# Factors Affecting Translators' Choices in Rendering CSIS in Moroccan Literary Texts

**Ikrame Chibani[1], Mohamed Benmhamed (Ph.D Thesis Supervisor)[2], Khalil Hsoune[3]**

[1,2,3] Department of English, Faculty of languages and arts, University of Ibn Tofail, Kenitra, Morocco.

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The translation output is affected by a number of factors which could be both implicit or explicit. Such factors provide a variation in translation. This study aims at investigating the different factors influencing Moroccan and non-Moroccan translators' choices. It also aims at identifying these factors. Using a qualitative approach, it was found that contextual factors which refer to the circumstances surrounding the translation act, including the purpose of the translation, the intended audience, and the medium of communication have a major role in shaping the decisions of the translators. therefore, it is recommended that translators consider these factors along with others when making choices in the translation process. Translators must understand the purpose of the translation and use appropriate language and terminology.

## INTRODUCTION

Translation is the process of transferring meaning from one language to another while maintaining the intended message and context of the source text. In the translation act, translators face numerous challenges that affect their choices in the translation process. These challenges include cultural differences, linguistic diversity, and context. In this paper, we will examine the factors that affect translators' choices in the translation act.

## Translation

Eugene A. Nida, a renowned American linguist and translation theorist defines translation as follows:

"Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style."

According to Nida, translation involves finding the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, which means that the translator must consider both the meaning and the style of the source text. The goal of the translator is to convey the meaning of the original text as accurately and effectively as possible, while also taking into account the cultural and linguistic differences between the source and target languages. Nida's definition emphasizes the importance of both the semantic and pragmatic dimensions of the translation process, as well as the need to maintain the stylistic features of the source text in the target language.

## Literary Texts

A literary text is a type of literature that uses an aesthetic and creative discourse to tell a story, to convey a message that may have political, social or ethical purpose through both fiction or non-fiction. It may also aim at entertaining the reader. There are three main types of literary texts: prose, poetry, and drama. They both have sub-types. They respectively include: myth, story, novel, science-fiction, fantasy, film script, etc. Poetic types as a sonnet, lyric verse, song, jingle, etc. Then, drama which can be viewed in the form of tragedy, comedy, farce, dramatic monologue. Mostly poetry seeks to depict a feeling, a reflection on events, or people using a robust textual cohesion to establish some kind of patterns in the poem. Whereas prose may focus on the sequence of events, with a more detailed description of the characters, the main and secondary events, and whereabouts of the narrative. Finally, drama is performed for an audience to give a realistic aspect to the written version of the story. It could be in the form of a play, a movie to name but a few.

*Corresponding Author: Ikrame Chibani*

**Translating Literary Texts**

Translating literary texts can be a complex and challenging task, as it requires not only a high level of linguistic proficiency but also a deep understanding of the literary traditions, cultural context, and author's intent. Literary texts often contain nuances, cultural references, wordplay, and other stylistic elements that are difficult to capture in the target language. The translator must be able to maintain the original style and tone of the text while also making it accessible to readers in the target language.

In addition, literary translators must also consider the reader's cultural background and linguistic competence when translating the text. They must make choices about how to convey cultural and historical references, idiomatic expressions, and other linguistic nuances in a way that is understandable and appropriate for the target audience.

"Translation is the circulatory system of the world's literatures, conveying what is lifegiving" (Sontag, 1962).

In this quote, Sontag emphasizes the importance of translation in enabling literary works to circulate and enrich different cultures, and the vital role it plays in promoting cross-cultural understanding and communication. This shows how vital translation of literary texts is in order to encourage mutual understanding.

**METHODOLOGY**

Given the fact that the present study seeks to compare between the translation procedures that Moroccan and non-Moroccan translators use in rendering CSIs in literary texts and attempt to interpret the factors that shape their practices qualitative research seems to be the most appropriate type of research to enable the implementation of the research objective. According to several prominent qualitative scholars (Creswell 2002; Pope & Mays 1995; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative research is intended to deeply explore, understand and interpret social phenomena within its natural setting. The data collected are not numerical but rather descriptive. Therefore, the approach required is qualitative, in order to make generalizations from the observations elicited through the patterns of the data, in this case, translation procedures for CSIs in Moroccan literary texts. The data collected were inductive because explanations were derived from the data collected by the researcher. Also, it is realized that the researcher is part of the research process, which is a common occurrence within qualitative research, as the data are supposed to be interpreted through the researcher's observation of the raw data collected in order to elicit themes through intensive scrutiny of the data. Part of the data collected was taken from the English translations made by non-Moroccan translators and the other part was collected from Moroccan translators. The data used relied on the translators' understanding and the meanings they attached to the cultural items they were given along with their translations**.**

**Research objective**: This study seeks to compare whether Moroccan translators use procedures akin to the ones used by non-Moroccan translators.

**Research question**: To what extent are these procedures similar to the ones used by Moroccan translators? (**Comparative**)

**Data source:** The novels chosen are some of the few Moroccan literary texts that have been written in Arabic by a Moroccan writer with many Moroccan cultural references and translated into English. They are all rooted in the Moroccan cultural context. They all portray salient periods of the Moroccan history through the lives of common Moroccan characters. This has fulfilled the requirements of this research and provided valuable sources of the data. The three literary texts are 'لعبة النسيان' by the novelist Mohammed Berrada was published in 1987, الخبز الحافي by the Moroccan writer Mohamed Choukri which was published in 1972 and عام الفيل which was written by the Moroccan novelist Leila Abouzeid and published in 1979. The translations used were the official translations provided by three foreign translators, namely Boullata, Issa J., Paul Bowles and Barbara Parmenter, respectively.

This research targeted Moroccan translators translations. Therefore, 20 Moroccan translators participated in this study through answering the open-ended questions of the qualitative survey to unveil their practices and compare them to those of the non-Moroccan translators.

**Document analysis**

Document Analysis is defined by Labuschagne as:

"An analytic procedure which entails finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and syn- thesising data contained in documents. Document analysis yields data— excerpts, quotations, or entire passages—that are then organised into major themes, categories, and case examples specifically through content analysis (Labuschagne, 2009 cited in, Bowen,

2009; P 27-28)."

With a view to select the CSIs from the three literary texts mentioned above, document analysis was made use of. Document analysis is also defined as a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internettransmitted) material. In qualitative research, document analysis requires data to be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge). Documents contain text (words) that have been recorded without a researcher's intervention (Bowen, 2009, p. 27).

In order to analyze the selected data content analysis was used. Content analysis is a data analysis method that seeks to categorize data systematically to turn a set of data into a set of codes that can be easily organized and studied. Moreover, this method not only allows to analyze the data qualitatively, given specific codes but also to quantify these codes numerically. To carry out the analysis, Newmark's translation model (1988) was adopted to pinpoint the

different procedures that both types of translators used and to try to pinpoint the factors that led to their distinct choices. It is worth mentioning that Newmark's translation model is a theoretical framework that seeks to explain the translation process and provide multiple procedures for translators. The model is based on the idea that translation involves both linguistic and cultural differences between the source language and target language.

To compare the translations of the non-Moroccan translators and the Moroccan ones, qualitative surveys were administered online with 20 Moroccan translators. "The qualitative survey is the study of diversity (not distribution) in a population" (Jansen, 2010). From this definition, it follows that a qualitative survey is a research instrument used to study the variety within a specific group. Unlike quantitative surveys, it doesn't seek to provide an ordinal representation of the data, rather, its objective is to provide a thorough representation of the sample studied. Hence, this type of surveys is adopted in this study to find out the diverse procedures used by Moroccan translators in the translation of CSIs.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Considering the three literary texts that were studied in for this research and having in mind the research question, the translation procedures that were frequently used by non-Moroccan translators in the translation of the CSIs are **functional equivalence, cultural equivalence and modulation**. Other translation procedures were also used, yet not as many times as the ones mentioned above. Those are reduction, naturalization, through translation, synonymy, shifts and compensation, descriptive equivalence and cultural equivalence.

| Translation procedures / Translators | Use of translation procedures | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | T1 | T2 | T3 | T4 | T5 | T6 | T7 | T8 | T9 | T10 | T11 | T12 | T13 | T14 | T15 | T16 | T17 | T18 | T19 | T20 |
| Naturalization | 6 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 19 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Transference | 12 | 18 | 2 | 12 | 5 | 15 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 19 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 2 | - | - | - |
| Modulation | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 15 | - | 20 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | - | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Functional equivalence | 1 | - | - | 5 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 19 | - | 1 | 19 | 10 | 1 | 11 | 6 | - | 20 | - | - | - |
| Descriptive equivalence | - | 6 | 4 | 7 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | 5 | 12 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Cultural equivalence | - | - | - | - | 9 | - | - | - | - | 19 | - | - | 15 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Notes | 4 | 3 | - | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Couplet | 6 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 20 | 1 | 1 | 18 | 4 | - | - | 4 | - | 2 | - | - | - |
| Synonymy | - | - | 15 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Compensation | - | - | 7 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Paraphrase | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| Through analysis | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 14 | - | - | - |

**Table 1 Translation Procedures used by Moroccan translators**

The table above sums up the various procedures each Moroccan translator (T1-T20) used. Among 18 translation procedures, 12 were used, excluding six other translation procedures, which are reduction, expansion, componential analysis, recognized translation and translation label. In order to answer the research question, the researcher selected 20 CSIs and made an online survey. The surveys were filled out by 20 Moroccan translators, who were asked to translate 20 CSIs from Arabic to English. As the table and the graph above show, the most used translation procedures by Moroccan translators are **transference, functional equivalence and modulation.** Other translation procedures that were used are naturalization, descriptive equivalence, cultural equivalence, notes, couplets, synonymy, compensation, through analysis and paraphrase.

**Factors affecting translators' choices**

Translators' choices can be influenced by a variety of factors, including:

**Linguistic factors**: The linguistic characteristics of the source text (such as syntax, vocabulary, and style) can impact the translator's choices. For example, a highly idiomatic source text may require more creative or dynamic equivalent translations than a scientific or a technical text.

**Cultural factors:** The cultural context of the source text can also be a significant factor in translation choices. Culture-specific items, such as idioms, proverbs, and names, may

require adaptation or explanation in the target language to effectively convey their intended meaning.

**Reader expectations:** The intended audience of the translation can also influence the translator's choices. For example, a translation intended for an academic audience may prioritize accuracy and faithfulness to the source text, while a translation intended for a general audience may prioritize readability and cultural adaptation.

**Genre**: The genre of the source text can also impact the translator's choices. For example, a literary text may require more creative or nuanced translations than a technical or legal text. Literary texts are known to be more artistic as they contain expressions that stem from the setting of the story.

**Time constraints**: Translators may also be influenced by time constraints, such as deadlines or turnaround times. This can impact the level of detail and depth of the translation, as well as the procedures used to approach translation challenges.

Overall, the factors affecting translators' choices can be complex and multifaceted. Effective translators need to consider a range of linguistic, cultural, and contextual factors when making translation decisions in order to produce high-quality, culturally sensitive translations that accurately convey the intended meaning and cultural context of the source text.

The factors enlisted above can affect multiple types of translations. Nevertheless, translating culture-specific items presents further challenges for translators and involves additional factors that can impact translation choices. Here are some of the factors that can affect translators' choices in translating culture-specific items:

**Cultural knowledge**: Translating culture-specific items requires cultural competence and knowledge of the source and target cultures. Translators need to have a deep understanding of the cultural context of the source text in order to accurately convey the intended meaning and cultural connotations of culture-specific items.

**Target audience**: The target audience of the translation can also influence translation choices when dealing with culture-specific items. The translator needs to consider the cultural background and expectations of the target audience when deciding how to approach translating culture-specific items. For example, if the target audience is familiar with the source culture, the translator may choose to keep the original cultural references or provide minimal explanation, while for an audience unfamiliar with the source culture, the translator may need to provide more detailed explanations or use cultural substitutions.

**Source text genre**: The genre of the source text can also impact translation choices. Literary texts may require more creative or nuanced translations than technical or legal texts, and the translator may need to adapt cultural references and idiomatic expressions in different ways depending on the genre.

**Translation purpose**: as the Skopo's theory holds, translation is not simply an act of linguistic transference, but rather an implementation of a specific purpose. There are different purposes surrounding the translating act, the author's purpose, the text's purpose, the translator's purpose. The purpose of the translation can also impact translation choices. For example, a translation intended for scholarly research may prioritize accuracy and fidelity to the source text, while a translation intended for general readers may prioritize readability and cultural adaptation.

**Translation procedure:** Translators may use different translation procedures to deal with culture-specific items, such as cultural substitution, cultural adaptation, or explanation. The choice of procedure will depend on the translator's assessment of the target audience's cultural background, the intended purpose of the translation, and the translator's own judgement.

In conclusion, translating culture-specific items requires cultural competence, knowledge of the source and target cultures, and careful consideration of the target audience, source text genre, and translation purpose. Translators need to choose appropriate translation procedures to ensure that cultural references and idiomatic expressions are accurately conveyed in the translation while also adapting them to the target culture and audience. Translators must also consider the medium of communication, such as a website, a print publication, or a video, and ensure that the translation is appropriate for the medium.

From what was reported earlier and given the different procedures that were identified before, it seems clear that Moroccan translators and foreign translators make different choices and face different challenges when translating Moroccan literary texts. These challenges are influenced by their respective linguistic backgrounds, cultural perspectives, and experiences.

**Linguistic Background:** Moroccan translators who are native speakers of Moroccan Arabic or Standard Arabic have an advantage when translating Moroccan literary texts. They have an inherent understanding of the nuances of the language and the cultural context of the text. This understanding allows them to make more accurate and appropriate choices in their translation, particularly when dealing with idiomatic expressions or culturally-specific references. On the other hand, foreign translators may lack this level of understanding and may struggle to convey the intended meaning of the text. They may also face difficulties in finding suitable equivalents for certain words or expressions, particularly those that do not exist in their own language.

**Cultural Perspective:** Cultural perspective is another important factor that affects the choices of Moroccan and foreign translators when translating Moroccan literary texts. Moroccan translators have a deeper understanding of the cultural references and contexts within the text, allowing them to make more informed choices about the translation of

culturally-specific concepts or practices. Foreign translators, however, may struggle to interpret the cultural references and may not fully understand their significance or relevance to the text. This can result in a loss of meaning or misinterpretation in the translation.

**Experience:** Experience is another key factor that affects translators' choices when working with Moroccan literary texts. Experienced Moroccan translators are likely to have encountered similar texts in the past and may have developed specific strategies or techniques for dealing with the linguistic or cultural challenges of these texts. Foreign translators, particularly those with limited experience in working with Moroccan texts, may find it more challenging to make the appropriate choices in their translation. They may need to do more research or seek assistance from native speakers or experts in the Moroccan culture or language to ensure that their translations are accurate and appropriate.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Moroccan translators and foreign translators face different challenges when working with Moroccan literary texts. These challenges are influenced by their respective linguistic backgrounds, cultural perspectives, and experiences. Moroccan translators have an advantage in terms of their understanding of the language and culture, but foreign translators may need to work harder to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of their translations. Ultimately, the success of the translation depends on the translator's ability to make informed choices based on a deep understanding of the text and the cultural and linguistic context in which it was written.

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