

Contextualized translation: An alternative strategy to translate culture-specific Moroccan Arabic Proverbs in English

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to shed light upon the difficulty that arises when translating culture-specific proverbial utterances from a source language (SL) to a target language (TL). For this particular purpose, we select a number of both quasi-universal and culture-specific Moroccan Arabic proverbs (MAPs) to investigate their translatability into English. The study unfolds that the extent to which MAPs are successfully translated into English is closely related to their cultural load. Whereas the translator can accurately replace quasi-universal MAPs with their English equivalents, the translation of culture-specific MAP's is rather problematic. The process of this translation is obstructed mainly because these MAPs are carriers of cultural values, beliefs, and ideas that are not common or have no equivalents in English cultural background. To overcome this obstacle, we suggest a translation strategy that can be used to appropriately translate culture-specific MAPs into English. We argue that this strategy enables the TL recipients (TLRs) to derive the right interpretation of the source proverb (SP) even when it bears no relevance in their culture.



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1 INTRODUCTION

Translation is an activity, which has always accompanied human civilization through its long history. Before becoming a field of study, it had been practiced by language experts who translated thousands of books from different languages. Nowadays, translation is the scope of interest of linguists and scholars all over the world. This is not only because translation plays an essential role in enabling cross-cultural communication, but it is also a discipline involving a multitude of issues that are open to fruitful discussions. Suffice it to say, that the term “translation”, itself, continues to be debatable. An in depth analysis of any translation issue involves an exhaustive study, which goes beyond the limits of this article. We try, however, to address the particular issue of translation difficulty caused by the culture-specific implications of the source language text (SLT). It is worth noting at this point that scholars have described different types of translation difficulty, seeking efficient approaches, techniques, and procedures to surmount it. Most of them agree that the challenge is considerably serious when the translation activity involves culture-specific expressions, or frozen structures (idioms, proverbs, metaphors, collocations, etc.). [4], assumes that “*differences between SL culture and TL culture may cause translation loss because there are some contextual aspects that have features related exclusively to SL culture and they are not found in the TL culture*”. Similarly, [1], e “*translating works that incorporate cultural phrases, proverbs, metaphors, collocations, and religious terminology creates major challenges for translators*”. In this article, we focus mainly on the difficulty that arises when translating culture-bound MAPs into English. We try to show that these expressions are so heavily loaded with local socio-cultural implications that rendering their intended meaning to an English recipient is not an easy task. To overcome this difficulty, we suggest a particular translation strategy that we describe as “Contextualized Translation”.

2 TRANSLATION: ONE WORD, VARIOUS DEFINITIONS

In its broadest sense, translation refers to any process of rendering a meaning, ideas, or a message from one language to other language. The term translation, however, has always eluded a clear-cut definition. The historical background of translation shows a lack of consensus on the nature of this term. Indeed, despite its long history, which dates back to Antiquity, translation has never been associated with one agreed upon definition, nor has it been firmly fixed with one specific theory or approach. In his book, *Towards a science of Translation*, [17] maintains that “*definitions of proper translating are as numerous and various as the persons who have undertaken to discuss the subject*”.

Our review of the relevant literature reveals that translation has been a locus of various interpretations because of different reasons. The first concerns discussions on translation adequacy, which have been preoccupied for a long time with the controversy of whether translation should incline towards the source or the target language. The other is related to subsequent disputes concerning *faithful vs beautiful*, *literal vs free*, *form vs content* dichotomies of translation. The differences in definitions of translation can be also attributed to the translator’s approach, which can be semantic, pragmatic, communicative, or dynamic. The other important reason consists in the element to which the translator gives priority in the SLT, which can be content, style, message, effect, or response.

Accordingly, several definitions have been set forward. [18] regards translation as «*the **reproduction** in a receptor language of the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style.* » For [20], translation is the **interpretation** of verbal signs in one language by means of verbal signs in another. » [8] defines translation as « *the **rendering** of a source language (SL) text into the target language (TL) so as to ensure that the surface meaning of the two will be preserved as closely as possible but not so closely that the TL structures will be seriously distorted*». On his part, [16], points out that «*Translation is a **craft** consisting in the attempt to replace a written message, or statement in one language by the same message or statement in another language*».

Even in the recent literature, the word translation continues to be differently interpreted. [19], regards translation as «*a creative intellectual **activity**, denoting the transmitting of information from a source language into a target language.* » [13], reports that «*Translating is **expressing** by means of one language the things that had been expressed earlier by the means of another language.* » On his part, [14], points out that «*Translation is **changing** an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language.*»

Dealing with all these definitions, it is clear that experts have conceptualized translation differently. It is regarded as a reproduction, an interpretation, a rendering, a craft, etc. However, if we consider what these definitions share in common, we can argue that translation is widely seen as a process of changing words from one language to another. In this translating process, priority is given to an element or another in the SLT depending on the scholar’s conception of “translation”.

**3 THE PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY:
TRANSLATING MAPS INTO ENGLISH**

If translation is widely used to mean an operation that involves changing words from a SL to a TL, translation experts are still concerned with other more controversial issues. Many studies are dealing with the issue of translation difficulties, investigating the hardest obstacles that can complicate the process of translation. Others are more interested in studying the strategies that should be used by the translator to successfully render a ST into a TL. To contribute to the discussions related to these two points, we aim in this article to investigate the possibilities and the limits of translating MAP's into English. We first aim to shed light on the difficulty that can obstruct the translatability of MAP's into English. We then discuss the translation strategy that can be used to accurately translate Moroccan culture-specific proverbs into English.

3.1 Collection of data

For the purpose of our study, a set of data is collected. It consists of two types of MAPS: 150 quasi-universal MAPs and 150 culture-bound MAPs. Examples of both types are used in this article to discuss their translatability into English. The proverbs that constitute our corpus of data are collected mainly from the following sources:

- i-Books: (See the bibliography)
- [7]: Les Proverbes Marocains.

[6] : A m θ a : l m i n a L - M a g h r i b
(l s t p a r t) .

[12]: Amθa:l mina L-Maghrib
(2ndpart).

- [1 1] : A l - a m θ a : l s h - s h a ḡ b i y y a L - M a g h r i b i y y a .
ii. Radio:
Azha:r wa fashwa:k by Laarbi Zeggaf- Tangier Radio.
Am θal wa Hikam by Thami Lammrani -Rabat Radio.

It is worth noting at this point that MAPs used in this article are presented in three lines. The MAP is first quoted in Moroccan Arabic, then it is transcribed following the principles of I.P.A. The last line consists in matching the transliterated words with their equivalents in English.

3.2 Translating quasi-universal MAPs into English

The proverbs provided in (1-10) are non-culture specific, or what we can consider as quasi-universal. They are related to a variety of human experiences, expressing views which are widely adopted by English culture as well.

(1) -اللي حب العسل يصبر على قريص النحل lli:-Habb- l3- عs3l- y3-ṣbar-عla- qri:ṣ-n-nHal Who- likes- the honey- should endure- biting-of the bees
(2) -اللي عضاته الحية، كيخاف من الحبل lli:- عadda:t-u-l-Hayya- ka-y-kha:f-m3n-l3-Hb3l Who- bit-him - the snake- fears- of- the rope
(3) -اللي خالط الفضة، لايد ينال منها الصدا lli:-kha:l3ṭ-l-f3ḏa- la:bud- y-na:l-m3nn-ha:-ṣ-ṣda: Who- mixes with- silver- necessary- gets- from- it- rust
(4)-الحمية غلبت السبع l- H3mya- gh3lb3-t-s-sbaع Alliance- defeated- the lion
: ملي ولدت ولادي، ما كلت علفي وافي، ما شربت ماي صافي (5)-كلام العودة kla:m- l-عawda:-m3lli:-wl3d-t-wla:d-i: Talk- of the mare -since- I gave birth- sons- my ma:- kli:t- عalf-i:-wa:fi:-ma:-shrab-t- ma:y-a-ṣa:fi: Neither-I ate- fodder- my- enough- nor- I drank- water- my- pure
(6)اللي كتم سره، يبلغ مراده lli:-kt3m- s3rr-u- y3-blagh- mra:d-u Who- keeps-secrets- his- achieves- aims- his
(7)-البكا مور الميت خسارة l3-bka: -mu:r-l-miyy3t-khsa:ra The crying- after- the dead- a waste
(8)-اللي غارق في البحر، ما يخاف من الندى lli:- gha:r3q- f- l3-bHar- ma:- y3-kha:f- m3n- n-nda: Who- is drowned-in- the sea- not- fears- from- the dewdrop
(9)-إلى جا الرزق لبابك ، لاتعطيه بققاك fīla:- ja:- r-r3zq-l-ba:b3-k-la:- t3-عṭi:-h-b3-qfa:-k If-the livelihood- comes- to- door- your- don't- give- it- neck-
(10) -في الضيق فين نعرف العدو من الصديق f-ḏ-ḏi:q-fi:n- n3-عraf-l3-عdu:- m3n-ṣ-ṣdi:q In- adversity- when- I know- the enemy- from-the friend

Since the MAPs in (1-10) don't carry any particularities that are specific to Moroccan culture, we assume that translating these MAPs into English can be an uncomplicated transfer. It simply involves the replacement of MAPs with their English Equivalents. The English translations of MAP's in (1-10), respectively provided in (11-20), support this assumption:

- 11-He deserves not sweet that will not taste of sour.**
- 12-He who has been bitten by a serpent, is afraid of a rope.**

- 13-If you lie down with dogs, you will get up with fleas.
 14-Numbers prevail over courage.
 15- He that has children, all morsels are not his own.
 16-Keep your secrets to yourself and tell your tale to the wind.
 17-It is no use crying over spilt milk.
 18-A drowning man does not fear getting wet.
 19-Open the door when fortunes knock.
 20-Friends are made in wine and proved in tears.

The MAPs in (1-10) and their English equivalents in (11-20) can be used in similar communicative situations to perform the same illocutionary acts. A Moroccan Arabic speaker can, for instance, use the MAP in (9) as an English speaker uses its English equivalent in (19) to strongly advise a friend not to miss a good opportunity. Similarly, the MAP in (3) and its English equivalent in (13) can be both used to warn the hearer against the effect of bad company.

The translation of quasi-universal MAP's in English is , therefore, not only unproblematic, but it can be said to be a successful example of transferring a proverb from a SL to a TL. This transfer succeeds in attaining the ultimate goal of translation that lies in rendering in the TL the message as it has been intended in the SL, making it sound as natural as possible. The accuracy of translating non-culture specific MAP's into English can be attributed mainly to fact that express ideas, experiences, and values which have recognized equivalents in the English socio-cultural context [10],[5].

3.3 Translating culture-specific MAPs into English

MAP's and their English translations provided above prove that within the apparent diversity of cultural manifestations there exists an underlying common core that we can refer to as universal culture. These universally shared cultural values make translation possible and even a successful linguistic activity. Superimposed on this common core, however, there are particular aspects of each culture [21],[15]. These particularities constitute one of the most serious challenges to translation. Newmark (1981:41) finds that "*frequently when there is a cultural focus, there is a translation problem due to the cultural gap or distance between SL and TL*". The same author argues that the "*closer the cultural overlap between two languages, the better the translation is likely to be*" [10]

At this point, we aim to show that the cultural particularity aspect of socio-culturally based MAPs constitutes a major hindrance to their translatability into English. For this purpose, we select MAPs that are deeply embedded in Moroccan culture. The proverbs in (21-30) pertain to various aspects of Moroccan culture. The MAPs in (21-24) are, for instance, related to praying in Islam. The MAP in (25) is about cousin marriage, the

MAPs in (26-27) are related to divorce. All these proverbs express views from a Moroccan cultural perspective.

(21) صلاة مع صلاة كتسوى بصلة ṣla:- mɛa-ṣla:-ka-t3-swa:- b3ṣla Prayer- with- prayer- worth- an onion
(22) -الما بلا شرا والقبلة بلا كرا، الله يلعن تارك الصلاة l-ma:- bla:-shra:- u-l-q3bla- bla:- kra: lla:h- y3-lɛ an-ta:r3k- ṣ-ṣla: water -without- buying - the place facing Mecca -without -renting-God-curses- negligent- of the prayer
(23) -جمعهم في جمعة وركعهم في ركعة jm3ɛ-hum-f-j3mɛa-u-rk3ɛ-hum-f-r3kɛa He gathered up- them-in-a- gathering- and- kneeled down- them- in a prostration
(24) -صلاة القبايد، الجمعة والاعباد ṣla:t-l-quyya:d-j-j3mɛa-u-l3-ɛ-yɑ:d Pray-of- Chiefs- Fridays- and- feasts
(25) خيرنا ما يديه غيرنا khi:r-na:-ma:-y3-d-di:-h- ghi:r-na: Goods- our- not- take- it- others- than us
(26) -جوج كيلاقبو، جوج كيفارفو ju:j- ka-y-la:qi:w-ju:j-ka-y-fa:rɔ-u: Two- bring together-two- set apart
(27) -إلى طلفتها، لا توريتها دار ابها fila:- t3llaqti-ha:-la:-t-w3rri:-ha:-da:r- b-ba:-ha: If -you divorced- her- not- show- her- house- of father- her
(28) كويسة وكعبية و خرج مع الدريبة kwiysa-u- kɛɪba-u- khr3j- mɛa- d-driba Glass- and - kɛɪba-and-went out-by-the road
(29) إلى دخل رمضان في الشتا، تسحر باللحمة ماشي بالحوتة fila:-dkhal- r3mda:n- f- shta, If-entered- Ramadan-in- winter- t-saHHar-b-l3Hma- la:- t-ṣaHar- b3-l-Hu:ta Eat for sHor -a piece of meat- not- eat for sHor - a fish
(30) -فينك أ الايام ما بقى لا طبل لا مولاه fi:n3-k- fa-liyya:m-ma:-bqa:-la:-t3b3l-la:-mu:la:-h Where - you -the days- not- remained- the drum- nor- owner-his

Keeping in mind that (21-30) are loaded with Moroccan cultural particularities, we can assume that there are two reasons that can complicate their translation into English. First, these proverbs don't have their equivalent proverbial utterances in English. Second, their translation can't be a simple change of their words from Moroccan Arabic to English. To investigate the constraints involved in translating culture

specific MAP's, we first examine the English translation of some religion-related MAP's. We believe that religion is one of the basic components of culture. It is in this area that differences between Moroccan and English societies are greatest. The former being fashioned by Islam, whereas the latter derives largely from Christianity and the Greco-Roman background. Although there is an area of overlap in belief and theological matters between the two religions, the differences in detail and emphasis remains vast.

The MAPs in (21-24) are religion-marked proverbial utterances dealing with praying, the second pillar in Islam. The cultural particularity of these MAP's prevent them from having their equivalents in English, a language where such proverbs are inexistent. The question that is worth asking at this point is "what is the best strategy to translate these proverbs in a way that enables the TLR to grasp their intended meaning?"

In our attempt to elaborate a translation procedure that can appropriately translate (21-24) into English, we first opt for procedures that preserve semantic equivalence between the SPs and their English translations. Consider the respective semantic translations of (21-24) provided in (31-34):

31-Two prayers performed at once are worth an onion.

32-He combined all prayers at once, and then performed them in one prostration.

33-Water is for free, a place facing Mecca is not to be rented. May God's curses fall upon the one who neglect prayers.

34-Chiefs perform their prayers just on Fridays and Holidays.

These semantic English translations in (31-34) preserve the sentence meaning of the SPs, but they create far-fetched and even unintelligible translations for the TLR. In fact, we can argue that the SLR, a Muslim recipient, can easily grasp the message conveyed by the SP in (21), namely, "it is obligatory for a Muslim to perform prayers at their prescribed times." The SLR, also familiar with Moroccan culture, knows well that onions, one of the cheapest vegetables in Moroccan market, usually connotes insignificance. They can, therefore, easily comprehend that the word onion in this proverb is used to emphasize the worthlessness of combined prayers. By contrast, it is not surprising that the TLR, as a non-Muslim, will get confused in their attempt to figure out what is meant by (21)'s English translation (*two prayers performed at once are worth an onion*). They may wonder what prayers the SP refers to, when these prayers should be performed, and why the value of combined prayers is compared to that of an onion. Indeed, the TLR knows little about the theology and practices of Islam. When they receive semantic translations of MAP's with religious connotations as those provided in (31-34), they face

conceptual novelties that are irrelevant in their culture. This cultural irrelevance is exactly what makes these translations seem incomprehensible and even meaningless to a TLR.

The failure of the semantic procedure to accurately translate the religion-related MAPs into English lead us to try not only different procedures, but also to select culture specific MAPs related to other themes. Below, we inquire into the English translation of a culture-specific marriage-related MAP. For us, marriage is a universal social institution since it involves values that can be found in all cultures. Yet, there are no marriage absolutes that can apply equally to all societies. In Morocco, for instance, marriage has a number of local cultural aspects that distinguish it from marriage in English culture.

The proverb in (25) is related to cousin marriage in Moroccan society. It is used specifically to encourage marriage between cousins, a kind of consanguineous union uncommon in English society [18],[2]. The cultural specificity of this proverb prevents it from having its English equivalent proverb. Besides, its translation in English in a way that enables TLR to get its intended meaning cannot be achieved by preserving its semantic content. Let's consider (25)'s semantic translations provided in (35-36):

(35) *Our goods should not be taken by others.*

(36) *Our properties don't go to strangers.*

The same proverb can be freely translated as follows:

(37) *Our children will not marry someone outside our family.*

(38) *We should not marry our children off to strangers.*

We assume that the translations provided in (37-38) are more readily intelligible to the TLR than (35-36). Yet, these translations leave out the cultural insights of the SP, keeping the TLRs open to the danger of misinterpretations. In fact, the TLRs may wonder why Moroccan parents do not want their children to marry outside the family. They may, for instance, think that people outside one's family are untrustworthy in Moroccan society. They may also think that Moroccan young adults have no choice to choose their spouses, or they are even forced to marry their cousins.

What transpires from this discussion is the fact that both literal and free procedures fail to appropriately translate culture-loaded MAPs into English. The failure of these procedures can be mainly ascribed to the cultural particularity of these proverbs. Given this, we suggest an alternative translation procedure that can be used to translate the SP in such a way as to enable the TLR to accurately understand its English translated version.

4 CONTEXTUALIZED TRANSLATION: AN ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY

In our attempt to overcome the cultural constraints imposed on the process of translating culture-specific MAP into English, we conclude that Contextualized Translation (CT) can function as an alternative strategy to compensate for the failure of other translation procedures [9]. The CT involves, in addition to the semantic translation of the SP, the presentation of the information relevant to the SP's socio-cultural background. This kind of information, which we call 'Source Informative Context' (SIC) enables the TLR to understand not only the strictly semantic meaning of the MAP, but also to learn about its socio-cultural background, and most importantly to comprehend its utterance meaning. Indeed, CT is a translation strategy that allows the TLR to adequately grasp culture-bound MAP's, without depleting them of the wealth of the cultural information that has been encoded into them to reflect the various aspects of life in Moroccan society. An appropriate English CT of the MAP in (25), for instance, involves in addition to its English semantic translation some information about its socio-cultural contexts. This can be presented as follows:

(25) خيرنا ما يديه غيرنا

khi:r-na:-ma:-y3-d-di:-h- ghi:r-na:

Goods- our- not- take- it- others- than us

Semantic Translation (ST): *Our goods should not be taken by others.*

SIC-: *Marriages between cousins is religiously and socially accepted in Morocco. There is nothing surprising about romantic relationships between first or distant cousins, ending up in happy weddings. Although this kind of union is much less arranged by parents nowadays, there are still parents who continue to play an active role in arranging family marriages. They use the proverb in (25) to mean that one's 'goods' (sons and daughters) should not be taken by others, implying that they should not marry someone outside the family. They strongly believe that marriage to a cousin binds families closer together and facilitates inheritance within the family.*

Along the same line of reasoning, we argue that the message conveyed by praying-related MAPs can be more comprehensible to the TLR when their English semantic translation is supported by a SIC. The following SICs are provided to amplify the English semantic translation for each praying-related Proverb.

صلاة مع صلاة كتسوى بصللة

řla:- mġ a-řla:-ka-t3-swa:- b3řla

Prayer- with- prayer- worth- an onion

ST-Two prayers performed at once are worth an onion.

SIC- *Praying five times a day constitutes the second pillar of Islam. The five prayers are Morning (AřubH), Noon (ađuhr), Afternoon (alġařr), Sunset (almaghrib) and Night (alġisha:). The exact time for each prayer is determined by the position of the sun (except for alġishař). It is unambiguously stated in the Holy Koran that these prayers should be maintained at their proper times. In this proverb, the little worth of performing two or more prayers at once is compared to that of an onion, one of the cheapest vegetables in Moroccan markets.*

الما بلا شرا والقبلة بلا كرا، الله يلعن تارك الصلاة

l-ma:- bla:-shra:- u-l-q3bla- bla:- kra: lla:h- y3-lġ an-ta:r3k-ř-řla:

water –without- buying - the place facing Mecca –without –renting-God-curses- negligent- of the prayer

ST: *Water is for free, a place facing Mecca is not to be rented, May God's curses fall upon the one who neglect prayers.*

SIC. *The two essential things that a Muslim needs to perform the prayers are costless. Indeed, neither do they have to buy water for (Al-wudu:l) i.e. the act of washing some parts of the body before praying, nor do they need to rent al –qibla i.e. any place with a direction towards the Kaaba in the sacred Mosque (masjid alHaram) in Mecca. The proverb is used to mean that a Muslim can't have an excuse for not observing the five obligatory prayers.*

صلاة القبايد، الجمعة والاعباد

řla:t-l-quyya:d-j-j3mġ a-u-l3-ġya:d

Pray-of- Chiefs- Fridays- and- feasts

ST: *Qaids (Chiefs) pray just on Fridays and Feasts.*

SIC- *A Qaid, a civil servant symbolizing a model of social decorum in Moroccan cultural background, usually prays in the mosque on Fridays and religious feasts as most Moroccan males do. Some people think, however, that Qaids don't pray for God's sake. For them, they pray only occasionally to gain a good reputation among people. This proverb is largely used to criticize men who pray to attract publicity.*

VI-Contextualized Translation: Other Illustrative Examples

At this point of our study, we aim to shed more light on the workability of CT. For this purpose, we use this strategy to translate into English other culture-specific MAP's that constitute part of our data. For each proverb, we provide a semantic translation that we support with a SIC [3].

جوج كيلاقيو، جوج كيفارفو

ju:j- ka-y-la:qi:w-ju:j-ka-y-fa:rq-u:

ST- Two get you together, two set you apart.

SIC- Cohabitation is illegal in Moroccan society. For a man and a woman to live together, they have to be married. Two notaries write the marriage contract, and both the husband and wife must sign it. To revoke a marriage contract, two notaries are needed to disunite the couple. The proverb is usually used to insinuate that spouses who do no longer get along together can be easily set apart.

إلى طلقها، لا توربها دار ابها

fila:- ṭllaqti-ha:-la:-t-ẉrri:-ha:-da:r- b-ba:-ha:

If -you divorced- her- not- show- her- house- of father- her

ST: *If you divorce your wife, you don't need to show her her father's house.*

SIC- Moroccan society, being a conservative one, expects unmarried women to live with their families. A female divorcee is, therefore, supposed to move back to her parents' house. Thus, if a man divorces his wife, he doesn't even need to tell her where she should go as she already knows. This proverb is widely used figuratively to signify that if you let down a person, you don't have to tell them what they should do.

كويسة وكعيبية و خرج مع الدريبة

kwiysa-u- ḳeiba-u- khṛzj- ṃe'a- d-driba

Glass- and - ḳeiba-and-went out-by-the road

ST: *He had glass of tea and a cookie, he went away.*

SIC- It is unbecoming of a guest to leave immediately after a meal is over. The 'eat and leave' behaviour is not appreciated by the Moroccan host family. Thus, the guest should not behave like someone who leaves immediately after having drunk tea and eaten 'ḷs-ḳeiba' (One of the most delicious Moroccan traditional cookies). The proverb can be used figuratively to criticize ungrateful people.

إلى دخل رمضان في الشتاء، تصحر باللحمه ماشي بالحوتة

fila:-dkhal- ṛmda:n- f- shta,

If-entered- Ramadan-in- winter-

t-ṣaHHar-b-ḷHma- la:- t-ṣaHar- ḅ3-l-Hu:ta

Eat for sHor –a piece of meat- not- eat for sHor - a fish

ST: *If Ramadan occurs in winter, eat meat for your sHor (predawn meal) rather than fish.*

SIC: The last meal of a Ramadan day is called 'sHor'. It is usually served just some time before dawn to help the Ramadan observer bear hunger and thirst during the daytime. The proverb reminds fasters that it is advisable to eat meat rather than fish for 'sHor' if Ramadan coincides with winter. Although days are short during this season, cold makes hunger difficult to bear. While 'meat' stands for a plentiful meal, 'fish' stands for a light one.

(41)- فينك أ الأيام ما بقي لا طيل لا مولاه

fi:n3-k- fa-liyya:m-ma:-bqa:-la:-ṭb3l-la:-mu:la:-h

Where - you -the days- not- remained- the drum- nor- owner- his

ST: *Those were the days. Neither the drum is there, nor the drummer.*

SIC-: During the month of Ramadan, a herald would walk through the streets late at night. He would sound a drum 'tebbal', or a trumpet 'neffar' in order to wake up people to have their 'sHor' (the last meal of a Ramadan day usually served before dawn). This tradition, which seems to be missed by many Moroccans, is increasingly fading away. In many regions, the firing of a cannon or the sounding of a siren is gradually replacing the 'neffar' and 'tebbal'. The proverb can be used figuratively to express nostalgia for some good old days.

5 TRANSLATION: A PRAGMATIC- DRIVEN CONCEPT

Towards elaborating a definition of translation, it should be kept in mind that the ST is a combination of several components, including linguistic (syntactic-stylistic, etc.) and extra-linguistic (pragmatic-cultural, etc.). A perfect translation can be said to be the one that conveys the extra-linguistic particularities of the ST while remaining faithful to its original linguistic version. In many cases, however, this is unachievable. Thus, we consider it important to emphasize that absolute priority should be given to the ST pragmatic element, which consists in the intended meaning of the original text. For us, it is not unfaithful of the translator to overlook other elements of the ST for the sake of transferring to the TLR the message as it is meant by the SL producer. Indeed, we deem it reasonable to think that an appropriate translation is not produced by conveying to the TLR what the SLT says (sentence meaning), but rather what it means by what it says (utterance meaning). The translation of a proverbial utterance from one language to another as in the case of translating MAPs into English can't be said to be accurate if it fails to convey to the TLR the intended meaning of the SP. This may involve two completely different semantic contents (see the MAP in (4) and its equivalent in (14)). An adequate translation may also involve informative contexts as in the English translation of culture- specific MAP's. Hence, our definition of translation can go as follows: "**Translation is a linguistic activity that should reproduce in the TL the intended message of the SL. Other elements of the source text should be preserved as long as they do not interfere with the reproduction of the SL intended message.**"

4 CONCLUSION

We conclude that translation involves not only two languages, but two cultures as well. The culturally closer the source and the target languages, the easier is the translation. The difficulty arises when the languages are set in two different socio-cultural contexts. This cultural gap is exactly what constitutes the major hindrance to the workability of translation. Our study has shown that different procedures of translating culture-specific MAP's have resulted in expressions that remain unintelligible to the TLR. A difficulty that can be removed only by providing the necessary information that puts the SP in its socio-cultural context. Indeed, culture-bound texts are very likely to become alienated and uprooted when they are stripped of their original cultural environment. Thus, it is beyond the translator's task to make their translations sound natural for the TLR. However, a translator is required to possess linguistic and extra linguistic abilities to overcome this challenge. For us, to have the so-called bilingual background is not enough to manage the process of translating culture-specific texts. In fact, it is just as important that translators, in addition to their ability to communicate confidently in the two languages, need proficiency in the cultures in which these two languages are embedded. Indeed, both linguistic and cultural competence on the source and target side is a perquisite qualification for proficient translators. This double competence enables them not only to perceive, but also to surmount the problems involved in translating a culture bound SLT into the TL.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to the material presented in this article.

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