific proverbs. The study discusses the importance of equivalence, adaptation, paraphrasing, domestication, foreignization, and compensation strategies in overcoming cultural differences between source and target languages. Particular attention is paid to the problem of transferring implicit cultural meanings and maintaining the communicative function of proverbs.

The research demonstrates that successful proverb translation cannot be achieved through literal translation alone. Translators should consider the cultural background, context of usage, and intended meaning of each proverb. The findings indicate that combining several translation strategies provides more effective results and helps maintain a balance between cultural authenticity and reader comprehension.

Keywords: culture-bound proverbs, translation strategies, proverb translation, adaptation, equivalence, cultural meaning, intercultural communication.

Introduction

Language is one of the most important elements that represents the cultural identity of a nation. It reflects the history, traditions, beliefs, and social experiences of people. Every language contains unique expressions that carry information about the way a particular community understands the world. Among such expressions, proverbs occupy a significant position because they represent collective knowledge accumulated over centuries.

Proverbs are short but meaningful statements that express advice, moral principles, social observations, and human experiences. They are widely used in communication because they allow speakers to express complex ideas in a concise and memorable way. However, the same features that make proverbs valuable also make them difficult to translate.

The main difficulty in translating proverbs is that their meanings are often connected with cultural contexts. A proverb does not usually communicate only its literal meaning; it also contains hidden cultural information. This information may include references to historical events, traditional lifestyles, social values, religious beliefs, and

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national symbols. When such elements are transferred into another language, the translator faces the challenge of preserving the original meaning while making it understandable for the target audience.

For example, a proverb based on agricultural traditions may be easily understood by people from a society where farming plays an important role, but it may require explanation for readers from a different cultural background. Similarly, symbols such as animals, natural objects, or traditional activities may have different meanings in different cultures.

Therefore, proverb translation requires more than bilingual knowledge. A translator must have intercultural competence and understand the relationship between language and culture. The translator should analyze not only the words but also the purpose, context, and cultural message of the proverb.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the main translation techniques and adaptive strategies used in translating culture-bound proverbs and to identify effective methods for transferring cultural meanings between languages.

The objectives of the study are:

- to analyze the role of culture in proverb translation;
- to identify the main difficulties in translating culture-specific proverbs;
- to examine different translation techniques applied to proverbs;
- to explore adaptive strategies that help preserve cultural meaning;
- to determine the importance of cultural competence in translation.

Methodology

This study applies qualitative and descriptive methods to analyze translation approaches related to culture-bound proverbs. The research is based on theoretical principles of translation studies and focuses on the comparison of different strategies used for transferring culturally specific expressions.

The analysis examines how translators deal with situations where direct equivalents are unavailable. Particular attention is given to the ways translators modify, explain, or replace cultural elements in order to achieve successful communication.

The research considers translation as an intercultural process in which the translator functions as a mediator between two linguistic communities. Therefore, the study focuses not only on linguistic accuracy but also on cultural appropriateness and communicative effectiveness.

Translation Techniques Applied to Culture-Bound Proverbs

One of the most important techniques used in proverb translation is equivalent translation. This technique is applied when the target language contains a proverb that expresses a similar idea and performs the same function as the original one. In such cases, the translator can replace the source proverb with an existing expression in the target language.

Equivalent translation is considered one of the most effective methods because it allows the target reader to understand the message naturally. Although the words and images may differ, the main idea and communicative purpose remain unchanged.



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Another important technique is literal translation. This method involves transferring the original proverb directly while maintaining its structure and vocabulary. Literal translation can be successful when the cultural elements of the proverb are understandable in the target language. However, it may create problems when the proverb contains unfamiliar cultural references.

A word-for-word translation may preserve the external form of the proverb but fail to communicate its real meaning. Therefore, translators should use literal translation carefully and only when the cultural context allows accurate understanding.

Adaptation is another widely used technique in translating culture-bound proverbs. It involves changing certain elements of the original proverb to make it more acceptable for the target audience. Through adaptation, translators attempt to create an equivalent cultural effect.

Paraphrasing is also an important method when no similar proverb exists in the target language. Instead of searching for an equivalent expression, the translator explains the meaning of the original proverb. This technique is useful in academic and educational contexts where clarity is the main priority.

Compensation is another strategy that helps translators preserve features that cannot be transferred directly. If a cultural or stylistic element is lost during translation, the translator may introduce another expressive element to maintain the overall effect.

Adaptive Strategies in Proverb Translation

Adaptive strategies are essential in dealing with cultural differences. Since proverbs are closely connected with the traditions and values of a society, translators must decide whether to preserve the original cultural features or adapt them for the target audience.

Domestication is a strategy that makes the translation closer to the target culture. It replaces unfamiliar cultural elements with familiar ones. This approach improves understanding and creates a natural reading experience.

However, excessive domestication may remove important cultural features of the original proverb. The target reader may understand the message but lose information about the source culture.

Foreignization, in contrast, preserves elements of the original culture. This strategy allows readers to recognize cultural differences and learn about another worldview. It is especially useful in literary and cultural translations.

The choice between domestication and foreignization depends on the purpose of translation. If the main goal is communication, domestication may be more appropriate. If the goal is cultural representation, foreignization may provide better results.

Challenges in Translating Culture-Bound Proverbs

The translation of culture-specific proverbs involves several challenges. The first challenge is the absence of direct equivalents. Some proverbs express experiences that are unique to a particular society and cannot be transferred directly into another language.

The second challenge is metaphorical meaning. Many proverbs use images that have symbolic meanings. These symbols may not have the same associations in another culture, which makes translation more complicated.



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Another challenge is preserving the stylistic features of proverbs. Proverbs are usually characterized by brevity, rhythm, and memorable structure. A translation that focuses only on meaning may lose these important characteristics.

Cultural values also create difficulties. Proverbs often express social attitudes and moral principles that may differ between communities. Therefore, translators must consider whether the translated proverb will have the same effect on the target audience.

Results and Discussion

The analysis shows that successful proverb translation requires a combination of different strategies rather than the use of a single method. Each proverb should be analyzed individually according to its cultural background, meaning, and communicative purpose.

The findings demonstrate that translators should avoid focusing only on linguistic structure. Understanding cultural context is equally important because the main message of a proverb is often hidden behind cultural references and metaphorical expressions.

The research also highlights the important role of the translator as a cultural mediator. A professional translator must be able to interpret cultural meanings and make appropriate decisions to ensure successful communication.

Conclusion

Culture-bound proverbs represent one of the most challenging areas of translation because they combine language, culture, and social experience. Their successful translation requires not only linguistic competence but also cultural awareness.

The study shows that techniques such as equivalence, adaptation, paraphrasing, and compensation, together with adaptive strategies such as domestication and foreignization, help translators overcome cultural barriers.

The most effective translations are achieved when translators maintain a balance between preserving the cultural identity of the original proverb and ensuring that the target audience can understand its meaning. Therefore, proverb translation should be viewed as an intercultural process that contributes to communication and mutual understanding between different societies.

