

The Social Dimension of Translation and its Role in Bringing Cultures and Societies Closer Together

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Abstract :

This Article explores the vital role of translation as a cultural mediator, emphasizing its historical, social, and civilizational functions in fostering dialogue and mutual understanding between peoples. Beginning with the transformation of intellectual roles in traditional societies, it highlights how translation has historically served as a bridge for transferring knowledge, preserving cultural identities, and facilitating peaceful coexistence. The paper examines key concepts such as culture, cultural mediation, and the translator's role as an active agent in intercultural communication. Special attention is given to the Algerian context, where linguistic plurality and colonial legacies present unique challenges to translation and cultural policy. The study also addresses the translation crisis in Algeria, identifying systemic issues such as the lack of strategic planning, outdated educational curricula, insufficient cultural marketing, and weak institutional coordination. Ultimately, the research asserts that translation is not merely a linguistic task but a strategic and cultural necessity, especially in today's globalized and information-driven world. It calls for an updated vision of translation as a social act that supports cultural democracy, fosters integration, and ensures the sustainability of intercultural dialogue.

Keywords: *communication, cultural mediation, mediation, role, culture, translation .*

La Dimension Sociale de la Traduction et Son Rôle dans le Rapprochement des Cultures et des Sociétés

Résumé :

Cet article explore le rôle vital de la traduction en tant que médiateur culturel, en soulignant ses fonctions historiques, sociales et civilisationnelles dans la promotion du dialogue et de la compréhension mutuelle entre les peuples. En commençant par la transformation des rôles intellectuels dans les sociétés traditionnelles, il souligne comment la traduction a historiquement servi de pont pour transférer les connaissances, préserver les identités culturelles et faciliter la coexistence pacifique. L'article examine des concepts clés tels que la culture, la médiation culturelle et le rôle du traducteur en tant qu'agent actif dans la communication interculturelle. Une attention particulière est accordée au contexte algérien, où la pluralité linguistique et les héritages coloniaux présentent des défis uniques pour la traduction et la politique culturelle. L'étude aborde également la crise de la traduction en Algérie, identifiant des problèmes systémiques tels que le manque de planification stratégique, les programmes éducatifs obsolètes, le marketing culturel insuffisant et la faible coordination institutionnelle. En fin de compte, la recherche affirme que la traduction n'est pas simplement une tâche linguistique mais une nécessité stratégique et culturelle, surtout dans le monde globalisé et axé sur l'information d'aujourd'hui. Elle appelle à une vision actualisée de la traduction comme un acte social qui soutient la démocratie culturelle, favorise l'intégration et assure la durabilité du dialogue interculturel.

Mots-clés : *communication, culture, médiation culturelle, médiation, rôle, traduction.*

Introduction:

In traditional societies, intellectuals were those who knew how to read and write. With the development of societies, especially with the emergence of printing, the number of educated groups increased, expanding their knowledge and culture through the spread of books and literary and cultural councils. These intellectuals acquired diverse knowledge that was no longer limited to the religious or literary fields, as was previously common, but also shed light on new sciences such as law, medicine, and journalism, not to mention the openness to other cultures through translation. The Arabs have long recognised the important role that translation plays in human society through the exchange of cultures and ideas between different communities and the transfer of various sciences. It plays a cultural role in promoting communication between cultures, helping to overcome language barriers, which helps individuals learn about the traditions and civilisations of other peoples, thereby enhancing interaction and mutual understanding, strengthening relationships, and thus building social ties between nations, addressing the problem of social integration, and raising the banner of peace and security.

In order for the cultural mediator (translator) to play their role, they must be familiar with the culture of the society in which they live (its customs, traditions, prevailing values, etc.), as well as know how to communicate that knowledge (culture). Therefore, the central function of this intellectual was to play the role of a cultural mediator who seeks to facilitate relations between individuals in order to create positive relationships between people belonging to different cultures.

If we look back at history, we will find that thanks to translation, peoples have been able to communicate peacefully and

integrate socially within a framework of respect for cultural diversity. It has also contributed to the preservation and maintenance of the cultural identity of society, as it has been translated into other languages. In addition, through translation, we can learn about ancient civilisations and work to preserve their identity and prevent them from disappearing, so that they remain immortal in human history and so that everyone can learn about them and revive them.

Based on the above, it can be said that translation as a cultural mediator is a process of communication that enables people to become intellectually open, allowing them to accept other cultures with flexibility, and contributes to dealing with the problems and difficulties caused by linguistic differences. This leads us to ask some questions about the actual nature of translation and what role translation plays as a cultural mediator that contributes to building cultural bridges and communication between societies.

1. Definition of concepts

1.1. Definition of Translation:

Before addressing the definition of translation, we will discuss the phenomenon of immigration, which has transformed Italy into a multicultural country where people of different religions, languages and cultures live together. Understanding others in terms of their historical, religious and cultural realities is one of the most important factors leading to peaceful coexistence.

The only text on immigration describes the cultural mediator as an effective element of social integration policies, indispensable in helping new citizens and facilitating their integration through mutual acquaintance in order to ensure equal opportunities and respect for others. The cultural mediator finds himself faced with the challenge of integration policies and the

importance of acknowledging differences and overcoming fears and prejudices in order to avoid racial discrimination and achieve peaceful coexistence.

We also find that translation has been of interest to Arabs since ancient times. We find the House of Wisdom, which is a library that provides the necessary tools to aid translation, and the Baghdad School, which was the largest centre for translation, containing some philosophical and Greek books brought by the Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid from the Roman Empire. Caliph al-Rashid worked on translating these books from Greek into Arabic, in addition to making available other books such as Persian heritage, which he also had translated from Persian into Arabic. Translation was not limited to one field, but came to encompass various fields of knowledge and sciences that flourished in ancient civilisations.

Translation is derived from the verb 'translate', and as stated in *Lisan al-Arab*, 'he translated his words, meaning he interpreted them in another language.' (Ibn manzūr, 1998 :316)

Translation is defined as 'the transfer of words, meanings and styles from one language to another while maintaining equivalence.' (Kuḥayl, Sa'īdah: 21)

Based on what has been presented, translation is the process that allows the transfer of meanings to be translated from the source language to the target language, which requires the translator to have the ability to control both languages, respect the target language system, and understand their cultures, as this point is considered one of the most important conditions that must be met in the cultural milieu, It requires an understanding of the text to be translated, which can only be achieved by evoking the cultural atmosphere in which it appeared. (Zarmān, Muḥammad ,2001:117-118)

In the words of Nasif Abdul Karim: "Translation was and still is the most important means of achieving communication between peoples. Since humans discovered the alphabet, achieving a historic leap in the field of development, and since they began to write down what they knew and record their history and ideas, translation has been the direct counterpart of that development. Humans are a connected chain of links bound together by language, and the twin of that bond is translation. Hence, we find that translation is a cultural necessity and a social and cultural activity of great importance in completing dialogue and communication, as it is considered a bridge for the passage of cultures between different societies.

When discussing the role of translation, we find that it is not limited to transferring text from one language to another, but also works to promote cultural and social communication between different peoples and civilisations. Accordingly, we find that there are multiple definitions of translation among specialists, sometimes intersecting in the same ideas and sometimes differing and varying. Hence, it can be said that translation is a tool for dialogue between cultures, as it serves as a bridge to achieve communication and understanding between people of different cultures by providing an interactive platform to facilitate dialogue between them.

1.2. Definition of Culture:

The real power in modern society is manifested through the cultural sphere. To confirm this, we find that many European countries have adopted a policy that has crystallised into a constitutional preamble stipulating that the nation guarantees children and adults equal access to education, vocational training and culture. UNESCO has also stated that culture is the fourth pillar of sustainable development.

Therefore, European countries are striving to establish the foundations of cultural democracy, which means that culture is accessible and not limited to the elite or a specific segment of society, and to make culture available to populations that suffer from problems of access and availability. In doing so, they are addressing the idea of social isolation in democratic politics under the slogan of 'equal access to culture.' The root of the word 'culture' in Latin is 'cultura,' which means the cultivation of fields or livestock. The word 'culture' in French appeared in the 16th century to denote the act of cultivating the land (la culture de la terre). The semantic content of the word then began to be influenced and developed with the evolution of ideas, shifting from the meaning of cultivating the land to the meaning of cultivating the mind. The word became firmly established in the thinking of the French Enlightenment and was associated with ideas of progress, development, education and reason, leading to its adoption in various languages, such as German (kultur) and English (culture). (BENETON Pierre, 1975 : 15)

Edward Taylor, a British anthropologist, was the first to propose a conceptual definition of culture, stating that culture is the complex whole of beliefs, knowledge, art, morals, customs, and habits acquired by humans from the society in which they live as part of it.

Based on what has been proposed, we find that the subject of culture has become a topic of interest to many scholars. Some believe that culture is the complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, and customs acquired by individuals as members of society, while others believe that culture is the manifestation of actions and ideas expressed by humans through the use of symbols or language. Culture is thus the accumulated history of humanity, which carries a set of charac-

teristics that can be summarised as being human, i.e. specific to humans and not to other creatures. It is also acquired, either directly or indirectly, through learning or through interaction between individuals. It also has the characteristic of transmission and dissemination thanks to language and modern means of communication, where it has become easy to learn about other peoples' cultures while sitting at home, considering that the world has become a small village.

We have become more open to the cultures of other societies. In addition, culture is evolutionary, meaning that it develops for the better and better, as well as being changeable and predictive, in the sense that it can determine the behaviour of individuals and predict how a particular individual belonging to a particular culture might behave.

2. Cultural Mediation:

To arrive at a definition of cultural mediation, we must distinguish between the concepts of mediation and cultural mediation. Disagreements and conflicts are part of our lives and have existed since the beginning of time. The first conflict was between Abel and Cain, which shows that they have existed since ancient times. They are also one of the results of human interaction, in which there are differences in opinions, values and goals. The idea of applying mediation to resolve existing disagreements and conflicts between parties and groups in peaceful ways came about. Mediation means that there is a dispute between two or more parties, and the mediator is the third party who works to resolve this dispute and reach peaceful solutions that satisfy both parties. In addition, it is voluntary, i.e. not compulsory, and individuals resort to it of their own free will. It requires a number of conditions, including the existence of a high level of conflict, weak incentives to reach an agreement, and unequal power between the parties to the conflict.

Here, the mediator has a role to play in helping to defuse anger and create an atmosphere conducive to negotiation. The mediator focuses on the interests of the disputing parties and uses active listening techniques (being a good listener enables him to understand and analyse the situation well), in addition to motivating the disputing parties to reconcile by alerting them to the consequences of not reaching an agreement. Cultural mediation refers to the process of bringing culture and the arts closer to citizens. It is a broad concept that includes activities related to cultural democratisation projects, which aim to encourage cultural projects and improve access to culture in order to achieve cultural democracy, which means making culture accessible to all segments of society, not just a select few. It also aims to facilitate relations between nationals and foreign citizens in order to create friendly relations and support peaceful coexistence. All of this requires the presence of a cultural mediator who must possess a set of qualities such as the ability to engage in dialogue, active listening, and knowledge of the host country and the country of origin, in the sense of mastery and control of everything related to culture, laws, traditions, language, customs, etc.

Among the goals that cultural mediation seeks to achieve are strengthening education, diversity, equality, and respect for differences, in addition to encouraging cultural exchange programmes and facilitating understanding and dialogue between people from different cultures, cooperating to encourage social change aimed at eliminating racial discrimination and developing social relations between cultures. From the above, we find that mediation is a mechanism for resolving conflicts peacefully, while cultural mediation does not aim to resolve any conflict but rather aims primarily to bring culture and the arts closer to citizens.

3. The Role of the Translator:

The translator plays a fundamental role in facilitating understanding, revealing and interpreting meanings, and attempting to convey cultural messages and their meanings, which requires the translator to exercise control and mastery in the translation process.

Translation is not an easy process, which means that translators face many difficulties in understanding the text and conveying its socio-cultural content without distorting its original meaning. Here, they find themselves faced with two choices: the first is to hold on to and preserve their own culture and distance themselves from other cultures instead of drawing from them, or to be open to the culture of others and borrow from it. This is what Fenotti referred to as the disappearance of the translator, where he merges and assimilates into the other culture, which brings us to the term acculturation, which means that when members of a group move from their group to live in another group, they face a process of cultural change called cultural change, because they encounter a culture that is different from that of their own society. In other words, we find that the cultural characteristics of the new culture overwhelm or replace the mother culture, and individuals may lose their original culture.

Therefore, we find that the translator plays an effective role in cultural transfer. Talking about culture as a social phenomenon means that it is a product of society and is not formed as an individual phenomenon, which requires the existence of a society through which individuals can form and develop their culture through social interaction with others within the society. And strive to overcome the gaps that prevent the transfer of meaning to the other party by accessing their culture. Here, we introduce the term 'democratisation of culture,' which aims to improve access and encourage cultural projects, thus trans-

forming the translator from a mere mediator between two cultures to an active member in the transfer of their contents. This is achieved by transferring culture in a correct language that ensures the preservation the correct meaning. This requires proficiency and mastery of several languages and a broad view of the target culture, thereby enabling the translator to create cultural communication through translation.

4. The Translator as a Cultural Mediator:

Translation is as old as humanity and its civilisation, which practised this intellectual activity, whether oral or written, as an effective tool in the process of transferring knowledge and serving dialogue and creativity. In the past, sailors, merchants and princes used translation for trade and politics, while clergymen worked on translation for the sake of preaching and proselytising. Intellectuals then came along and used translation to spread ideas and open up to other sciences and cultures. Considering that translation is the bridge through which cultures cross, the translator is the person who receives those cultures, guides them, and even leads them to safety on the other side. Translators, as described by Marianne Lederer

The role of the translator is centred on being a mediator between cultures, in the sense of mediating between ideologies within a framework of respect for cultural diversity and acceptance of the other as they are, and between social values and political and social structures, in order to overcome the difficulties that hinder the transmission of meaning.

This requires the translator to have a high degree of cultural and linguistic competence, in addition to a knowledge of a range of arts and sciences, given that each society has its own language and mental constructs. The translator's job is to leave the same impression that the original text leaves on its original

readers, meaning that the original meaning of the text must remain intact. This can only be achieved through mastery and good command of the language and culture of the target country, in addition to working to exclude personal standards and relying on understanding the text and preserving the original text, as the translator is a mirror reflecting this text and its culture. (HATIM, Basil, 1990 : 223)

5. Translation and its Role in Cultural Communication Between Peoples:

The process of translation is not a secondary activity limited to a linguistic criterion, manifested in the fact that it is a process of transferring from one language to another, as is commonly believed. Rather, it has transcended its classical technical essence to become a central practice that involves theoretical, cultural, economic and social aspects. It has become one of the mechanisms used since ancient times to enable nations and peoples to coexist, especially since it enjoys a distinguished position thanks to its effective and significant contribution to understanding others and opening up to them and their cultures.

Translation is therefore considered one of the most important means used to create this cultural and civilisational interaction that enables peoples to benefit from each other, as it is a 'source of energy for creation and creativity... as well as openness, listening, dialogue and interaction with others'. (HATIM, Basil, 1990 : 223) Therefore, the more translation from one language to other languages increases, the more cultural richness in human civilisation in general increases, because through it, paths are opened to learn about other cultures and their customs and traditions, and then benefit from them and their experiences in all fields.

Translation continues to play an important role in the dialogue between cultures and civilisations, as it is the main tool

for the advancement of civilisations. Thanks to it, people can learn about the cultures of other countries without travelling, while remaining in their own countries, where they form ideas about the history and civilisation of these countries, not to mention the accumulation of knowledge and science, which is transmitted from one country to another. This leads to interaction, through which one culture understands another, resulting in exchange, advancement and development. This may bring about understanding between the peoples of the two civilisations, leading to harmony and peace (peaceful coexistence). (al-‘Aqqād, ‘Abbās Maḥmūd, 1998: 32)

One of the fundamental objectives of this cultural mediator (translator) is to expand the scope of cultural democracy, which means that culture is not limited to the elite or a specific segment of society, but rather seeks to spread it to different segments of society, so that it includes all individuals in all regions. It also aims to help break down linguistic, cultural and social barriers and support coexistence in a culturally diverse society.

Translation, as a bridge for communication between peoples throughout history, brings different cultures closer together and promotes cultural convergence between nations. In doing so, it supports dialogue and exchange between peoples, facilitates communication between nations, and opens windows onto other cultures for peoples, as long as knowledge of the other gradually leads to self-knowledge through comparison and communication.

In addition, translation works to protect culture and its values and preserve them from disappearing and dissolving in the creeping tide of civilisation with its technologies, material values and lifestyles, and to facilitate relations in order to create positive relationships between people belonging to different

cultures. Thus, it can be said that translation from one language to another is one of the windows through which people view other peoples' cultures, civilisations and information, and it is one of the bridges that connect cultures and human knowledge. The role of translation is growing in our present age, which is witnessing an information explosion and significant technological development that we must keep up with and keep pace with in a world full of new information and data generated by numerous and diverse changes. This requires us to contribute to cultural development as active and interactive participants who are open to other cultures, while taking care to preserve our original culture and not allow its roots to be uprooted.

Therefore, translation has been, is, and will continue to be a tool that allows for human interaction through the exchange of cultures, knowledge, and science, thereby providing an opportunity for cultural and civilisational communication between peoples, transcending political and geographical barriers. It addresses the problem of social isolation, especially as we are witnessing an information technology revolution in which translation is one of the main tools. Without it, peoples would remain isolated until they withered and disappeared. Translation has a place among the sciences and is one of the interactions between human beings. From what we have mentioned, it is clear that translation is an attempt to understand others, communicate with them, and learn about them. It is a reciprocal process that ultimately leads to cultural exchange, civilisational dialogue, and knowledge transfer.

6. The Linguistic and Cultural Reality in Algeria:

Freedom of cultural expression is a legitimate right for different cultures, and Algeria, like other countries around the world, is trying to promote communication and bring together the customs and traditions of its citizens, regardless of their

religious affiliations. Translation plays an effective role in facilitating the process of building bridges of communication internally and externally. In terms of linguistic identity, Algeria still faces several obstacles. The official and national language, and the language of the state, is Arabic, but the language actually used is French. Algeria is the third most Francophone country in the world after France and Congo, according to a study conducted by the French Language Observatory in 2010, which estimated the number of French speakers in Algeria at 11.2 million. We often find that French speakers, who are not few in number, boast about this language and see it as a sign of openness and sophistication, both inside and outside the country.

Recently, Amazigh has become an official national language, although it still suffers from several problems regarding its alphabet and spelling. However, this does not negate the fact that it brings together many diverse cultures, including the Kabyle, Chaouia, Mزاب, Tarika, Chnaoui of Tipaza, and the Bosmgunia Shalouh in Beida. This poses a major challenge for Algeria in terms of which language to use for writing, and what role translation will play in all of this. Algeria must therefore define a clear strategy in this area.

7. The Translation Crisis in Algeria:

When discussing translation in Algeria, researchers and scholars in this field point to the existence of a translation crisis, as well as the need to adapt translation studies to the Algerian reality. We urgently need to understand the most important difficulties and challenges posed by the cultural market and the requirements of our institutes and universities. To date, we have:

- Working on studying the strategy and importance of translation: a strategy that is imposed and not adapted to the local reality. (Sahābat Khayrah,2019: 130)
- Renewing language and translation teaching curricula in terms of content rather than form, in line with the requirements of the cultural market, where reviewing teaching curricula has become an inevitable necessity and every effort must be made to align these programmes with the requirements of the labour market.
- The problems faced by authors, which have contributed significantly to the obstruction and suspension of many translation projects each year.
- Focusing on finding consumers and improving cultural marketing. At this particular point, it is necessary to take into account the needs of the market, meaning that production should be in line with market needs, which are determined by studying the tastes of the public in advance. Studies and statistics have shown that large segments of the population do not benefit from cultural offerings because they are not targeted, which means that achieving cultural democracy lies not only in enriching cultural offerings but also in continuous and purposeful work focused on demand.
- -Lack of coordination between institutes and laboratories specialising in languages and translation. Coordination is essential and important in order to achieve satisfactory results that are always in the interest of both the producer and the consumer (the author and the recipient).

Here, we can propose the basic elements for a successful cultural mediation policy. At present, cultural mediation is the key and means of bringing culture to populations that suffer from problems of access and availability. It thus addresses the idea of social isolation in democratic politics and eliminates the idea

or phenomenon of limiting the world of culture to an elite class resulting from cultural (differences in learning), social and economic (poverty), psychological, geographical and linguistic (disability) conditions.

We can also attribute the reason to the weak financial support directed to translation, for example: The project to translate young people's books, which was adopted by the Arab Higher Institute for Translation, was halted due to the absence of financial support, as approximately 20 young people's books were translated and remained locked in drawers indefinitely.

Accordingly, the origin of the translation crisis in Algeria can be traced back to the absence or absence of a clearly defined strategy in the field of translation at the state level, as well as at the level of universities, institutes and scientific research centers, and the lack of coordination between them.

Conclusion:

The relationship between translation and culture is strong, as culture is the product of expressing the collective identity of a group of people, and translation is the way that enables us to reveal, learn and understand the cultures of past peoples. It serves as a bridge to achieve communication and break the barrier of ignorance, where it was Translation is still a source of communication between nations and cultures, as it leads to increased understanding and communication between individuals and societies by translating the works of others (various cultures and languages). Translation has witnessed many transformations since the 1980s, when a shift was made towards cultural translation practice. Translation is no longer limited to Translating works and texts alone, but has become a social ac-

tor and cultural friction between multicultural societies This has opened the way for scrutiny and research in cultural translation to solve the problems of cultural differences, which raises several problems, the most important of which is the issue of translating elements with a cultural load and transferring them to the other side of the mechanisms that societies have adopted since the beginning of their first formations, meaning that through them a greater opportunity is provided for the exchange and generation of ideas. New ones that support the structure of human civilization in general, despite its different backgrounds, as well as the formation of an appropriate space for dialogue and acculturation Because it is considered one of the basic and effective engines in producing this interaction and coexistence that links these human cultures, or rather it is an absolute necessity for development, growth, and the exchange of ideas and achievements. There is no civilization in history that has not been taken from other civilizations.

At the conclusion of this research paper, which aims to activate and shed light on the role of translation as a cultural mediator and to determine the great importance it has in light of the current challenges, the world today is experiencing cultural openness. The local translator must be in control and have a broad and comprehensive knowledge of global terms: such as dialogue of civilizations, dialogue of cultures, multilingualism, and cultural expression.

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