

Issue of Cultural transmission: The Space of Untranslatable **Fairouz Chenni^{1,*}**

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Abstract

This paper examines the close relationship between language and culture in the process of translation, with particular emphasis on the transfer of cultural elements in literary texts. It is based on the assumption that translation is not merely a technical linguistic activity, but a complex cultural act that requires a deep understanding of the social and historical contexts in which meaning is produced. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical approach, drawing on selected examples from the works of Mouloud Feraoun to analyze the translation of cultural terms, idiomatic expressions, and colloquial language, in light of concepts such as acculturation and functional equivalence. The paper highlights the role of the translator as a cultural mediator who seeks to balance fidelity to the source text with acceptability in the target culture, without erasing cultural specificity. It concludes that successful literary translation depends on bicultural awareness and that translation serves as a bridge for intercultural dialogue, promoting understanding, diversity, and mutual cultural enrichment.

Keywords : Translation ;Language ; Culture ; Acculturation ; Assimilation.

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I- Introduction :

Language learning provides access to a new culture, just as translation offers access to other cultures and worldviews. As language constitutes a fundamental repository of shared beliefs, values, and representations, translation cannot be reduced to a purely linguistic operation, nor can it be dissociated from its cultural dimension. Whether dealing with everyday communication, literary works, specialized texts, or even automated translation, the translator is inevitably confronted with a central challenge: transferring culturally and emotionally charged content from the source language into the target language while minimizing semantic and cultural loss.

From the earliest stages of human history, human beings—social by nature—have demonstrated a persistent need to communicate, interact with others, and transcend the barriers that restrict access to the cultural heritage of civilizations. This desire to understand the “Other” has continuously evolved and been reinforced through translation, which has played a crucial role in expanding cultural horizons and fostering intercultural exchange.

II. Translation and Culture:

Just as learning a foreign language enables access to a new cultural universe, translation facilitates encounters between different linguistic and cultural systems. According to Erik Lebreton, translation represents a site of confrontation between logics and, more broadly, between cultures. Consequently, translation—particularly non-literary translation—must often be adaptive in nature. This adaptation may concern the content, the structure of the text, the conventions of the target culture, and even the organization of illustrative elements. In this sense, the translator functions not merely as a transmitter of meaning, but as an adapter who reshapes discourse in accordance with the expectations and norms of the target audience (Libertson, 1991).

To avoid the distortion or erasure of foreign cultures, translators are called upon to overcome ethnocentrism and approach other cultures with openness, intellectual modesty, and methodological rigor. Literary translators, in particular, must take into account what Georges Mounin refers to as the “worldview” embedded within language. Translation has historically contributed to cultural exchange and linguistic enrichment, notably during the nineteenth century, when translations from French and English played a significant role in the emergence and development of modern Arabic literature. Conversely, Arabic literary works translated into European languages have equally enriched Western cultures.

Despite the widely acknowledged difficulties associated with language learning and translation, Georges Mounin argues that linguistic universals—linked to domains such as language, religion, education, and power—make

it possible to grasp a minimal invariant of denotative meaning that can be transmitted across languages (Mounin, 1963). Translation, therefore, should not be perceived merely as a technical operation, but rather as a means of fostering understanding, cultivating cultural difference, and promoting tolerance through knowledge of foreign languages and translated texts.

III. Language and Culture:

Language, conceived as a social phenomenon by virtue of its essence and function, constitutes a primary manifestation of a people's culture. Culture, in turn, is commonly defined by researchers as the sum of traditions, customs, religion, literature, and artistic production that distinguish a community, standing in contrast to nature as a constructed and socially produced reality (Senesson, 2002). In this perspective, language operates both as a reflection of culture and as one of its most fundamental vehicles.

Elena Dragan emphasizes that culture is a social product rather than a biological one, asserting that language serves as the principal means through which the values of civilization are materialized, preserved, and transmitted across generations (Dragan, 2007). Translation, therefore, is fully embedded within this cultural framework, as it involves not only the transfer of linguistic forms but also the mediation of cultural meaning.

Translation implies interaction between cultures. As Dumont notes, cultures rarely come into contact in their entirety; rather, interaction occurs at specific points or through particular cultural elements (Dumont, 1986). Consequently, translation establishes connections with a set of cultural references that may be either familiar or unfamiliar to the translator. In this sense, translation can be understood as a process grounded in cultural exchange, while simultaneously revealing zones of untranslatability (Cordonnier, 1995).

The influence of culture on language is particularly evident in the lexical and phraseological components of discourse, where culturally specific meanings are most strongly encoded. While language is shaped by both national and international cultural forces, it also actively contributes to shaping culture by conveying representations of the world, social norms, behavioral patterns, and value systems. As Georges Mounin observes, each language highlights different aspects of reality, organizing the speaker's perception of the universe and determining what can be seen, expressed, and understood (Mounin, 1963).

Furthermore, the same experience of the world is not necessarily conceptualized or expressed in identical ways across different languages. Insights from cultural anthropology and ethnology suggest that linguistic

diversity reflects diverse cultural interpretations of reality. This diversity poses significant challenges for translation, particularly in the search for equivalence between culturally distant systems. In this regard, Eugene Nida classifies the main sources of translational difficulty into five categories: ecological culture, material culture, social culture, religious culture, and linguistic culture (Nida, 1964).

IV. Terminology Issues

1.How to Translate Cultural Words?

The translation of literary texts raises specific challenges related to the transmission of culturally embedded terms. One of the primary considerations in this process is the cultural distance between the author of the source text and the readership of the translated text. Cultural references that are readily understood by the source-text reader may not be immediately accessible to the target reader, whose cultural background differs significantly.

As Rune Ingo points out, translators must remain aware that the target audience belongs to a different cultural and historical context, in which factors such as age, education, and standard of living may diverge from those of the source culture (Ingo, 2007). Accordingly, translators are required to adopt appropriate strategies in order to convey cultural meaning, and in some cases, to explicate the connotations of culturally specific terms. However, strategies that prioritize comprehension may also lead to a degree of deculturalization if applied without caution. Adaptation, therefore, should be employed judiciously, particularly in literary texts where cultural elements contribute to the aesthetic and symbolic richness of the narrative. In certain instances, such as the translation of marginal cultural references, adaptation may serve as an effective solution, provided that it does not undermine the overall cultural integrity of the source text.

2. Examples and discussion

Translation of literary texts often raises complex terminological issues, particularly when culturally loaded terms are involved. In such cases, the translator is required to strike a balance between preserving cultural specificity and ensuring comprehensibility for the target reader. Adaptation may sometimes lead to partial deculturalization; however, it can remain a valid strategy when cultural terms are not essential to the narrative structure or the plot. In this respect, the translator may prioritize meaning and readability, even though the text may risk losing part of its local cultural

color (Lindsten, 2013). Language, in this sense, is a creative activity and, by extension, an ongoing cultural practice. It functions both as a form of culture and as its foundation, particularly within the framework of cultural tradition (Mounin, 1963).

a. The Term “Dervish” (الدرويش)

In the following example drawn from Mouloud Feraoun’s work, the author refers to the figure of the dervish, a term deeply rooted in Islamic and Sufi cultural traditions:

“Il décida de consulter un derviche... lui donna rendez-vous chez le derviche et ils s’en allèrent”

(Feraoun, 1953).

In the Arabic version, the translator renders the term as follows:

« فقد قرر أن يستشير درويشاً... حدد له موعداً لدى الدرويش وذهباً »

From a cultural perspective, dervishes are ascetics belonging to various Sufi orders, characterized by extreme poverty and a life of austerity motivated by religious conviction and spiritual devotion. Their way of life is founded on renunciation of material possessions and the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment. Historically, dervishes have been known for their wisdom, knowledge, and social influence, often occupying respected positions within their communities.

In the Algerian cultural context, the term “murabit” is commonly used to designate religious figures who perform similar social and spiritual roles. Consequently, the translator’s choice to substitute “dervish” with “murabit” reflects an awareness of local cultural specificities and enhances the target reader’s comprehension. This strategy demonstrates the importance of cultural adaptation in literary translation, particularly when aiming to preserve the social and symbolic value of culturally embedded terms.

Furthermore, as Nida argues, the meaning of culturally charged terms cannot be fully understood in isolation from their cultural framework. Words function as symbols of localized cultural phenomena, and their interpretation depends largely on shared cultural knowledge (Mounin, 1963). The translator’s task, therefore, involves mediating between cultural systems rather than merely transferring lexical units.

b. The Term “Karouba” (الخربة)

The term “karouba” (الخربة) in the Kabyle region refers to a specific form of tribal and social organization that prevailed in the past. It designates a group of families sharing a common origin and constitutes a basic unit of village structure. In other regions, it may correspond to what is referred to as “الزربية”. André Julien defines karouba as “a group of families living on Kabyle land, gathered around three hearths of fire, and sometimes reaching up to fifteen families” (Julien, 1964).

Arabic lexicographical sources indicate that “خربة” literally denotes a dilapidated or abandoned dwelling. However, within the Algerian context—particularly in the Constantine region—the term refers to a stable settlement, despite the fact that such dwellings are often modest or in a state of deterioration. In this sense, “karouba” denotes a section of the tribe and is

pluralized as “خرايب”. It is also worth noting that the term shares its name with a small copper coin, which further reflects its deep historical and cultural embeddedness (Dosy, 2016).

Mouloud Feraoun describes karouba as both a social and geographical unit, highlighting its dual function within village life (Feraoun, 2002). In translating this term, the translator opted for the expression commonly used among villagers, based on the principle that understanding is facilitated when there exists an implicit agreement regarding the use and meaning of words (Vanoy, 1973). Through this choice, the translator successfully preserved the semantic and cultural charge carried by the term.

The term appears again in the following example:

“Ima Kamouma habitait au bout d’une ruelle du quartier. Ce quartier forme une karouba, autant dire une grande famille”
(Feraoun, 1953).

In the Arabic translation, the passage is rendered as:

« تسكن إيما كاموما في نهاية الزقاق بالحي، ويمكن القول إن الحي يشكل قرية واحدة كبيرة »

In this instance, the translator Hanifi Ben Aïssa adopted a different strategy from that of the first translator. While the lexical meaning of karouba is conveyed, its connotative and socio-cultural dimension—particularly its significance within village life—is partially attenuated. This example illustrates how different translation choices may affect the transmission of cultural meaning, even when the referential content appears to be preserved.

c. L’amin (الأمين) – Le caïd (القائد) – Hakem (الحاكم)

Another set of culturally loaded terms examined in this study concerns traditional figures of authority within Algerian society, namely l’amin, le caïd, and hakem. These terms appear in the following passage :

“Le caïd de la tribu – dix villages – a disparu. L’amin de notre village n’existe plus... Vive la démocratie ! À la place de ces valets du hakem, de ces mouchards... Vote, élection, choix librement exprimé”
(Feraoun, 1957).

In the Arabic version, the translator renders the passage as follows:

« لقد مات قائد القبيلة وكان يتحكم في ما لا يقل عن عشرة من القرى... كما توكل أمين قريتنا... »
«... وتخلصت القرية من العملاء والجواسيس الذين كانوا رمزاً لإشارة الحاكم الفرنسي »

One striking feature of the original text is the author’s use of Arabic terms transcribed into Latin characters. This stylistic choice reflects the presence of Algerian social and cultural realities embedded within the French narrative. The translator preserves these terms through phonetic transfer—le caïd, l’amin, and hakem—in order to retain their cultural and historical connotations.

As Ben Dhuril notes, every linguistic system is structured around specific semantic fields that facilitate meaning-making and communication (Ben Dhuril, 1981). By maintaining these culturally marked terms, the translator preserves their semantic specificity and the effect they produce on the reader.

Consequently, this translation strategy contributes to maintaining the cultural identity of the source text and enables the target reader to form an

authentic image of the source culture. Rather than offering a distorted or stereotypical representation of the “Other,” such an approach promotes cultural understanding. This aligns with Paul Bensimon’s view that translation participates in shaping or reinforcing the image of the Other among readers who lack direct access to the original cultural reality in which that Other is situated (Depre Oseki, 2002).

This translation strategy contributes to constructing and reinforcing an image of the “Other” for readers who do not possess direct access to the source culture. Translation thus becomes a means of approaching the truth of the original text, allowing the Other to express himself within his own cultural framework. In this context, the passage also reflects a political transformation within village organization, marked by a shift from tyrannical authority to a form of democratic governance based on elections and freedom of choice.

- **The Term “L’amin” (الأمين)**

The following example further illustrates the cultural significance of traditional authority figures:

“Mais voilà l’amin. Il monte sur une dalle. À côté de lui, un marabout déploie un étendard de soie jaune.”

(Feraoun, 1952).

In the Arabic translation, the passage is rendered as:

« لكن ها هو الأمين صعد على بلاطة، وإلى جانبه شيخ من شيوخ الزوايا نشر راية من الحرير الأصفر »

The amin is the head of the village and occupies a central position in the social and administrative organization of traditional communities. In the original text, the author includes a marginal note explaining the function of the amin as “the head of the village,” thereby guiding the reader’s understanding. The term itself derives from the role it designates, as the amin is a figure elected or chosen by the villagers to manage their collective affairs.

In the Arabic translation, the translator retains the original term due to its strong cultural and symbolic value, while also reproducing the explanatory marginal note. This strategy allows the translator to preserve both the lexical form and the socio-cultural significance of the term, ensuring continuity between the source and target texts.

The use of the color yellow in this context also carries specific cultural connotations within tribal societies. It is a distinctive marker of authority and public gathering in the region. When the amin appears, the yellow banner functions as a visual signal intended to attract attention and assemble the community, thus reinforcing the symbolic power associated with his role.

- **The Term “Le caïd” (القائد)**

Another example highlighting the challenges of translating culturally embedded terms is found in the following excerpt:

“Nous te ferons monter sur un âne, ajoute Kaci. Nous irons voir le caïd, tout de suite.”

(Feraoun, 1952).

In the Arabic version, the translator renders the passage as:

«وأضاف قاسي: سنركبك على ظهر حمار وسنذهب لمقابلة القاضي فوراً»

In this instance, the translator opts to translate le caïd as “القاضي” (the judge), relying on functional equivalence rather than phonetic transfer. This choice reflects the role attributed to the caïd in resolving disputes, as parties traditionally resort to him for arbitration. However, from a historical and socio-political perspective, the caïd represents more than a judicial authority; he is a leader appointed by the colonial administration to govern several villages and oversee their affairs.

As such, translating le caïd as “the leader” might more accurately reflect his position and power within the village hierarchy. The caïd often embodied an oppressive authority, exercising control over local populations and frequently abusing his power at the expense of the weaker members of society. This example demonstrates how translation choices can either preserve or partially obscure the ideological and historical dimensions embedded within culturally specific terms.

V. Acculturation and Translation

In social psychology and sociology, acculturation is defined as the set of processes through which individuals assimilate the culture of a group, constituting an essential aspect of socialization (Webencyclo, 2025). From an anthropological perspective, acculturation refers to the mechanisms of interaction through which cultural traits are transmitted from one social group to another. This process results in changes arising from direct or indirect contact between groups belonging to different cultures (Webencyclo, 2025).

Acculturation functions simultaneously as a mechanism of identification and differentiation, fostering both rapprochement and distancing between cultural groups. According to the definition proposed by the Memorandum of the Social Science Research Council, acculturation encompasses “the set of phenomena resulting from direct and continuous contact between groups of individuals from different cultures, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of one or both groups” (Bastide, 1998).

Cultures are neither isolated nor static entities; rather, they continuously interact, interpenetrate, and evolve, generating increasingly open spaces of exchange. However, these spaces may result either in integration or in marginalization. Within this framework, Berry proposes four principal strategies of acculturation:

- Assimilation, which involves the abandonment of one’s original cultural identity in favor of adopting the dominant culture.
- Marginalization, characterized by the abandonment of one’s cultural identity without fully adopting or explicitly rejecting the dominant culture.

- Separation, whereby individuals or groups maintain their cultural identity while refusing to adopt the dominant culture.
- Integration, which combines the preservation of one's cultural identity with the adoption of certain elements of the dominant culture (Berry, 1998).

The process of acculturation, or related processes depending on alternative classifications, does not always manifest in a clear or linear manner. Studies on acculturation often implicitly interpret cultural change from the perspective of a single cultural universe—either the “source culture” or the “target culture.” One of the limitations of classical definitions lies in their association with other notions inspired by culturalism, particularly that of the “cultural trait” (Barel, 1992).

Jean Poirier emphasized the necessity of unifying terminology in this field at an international level. He notes that German scholars employ the term *transculturation* to refer to change triggered by exogenous factors, while reserving *acculturation* for changes resulting from internal dynamics. Spanish scholars, by contrast, use *transculturation* to describe intercultural dynamics more broadly. Poirier therefore proposes the concept of cultural contact, defined as “the set of cultural interrelations that bind two cultures in relation—whether direct or indirect, physical or symbolic, continuous or episodic, conscious or unconscious.”

Within this conceptual framework, Poirier distinguishes several interrelated processes:

- Acculturation, understood as the dynamic process through which a culture evolves under the influence of another culture.
- Transculturation, which refers to similar processes resulting from endogenous factors, without direct contact between two or more distinct cultural systems.
- Enculturation, defined as the process of socialization through which individuals, via education, instruction, and social discipline, internalize the norms, values, and models characteristic of their culture.
- Counter-acculturation, which encompasses attitudes of resistance, rejection, or withdrawal that emerge as a reaction to the initial stages of acculturation (Poirier, 1972).

To this list, Poirier adds the notions of *deculturation* and *reculturation*. *Deculturation* refers to the degradation or loss of cultural meaning under the influence of a dominant culture, whereas *reculturation* designates a return to the original cultural framework. Georges Devereux provides a clear illustration of deculturation by defining it as the process through which a cultural trait is stripped of its original meaning within its culture. Thus, when a violin is used merely as firewood, it is deculturated (Devereux, 1977).

From the perspective of interpretative and adaptive theories, translation is fundamentally an act of communication and cultural transfer. It seeks to compensate for the differences in “worldview” between communities

belonging to distinct cultural systems. Since all lexical items are embedded with affective and cultural values, translation necessarily involves a passage from one cultural framework to another. Consequently, any translation presupposes a process of acculturation in order to render the text accessible to the target readership and to avoid producing sterile or lifeless reproductions of the original.

Often referred to as cultural adequacy, the adaptation of a translated text to the target culture requires a thorough knowledge of the expressive resources available in that culture. It also entails the translator's ability to integrate the foreign work into the target cultural context. The translator must therefore be fully aware that each act of translation is not merely linguistic, but deeply cultural in nature.

Culture corresponds to a system of values deeply rooted in a specific geography and a particular historical experience. These values shape collective identity and modes of expression. Consequently, translators are required not only to master linguistic competence but also to immerse themselves in the host culture, taking into account its socio-cultural dimensions as well as the historical and symbolic memory embedded in words.

One of the major challenges of translation arises precisely from this transition between cultures. Each culture possesses its own way of life, traditions, customs, modes of expression, metaphors, and references to historical heritage. These references may relate to national, religious, folkloric, and social traditions, as well as to geographical and climatic factors. All such points of divergence between civilizations must be carefully considered so that the target text does not appear as a mere translation. The ultimate objective of translation is to convey the intended meaning by reformulating it through an expression adapted to the host culture.

V.1. Acculturation and Translation : Examples

Acculturation of Marie

The phenomenon of acculturation is particularly evident in the character of Marie, whose experience illustrates cultural integration through everyday interaction and personal relationships.

a. "Il lui semblait qu'ils formaient tous deux un couple étrange, ridicule, qu'il avait perdu à côté d'elle son caractère de Kabyle et qu'elle n'avait plus celui de Française..." (Feraoun, 1953).

In the Arabic version, the translator renders the passage as follows:

« وكانا يبدوان لهما زوجين غربيين مثيرين للسخرية، إذ ضاع فيها الطابع القبائلي وفقدت هي « بدورها صورتها الفرنسية » »

This passage reflects a state of cultural hybridity resulting from mixed marriage, which constitutes a primary form of cultural cross-fertilization. Such unions often lead to voluntary cultural exchange without domination, enriching both parties through shared language, customs, and social practices. The result is a form of integration that allows each individual to internalize elements of the other's culture.

In this context, the image of the French woman within the Kabyle village symbolizes the beginning of intercultural exchange and communication between two cultures coexisting within the same geographical space. This coexistence illustrates a dynamic and enriching cultural diversity rather than a relationship of conflict or exclusion.

b. "Elle prit goût, petit à petit, à sa nouvelle société : elle vécut intensément avec ces femmes qui l'obligeaient à comprendre, à se faire entendre, à discuter." (Feraoun, 1953).

In the Arabic translation, the passage is rendered as:

« فأخذت تتذوق طعم الحياة شيئاً فشيئاً مع مجتمعي الجديد، وبدأت تتعاش مع أولئك النسوة اللواتي أجبرنني على الفهم والإفهام والمحادثة »

Here, the translator adopts a largely literal strategy, successfully conveying the progressive nature of Marie's integration. The image clearly depicts the initial stages of acculturation, characterized by social interaction, mutual understanding, and the gradual melting into the tribal community.

c. "Ce fut l'apprentissage direct de la langue. Les mots s'imposent d'eux-mêmes à sa mémoire... C'étaient tout d'abord les mots de l'existence aussi indispensables pour vivre que l'air que nous respirons." (Feraoun, 1953).

In the Arabic version, the translator renders the passage as:

« وكان ذلك التعلم المباشر للغة، إذ فرضت الكلمات نفسها مباشرة على ذاكرتها... وكانت أولى الكلمات التي تعلمتها هي كلمات الوجود الضرورية للحياة كالهواء الذي نتنفسه »

Language acquisition here constitutes a fundamental dimension of acculturation. The learning of essential words reflects the deep integration of the individual into the host culture, as language becomes not merely a tool of communication but a means of participation in daily life and social reality. Through this process, Marie gradually internalizes the cultural and symbolic universe of the Kabyle community.

In this image, a process of linguistic and cultural exchange becomes evident, as language gradually imposes itself on the individual's cognitive system. Continuous interaction generates the ability to learn, enabling the acquisition of linguistic competence through repeated exposure, listening, and daily communication. Language learning here is not the result of formal instruction, but rather of immersion and sustained interaction within the host community.

d. "Il lui arriva ce qui arrive aux bébés : elle finit par comprendre tout ce que lui disait Kamouma ou les autres. Elle comprit avant de savoir répondre. Et au fur et à mesure qu'elle apprenait, elle voyait sous un jour nouveau la vie à Ighil-Nezman." (Feraoun, 1953).

In the Arabic version, the translator renders the passage as follows:

« فكان يحدث لها ما يحدث للأطفال، إذ انتهت بأن أصبحت تفهم كل ما تقوله لها كاموما أو الأخرى، فصارت تفهم قبل أن تتعلم كيف تجيب، وكلما كانت تتعلم شيئاً كانت تنظر بعين جديدة للحياة في إغيل نزمان »

This passage illustrates the natural process of language acquisition through comprehension preceding production. Understanding emerges before the ability to respond, reflecting a stage commonly observed in early language learning. Through this process, Marie progressively acquires not only linguistic competence but also a renewed perception of life within the Kabyle environment. Language learning thus becomes a gateway to adopting new worldviews and cultural perspectives.

e. "Elle faisait de nombreux projets, les discutait avec Amer qui constatait avec plaisir qu'elle se calmait et se Kabylisait." (Feraoun, 1953).

In the Arabic translation, the passage is rendered as:

« وشرعت في وضع المشاريع العديدة ومناقشتها مع عامر، الذي لاحظ بارتياح هدوءها وسعيها لأن تصبح قبايلية »

This example highlights the culmination of the acculturation process, as Marie not only integrates linguistically but also begins to internalize the cultural norms and behaviors of the Kabyle community. The expression "se Kabylisait" reflects a deep level of cultural assimilation, where identity transformation occurs through prolonged interaction, emotional stability, and shared social practices.

Exploring local Kabyle cultural heritage thus becomes a reciprocal process of exchange between Arab, Kabyle, and French cultures. No culture can exist in isolation, detached from its surrounding environment, as interaction—whether with neighboring or distant cultures—is inevitable. The essence of translation, in this sense, lies in cultural exchange: bringing perspectives together, enabling encounters between cultures, and fostering cross-fertilization among civilizations without establishing relations of dominance or superiority. This process operates within a framework of difference and diversity, grounded in respect for cultural particularities and the acceptance of diversity in idiomatic and expressive forms.

VI. Cultural diversity in idiomatic expressions:

The issue of cultural diversity becomes particularly salient in the translation of idiomatic expressions and proverbs, which are deeply rooted in collective experience and cultural memory.

“Nous sommes voisins pour le paradis et non pour la contrariété, voilà le plus sympathique de nos proverbes.”(Feraoun, 1952).

In the Arabic version, the translator renders the proverb as follows:

« نحن جيران في الجنة لا في الخصومات، هذا لعمرى أعذب أمثالنا وألذها جميعاً »

This proverb, cited by Mouloud Feraoun, reflects the ancestral values of communal living within tribal society, emphasizing solidarity, mutual support, and the sharing of both joy and sorrow. The translation adopts a largely literal strategy, successfully preserving the semantic content and cultural resonance of the original expression. This example illustrates linguistic diversity, as the proverb originates in a tribal context, is expressed in French, and subsequently rendered into Arabic.

It is noteworthy that the translator renders the adjective “sympathique” using two Arabic terms in the comparative form (أعذب and ألذ), thereby reinforcing the aesthetic and emotional value of the proverb. This choice enhances the expressive power of the target text and reflects sensitivity to stylistic and rhetorical norms in Arabic.

Furthermore, Feraoun’s frequent use of popular tribal proverbs throughout his novel—despite writing in French—reveals his intention to remain faithful to the lived realities of Algerian village life. By incorporating

colloquial and culturally marked expressions, the author conveys the linguistic diversity and social stratification of the community, thus bringing the narrative closer to reality and reinforcing its ethnographic authenticity.

With regard to the translation of colloquial language—particularly in this case, where a French text infused with tribal colloquial thought is rendered into Arabic—it is considered one of the most challenging aspects of translation. As Nida points out, “the main problem is not that of the language register of the source text, but rather that of the register which the recipients will understand upon reading or hearing the text.” In other words, the audience’s ability to grasp the contribution of a given language register plays a decisive role in text comprehension (Jan de Waard, 2003).

Through this perspective, Nida emphasizes the importance of producing an equivalent effect on the target reader. The level of the source language should therefore be translated into a level that is accessible and intelligible to the recipient, ensuring effective communication without distorting the cultural and stylistic essence of the original text.

VII. Conclusion:

This study has demonstrated that translation is a complex process in which language and culture are inextricably linked. Meaning in translation is constructed through a specific system of symbols that reflects the diversity of languages, cultures, and worldviews. Consequently, translation cannot be reduced to a purely linguistic operation; it is fundamentally a cultural act.

The influence of culture on language is particularly evident in culturally specific elements, especially at the lexical and phraseological levels. These elements deeply affect the translation process, as they carry implicit values, beliefs, and representations rooted in the source culture.

Moreover, the multiplicity of languages mirrors the multiplicity of civilizations. This diversity constitutes an opening within the translation process, allowing for intercultural exchange and dialogue. Such an opening is best understood through the concept of acculturation, which enables mutual understanding without cultural erasure.

Translation also represents an attempt to welcome the Other without assimilating or neutralizing difference. It presupposes an ethical stance that

values diversity and seeks understanding rather than domination. Before embarking on the act of translation, there is a preliminary journey of discovery—an exploration of the depths of the foreign language and culture.

Immersion in a language goes far beyond learning vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, or grammatical rules. It aims at grasping the very spirit of the language, along with the cultural and symbolic universe it conveys. For this reason, the translator must be not only bilingual but also bicultural. Translators are therefore required to continuously enrich their cultural knowledge and remain attentive to the cultural contexts in which they operate.

Ultimately, successful translation emerges from a balance between fidelity to the source culture and adaptability to the target culture. It is through this balance that translation fulfills its role as a bridge between cultures, fostering dialogue, tolerance, and mutual enrichment.

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