Cultural Translation Competence: Problems Faced by Students in Translating Political Concepts

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Abstract

Translation of culture-specific political concepts poses challenges for novice translators as they require different related competencies, the most important of which is cultural translation competence, a skill that necessitates a thorough knowledge of both source and target cultures. This study is concerned with assessing cultural translation competence by analyzing translation errors that students make when translating culture-specific political concepts. Therefore, it aims to identify and analyze translation errors and the challenges that the 50 student subjects faced when translating 16 culture-specific political concepts.

The findings of the study reveal that errors of literal translation, omission, and paraphrasing were the main identified types of translation errors. These errors were found to be attributed to students' lack of cultural competence, lack of comprehension, in addition to other factors that hindered their completion of the task.

Keywords: Cultural Translation Competence; Culture-Specific Concepts; Political Translation; Translation Errors; Translation Problems**.**

1. Introduction

The interrelationship between culture and translation and its significant impact on translator's choices of translation strategies, methods, and types of problems they are likely to

encounter during the process of translation has been a central issue in the literature of translation studies (Katan, 2014). In order to appreciate the significant role of translation, one needs to explore the various elements that facilitate and/or impede the translator's task. Translation of culture-specific political concepts poses challenges for novice translators (Makoui, 2023) as they require different related competencies, the most important of which is cultural translation competence, a skill that necessitates a thorough knowledge of both source and target cultures. Studies have emphasized the mediating role of the translator between the source and target cultures Jabak (2019) which cannot be successfully performed unless translators demonstrate their acquisition of several types of competences (Hatim & Mason, 1997; Enani ,2016; PACTE, 2003; Cozma,2019) in order to produce correct translations of the source text (ST). As Katan (2014: 11) asserts, "scarcely any text can be adequately understood or effectively presented in a translating process without careful consideration of the factors of culture in it." Therefore, observing and thoroughly examining linguistic and cultural elements in both the source language (SL) and target language (TL) are necessary "in order that translation is carried out as successfully and accurately as possible" (Jabak, 2019: 20).

Undoubtedly, assessing translator's acquisition of the necessary translation competencies that fulfill and demonstrate their significant mediating and communicative role between the source and target cultures is important (PACTE, 2003); however, such a task is also challenging since there is no consensus as to what constitutes a translation competence or what types of sub-competences that should be examined to evaluate translators' translation competence (Cozma, 2019).

Within the same context, political translation is one type of translation that requires translators to have a cultural translation competence that enables translators to communicate the intended meaning of the political (ST) which necessitates a thorough knowledge of various translation strategies and techniques with which these cultural words and expressions are rendered correctly. In fact, the relation between culture, politics, and translation is intertwined and complex, necessitating a thorough examination of theoretical and empirical research that sheds light on some of the translation problems and errors that translators face and make when translating different types of political discourse that usually includes different culture-specific concepts and expressions that cannot be rendered correctly without fully understanding the role of politics in societies (Byrne, 2007: 5).

Clearly, translating cultural bound political concepts is a difficult task for novice translators and students because political discourse relies on the use of metaphoric and abstract language. These features of political texts pose challenges to translation students who should be able "to understand not only what the words mean and what a sentence means, but also what political or historical impact they have. Furthermore, "they a have to know how to achieve that certain effect in the other language" (Quentel, 2006: 3).Within a political context culture-specific concepts should be translated, in a way that reflects a thorough knowledge of political discourse and political culture (Schäffner, 2009).

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Translation and Culture

The concept of translation as an act of communication across cultures is not a recent or a novel idea; in fact, Nida (1964) was among early scholars who considered translation as representing other cultures. As a result, cultural aspects of translation have developed into a series of theories about cultural translation and challenges related to equivalence and assessing competence. Bourdieu (1990) posits that we are part of a community of ideas and practices through the language we speak. Similarly, Duranti (1997) observes that words connect people of different cultures together, including their situations, events, acts, beliefs, and feelings. As House (2015) remarks, not only two languages but also two cultures interact. Similarly, Newmark (1988) discusses certain significant aspects of translation and gives examples of its importance contributing towards the mutual understanding between different cultures. Translation, therefore, is a form of "intercultural communication" (House, 2015: 4). In this era of globalization which binds cultures of different languages together, translation scholars and practitioners need to fully understand the communicative function of translation which mediates between cultures. What makes this task daunting for students and novice translators is that each culture possesses specific cultural words and expressions that are difficult to be translated unless students acquire a cultural competence with which they can grasp the correct meaning of those concepts before embarking on translating them.

Furthermore, translators should be aware of the fact that readers' expectations, norms and values are controlled by culture and their understandings of "utterances" are based upon these expectations, norms and values (Kussmaul, 1995). According to Katan (2014: 57),

translation is the communication of "conceptual and cultural factors that are relevant to the given interaction as part of the lingual transmission." According to Yenkimaleki (2016: 2), the translator should be familiar with the culture, customs, and social settings of the (SL) and (TL). The extent of this familiarity and mediation between both cultures should reflect translators' cultural competence which includes their familiarity with readers/speakers of both source and target and cultures.

1.2.2 Cultural Translation Competence

According to Angelelli (2009) conceptualizations of translation competence follow a functional rather than a linguistic approach to perform a work within the (TL) and culture. For example, Esfandiari (2015) defines competence as the analysis of the required skills and knowledge for every field of study. A translator's competence is the combination of knowledge about the (TL) and the target culture in translation. The translator should have competence to transfer the text under translation into its equivalent in the target language.

For Eyckmans et al. (2009), a translator must also have a pragmatic competence to translate the concepts of the text and the ability to understand the source language culture. Klink (2002), meanwhile, identifies competence as an indistinct concept that connects the gap between education and occupation requirements. Furthermore, competence is a combination of talent, abilities to comprehend more than on task, skills and deep knowledge. The translator competence can be measured by his/her ability to comprehend and analyze both (ST) and (TLT), and successfully translate and shift between two texts.

A thorough examination of translation competence and ways to assess a translator's competency is the PACTE research group which stands for "Process in the Acquisition of Translation Competence and Evaluation." According to the group, translation is a "communicative activity" geared towards "achieving aims that involves taking decisions and solving problems and requires expert knowledge." Further, the group equates expert knowledge with translation competence which should be examined from two points of view: the translation process and the translation product.

According to the PACTE group (2003: 49), acquiring expert knowledge is achieved through different related stages:

"Beginning with the initial stage (novice knowledge), the knowledge gradually becomes more automatic until the final stage (expert knowledge) is reached. This acquisition can be natural or guided, through teaching, but in both cases there is a learning process".

PACTE group formulated a competence model that illustrates the necessary competencies that translators should have to produce correct target texts. Translation competence, as such, includes a set of sub-competencies which include the following: (1) language sub-competence in two languages; (2) an extra-linguistic sub-competence; (3) an instrumental/professional sub-competence; a (4) psychophysiological sub-competence; (5) a transfer sub-competence; and (6) a strategic sub-competence.

Eyckmans (2017) asserts that assessing translators' cultural translation competence is still underrepresented in the literature of translation studies. However, Albir and Olalla-Soler (2016: 323) explain that "while many models of TC [translation competence] have been put forward, few proposals have been made regarding how to define and model translators' cultural competence." Further, both scholars explain that the many perspectives that orient scholars' conceptualization of culture constitute the main reason for the limited proposals that define and model cultural translation competence (Albir and Olalla-Soler, 2016: 323).

In order to bridge this gap in the literature with regards to assessing translators' cultural translation competence (in isolation from other necessary sub-competences that constitute translation competence), Albir and Olalla-Soler (2016: 324) define cultural translation competence as: the translator's abilities to effectively arrange his/her knowledge about a source culture and that of a target culture and to contrast them in relation to a cultural phenomenon perceived in a source text in order to achieve an acceptable solution in a target text. The translator's cultural competence is related to the other sub-competences that make up translation competence.

In order to assess students' acquisition of culture-related contrastive abilities, Albir and Olalla-Soler (2016: 338) suggest that trainers and instructors are advised to choose assignments like text translation, whereas assessing students' attitudinal sub-competence is best approached by assigning cultural portfolio as an assignment or activity. Accordingly, translators need to be versed in grammar, rhetoric, terminologies, world knowledge, common sense and strategies for producing culture-bound equivalents that preserve their source meaning; lack of competencies

relating to the above should result in making translation errors, specifically because of the non-equivalence between the source and target languages (Baker 1992). In fact, competent translators with encyclopedic, linguistic, and cultural knowledge of both source and target cultures should know how to deal with different translation problems; therefore, errors reveal the quality of a produced translation and the translator's adopted strategies and methods (Seguinot 1990).

1.2.3   Problems of Culture-Specific Political Concepts

Every language contains certain words and expressions that represent specific cultural norms and values (Eyckman, 2017; Wierzbicka, 2002). These words and expressions are usually lexical items which represent idiomatic expressions, collocations, phrasal verbs, proper nouns, metaphorical expressions, similes, proverbs, compounds and discourse markers (Newmark, 1988; Baker,1992).

Several scholars such as, Newmark (1988); Espindola and Vasconcellos (2006); Chung-ling(2010); Aixela (1996); Albir and Olalla-Soler (2016) have proposed different ways to categorize culture-specific concepts in order to facilitate translators' identification of these cultural words and expressions. These categorizations are based on three main elements that construct the main constituents of any culture, namely its "cultural/material products", "cognitive features," and "integrative conceptions" (Albir & Olalla-Soler, 2016: 322). However, Aixela's (1996:68) conceptualization of culture-specific concepts is that any "linguistic item" can be categorized as a culture-specific concept, depending on its function in a text, how it is understood by the source culture, how it is perceived in the target culture and whether it signifies any ideological/cultural constraint or significance for the target reader.

In order to appreciate the complexity of translating the argumentation type of political discourse, translation scholars and practitioners need to fully explore the nature of culture-specific concepts and the type of translation competencies that translators need to acquire in order to be able to render their meaning correctly in the (TT). To effectively translate an argumentative political text, translators need to fully understand the culture-specific nature of this text type and the proper translation strategies that s/he needs to employ to effectively produce an equivalent (TT). As Hatim and Mason (1997: 151) explain, literal translation of

news report (expository type) may be appropriate; however, "greater latitude may be needed in handling argumentation effectively."

According to Zidan (2015), meanwhile, the role of the target culture on the translator's task should not be minimized; he considers the target culture as a motivational variable in enhancing or hindering the attainment of target language linguistics, communication, and above all, cultural objectives of the target language. Taking these elements into account, in translation training, should allow students to be familiar with possible translation problems they may encounter in translation tasks and assignments in which proper utilization of translation strategies and acquiring other competencies is crucial in order to render culture-bound concepts correctly.

The following is as an overview of the lexical constructs that comprised the selected culture-bound political concepts which posed problems for the student translation participants in this study.

- ***Acronyms***

Quirk et al. (1972: 1031) and Yule (2020: 68) assert that acronyms are words that are either formed from the initial letters of a set of a number of words (e.g. FBI which stands for "Federal Bureau of Investigation"), or are pronounced as single words, such as "UNESCO" which stands for "United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization." Other scholars, however, assert that an acronym should be defined as "the name of a word created from the first letter of each word in a series of words, to be pronounced as one word" (Kamil, 2014: 183), as in "NATO" which stands for "North Atlantic Treaty Organization"

In regard to the translation of acronyms, Kamil (2014) states that they pose significant problems for the translator. Indeed, for example, Newmark (1988:193) explains that all a translator has is words only, and s/he has to account for every single word in the acronym in the (TT). Such a problem arises often because acronyms are "conditioned by a certain linguistic, referential, cultural and personal context" (Kamil 2014: 184).

- ***Proper Nouns***

According to Rodríguez (2003), there are three main strategies to translating proper nouns: paraphrasing, borrowing and literal translation. These three strategies are also adopted by Moya (2000) and Ballard (1993). However, Moya (2002) prefers borrowing and

paraphrasing as proper translation strategies for translating proper nouns, in which borrowing as paraphrasing proper nouns by adapting a word from the (ST) to both the pronunciation and the morphology characteristics of the (TT) whereas in paraphrasing the proper name in the (ST) is passed on to the (TT) without any changes (Moya, 2000: 3-10). Similarly, Newmark (1988) advises translators to adopt the paraphrasing technique and include any necessary additional information through "appendixes and notes" to compensate for the loss of the meaning resulting from adopting this technique.

- ***Collocations***

Collocations are among the most challenging constructs that translators encounter during translation. For Teilanyo (2007:16), the task of translating collocations is difficult because it is hard to find (TL) equivalents for terms conveying culture-sensitive notions in (SL) as a result of the actual fact that the two languages have different meaning subsystems and cultures. Collocations can be defined as the tendency of certain words to co-occur regularly in an exceedingly given language. This tendency for specific words to co-occur is due to their propositional meaning Baker (1992: 47). To clarify, the word "cheque" usually occurs with the following words: "pay," "bank," "write," and "money." It is less likely, however, to occur with "moon," "repair," and "butter," for example. Further, no written rules that guide the use of collocations exist; but, one is usually able to identify an unusual collocation in his/her native language immediately Baker (1992: 47). Within this context, Baker (1992) states that if the cultural setting of (SL) and (TL) are significantly different, then some collocations (SL) might be unfamiliar for the target reader as collocations might express ideas previously unexpressed in the (TL). In fact, when translating collocations, "understanding meaning and connotations and rendering them into target language may be one of the most challenging tasks" (Dinçkan, 2010: 460).

Appropriate translation of collocations depends on the translator's semantic, lexical, and cultural knowledge of (SL) (Mahdi and Yasin, 2015); incorrect translation of collocations, meanwhile, is due to several reasons, including insufficient knowledge of the source culture (Olk, 2003) and "referential untranslatability" which occurs "when a referential element in the (SL) text is not known or readily comparable to a particular item in the (TL) (Sárosi-Márdirosz, 2014: 174).

- ***Synonyms***

According to Nida (1969:73), synonymy in language is "words which share various (but not all) essential components and thus can be used to substitute one another in some (but not all) contexts without any appreciable difference of meaning in these contexts (e.g. love and like). Similarly, Newmark (1981:101) points out that "I do not approve of the proposition that translation is a form of synonymy". For Bassnett-McGuire (1980: 15), even apparent synonymy does not yield translation equivalence as she states that: "a dictionary of so-called synonyms may give the word 'perfect' as a synonym for 'ideal' or 'vehicle' as a synonym for 'conveyance' but in neither case can there be said to be complete equivalence, since each unit contains within itself a set of non-translatable associations and connotations." Furthermore, she asserts that "equivalence in translation should not be approached as a search for sameness, since sameness cannot even exist between two (TL) versions of the same text, let alone between the (SL) and also the (TL) versions" (Bassnett-McGuire, 1980: 29).

In order to produce correct equivalents for synonyms, Nida (1960:64) advises translators to look at the various features of the meanings of these synonyms and "select only those meanings which compete in the same semantic fields." Such words are identified as near-synonyms (Shiyab and Abdellatif, 2001). According to Edmonds and Hirst (2002: 107), near-synonyms are partial synonyms which are pervasive in any language:

"Indeed, near-synonyms are pervasive in language; examples are easy to find. Lie, falsehood, untruth, fib, and misrepresentation, for instance, are near-synonyms of one another. All denote a statement that does not conform to the truth, but they differ from one another in fine aspects of their denotation"

Baker (1992:23), meanwhile, discusses the issue of translating synonyms and near synonyms from another perspective, bringing in the concepts of superordinates and hyponyms. Sometimes, the (TL) lacks a superordinate that is located in the source language. In this case, translators need to resort to a hyponym or a specific word that conveys the near meaning of the superordinate.

- ***Metaphors***

According to Deignan (2005), people express mental concepts through metaphors which essentially help to grasp the meaning of abstract notions. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) explain

that metaphors link abstract notions with familiar images which, in turn, facilitate their understanding of such abstract concepts. Furthermore, Penninck (2014) considers political discourse as one type that contains metaphoric language to fulfill its purpose which is usually persuading the target audience with the writer's intended message. Since the target readership comprises of people who share a common cultural understanding of abstract notions, metaphors in political discourse help the audience to fully grasp the meaning of the intended message and stir their feelings. In general, metaphors are difficult to translate and rendering the correct meaning of metaphors in the source language requires an adequate knowledge of the source culture and its used metaphors.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study provides the domain of translation studies with some translation problems likely to be faced when translating culture- specific political concepts. The study will be of interest primarily to scholars, students, and practitioners interested in political translation of argumentative texts which usually contain culture-specific concepts that pose many translation problems they are likely to encounter during translation. Therefore, this study will expand the scope of measurement tools, in light of cultural translation competence, that include a contextualized assessment of students' translations of argumentative political texts, a specific type of political discourse which usually contains culture-specific concepts that cannot be translated easily (Hatim &Mason, 1997).

1.4 Research Questions

The study aims investigate cultural translation competence through addressing the following questions:

1. What are the types of translation errors identified in student translations of the selected culture-specific political concepts, and what is their frequency of occurrence?

2. What is the nature of translation problems that resulted in the production of the identified translation errors in participants' translations?

2. Methodology

2.1 Sources of Data

Source language texts (SLTs):

In order to assess the problems that students face when translating culture-specific concepts, the researchers of this study followed Albir and Olalla-Soler's (2016) suggestion of selecting the task of translation to assess students' translation of culture-related contrastive abilities. Therefore, two opinionated political articles were selected for the purpose of this study. This type of political discourse falls under what Hatim and Mason (1990: 51) label as argumentative,

The first Source Language Text (SLT) was taken from the *New York Times* newspaper, entitled "Trump, Biden and the Tough Guy, Nice Guy Politics of 2020."

The second (SLT) was taken from the *Washington Post* newspaper, entitled, "The Trump Undertow will have a Long-Lasting Impact."Fifty translations of the *New York Times* article and fifty translations of the *Washington Post* article were produced by the students for the purpose of analysis.

2.2 Participants and target language text method of analysis

Fifty English major students from Al-Hussein bin Talal University were selected to participate in this study. All participants were enrolled in the 'English-Arabic translation (2). The students were assigned to translate both chosen (SLTs), and were given one week to complete each translation. Further, they were instructed on how to translate the opinionated articles and handle culture specific political terms: they were allowed to use the dictionary and other search engines to look up the meaning of problematic concepts or phrases in the source language text.

Culture-specific concepts are usually associated with different lexical items, including synonymy, polysemy and monosemy, collocations, idioms, proverbs, metaphors, technical translation, religious terms and cultural terms (Newmark 1988). They are also associated with acronyms (Kamil ,2014; Newmark 1988) and proper nouns (Moya, 2000); Rodriguez, 2003). Accordingly, the researchers of this study identified the following five lexical types of culture-

specific political concepts as problematic for students in the selected SLTs. Table (1) below lists the identified concepts that were analyzed in the translations produced by students:

Table 1: Categorization of Identified Culture-Specific Concepts

Category	Concept
Acronyms	GOP
Proper Nouns	Village People
Collocations	Gerrymandering
	post-Watergate era
	macho man
	Tough guy...nice guy
	man card
	new age
	glass ceiling
	size of his nuclear button
	red states as well as blue
Synonyms	Undertow
	Majeure
Metaphors	the Newt Gingrich-led tsunami
	blue wave
	salt of the earth

This study utilized a comparative analysis to identify translation problematic areas in participants' translations of the two chosen opinionated articles. After identifying all culture-specific political concepts in each article, this study conducted a comparison between students' translations of these concepts and the suggested translation of the same concepts with that of the researchers and a certified translator. Specifically, this study was concerned with lexical translation errors because, as mentioned earlier, culture-bound concepts usually appear in different lexical items which warrant great attention to their semantic structure and how they need to be translated while preserving their intended message in the (ST).

Translation errors analyzed, in this study, were the result of translators' inadequate decision with regard to reproduction or adaptation of culture-specific words and expressions from one language to another. Aixela's (1996) Baker's (1992) criteria on translating culture-specific concepts were adopted to identify and analyze errors. The translation errors, as table 2 shows, are those of employing wrongful: literal translation, omission and partial omission, synonyms and partial synonyms, borrowing and partial borrowing, transliteration, paraphrasing,

3.   Results, Findings and Discussion

The findings indicate that translating acronyms, proper nouns, collocations, synonyms, and metaphors were a challenging task for the student participants. In terms of translation errors found in students' attempts to translate these lexical items, literal translation (266 errors), omission (71 errors), partial omission (58 errors), as well as paraphrasing (48 errors) were the most frequent types of errors that led to the production of inappropriate translations. Furthermore, use of inappropriate (30 errors)/ incorrect synonyms (14 errors), borrowing (29 errors)/ partial borrowing (6 errors) and translating with English transliteration (23 errors) were evident in the translations but less frequent when compared to the other mentioned translation errors. Table (2) below illustrates the total numbers of translation errors found in the students' translations of the 16 identified culture-specific concepts:

Table (2): Distribution of Translation Errors in Students' Translations

	Translation Errors	Total in Raw Number
Translation Errors	Literal translation errors	266
	Omission errors	71
	Partial omission errors	58
	Paraphrasing errors	48
	Errors of Inappropriate synonyms	30
	Borrowing errors	29
	Errors of translating with English transliteration	23
	Errors of Incorrect synonyms	14
	Partial borrowing errors	6

The results show, as in figure 1 below, that none of the students were able to correctly translate the following collocations: post-Watergate era, macho man, tough guy and nice guy, new age, man card, and size of his nuclear button. Translation errors for the remaining collocations (red states as well as blue, gerrymandering, and, glass ceiling) amounted to 48, 11, and 4 errors respectively.

With regard to metaphors, translation errors in the produced translations of 'Newt Gingrich-led tsunami' were 50, followed by 48 translation errors in the produced translations of 'salt of the earth; lastly, translation errors amounted to 46 when analyzing students' translations of the metaphor 'blue wave.' As for translating proper nouns, translation errors amounted to 48 when analyzing students' translations of the proper noun 'Village People.'

Interestingly, the lowest number of translation errors was found in students' translations of the collocation "glass ceiling," which amounted to only 4 errors, followed by 6 errors that were identified in students' translations of the acronym "GOP", and, finally, translation errors of the collocation "gerrymandering" were 11 errors only were found. Meanwhile, the number of translation errors for the synonym "majeure" was 29, while 46 translation errors were identified in students' translations of the second synonym 'undertow'.
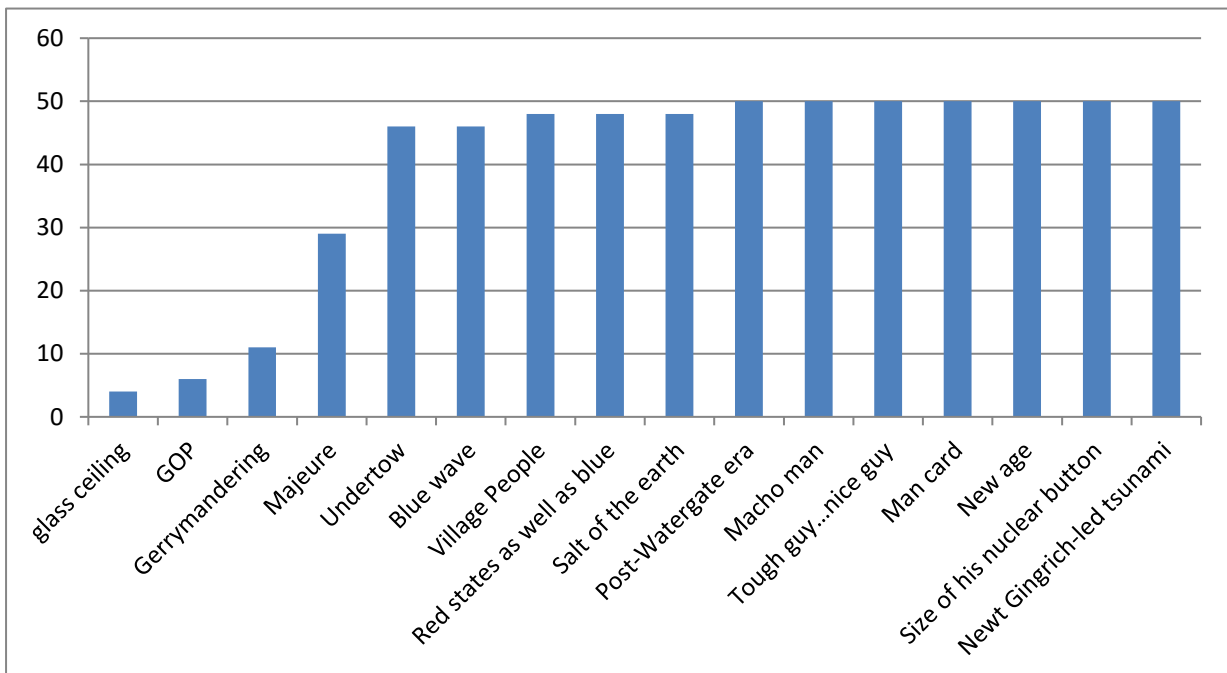

Figure 1: The number of translation errors produced by studnents in translating the 16 culture-specific political concepts

3.1 Acronyms

With regards to translating acronyms, translation errors amounted to only six errors. Surprisingly, 44 students correctly translated 'GOP' into 'الحزب الجمهوري' while the six errors were the result of using strategies that produced erroneous translations that distorted the meaning of the selected acronym. This low percentage of translation error indicates students' proper understanding of the acronym which stands for (Grand Old Party) which was not literally translated as expected. One possible explanation for the incorrect translations of the acronym GOP can be attributed to using the paraphrasing method incorrectly. Another suggestion is the incorrect use of the "autonomous creation" method Aixela (1996: 64) which entails using nonexistent culture-specific concept that translators may consider interesting for their target readers. In fact, student translators need to enrich their cultural understanding and knowledge of the source culture (Olk, 2003); taking into account the impact of globalization and the use of social media platforms in bridging the gap between cultures, a matter that definitely positively impacts translators' cultural competence.

3.2 Proper nouns

The proper noun of the music band, "Village People" posed a challenging task for the majority of students who resorted to literal translation. Translation errors reached 49 out of 50 due to lack of linguistic, translation, and cultural competence among students as to identify the lexical item as being a proper name. Therefore, they resorted to using literal translation (i.e. people living in a village) or omission, due to lack of comprehension, which significantly distorted the meaning of the target text. It appears that only one student resorted to naturalizing the proper noun (Moya, 2002) in which the word "Firqa,i.e, band" was added to the literal translation.

3.3 Collocations

Translating culture-specific political collocations apparently posed the greatest challenge and produced the majority of translation errors. In fact, significant translation errors that resulted from adopting erroneous collocations reached nearly 100% in 6 collocations out of the 9 collocations selected. (see figure 2 in appendix)

Clearly, using literal translation indicates participants' problematic acquisition of cultural competence reflected in their lack of cultural knowledge, culture-related contrastive

abilities, in addition to attitudinal cultural skills. The findings below reveal that literal translation students translations is common and that in most cases, translation errors were made due to the tendency to literally translate the text (Abdel- Fattah and Zughoul, 2003; andAbu Shaqra, 2009). In fact, literal translation seems to be the major reason for incorrect translation of collocation. These errors indicate students' lack of the second sub-competence, cultural knowledge acquisition abilities. Using dictionaries for translating culture-specific concepts is not enough as it only produces incorrect translations of collocations, metaphors, and other expressions that are not usually listed in a bilingual dictionary. Further, students' lack of this sub-competence is evident in their literal translation of these cultural references which they could have understood their meaning and significance for the American source culture by either searching the web which necessarily could have provided a context, and/or a definition, or a significance of these cultural concepts or by simply opening the hyperlink provided for each collocation in the STs.

For example, the first collocation "gerrymandering" was coined in 1812 and consists of both words "Gerry" and "salamander." The media was responsible for combining the two words "gerrymander" and the collocation has been used since then with negative connotations of corruption of the democratic process in the U.S. Elster (2006). Noticeably, 39 students out of 50 provided a correct translation of this culture-specific concept. Translation errors amounted to a total of 11 errors of borrowing and English transliteration. It appears that the most challenge students faced in translating collocations is "understanding meaning and connotations and rendering them into target language" (Dinçkan, 2010: 460). Other reasons include insufficient knowledge of the source culture (Olk, 2003) as well as "referential untranslatability" which occurs "when a referential element in the (SL) text is not known or readily comparable to a particular item in the (TL) text (Sárosi-Márdirosz, 2014: 174).

As for the second collocation "post-Watergate era", when comparing students' translations of this collocation with the suggested translation none of the produced translations were found correct. In the suggested translation, the certified translator used two translation methods: addition of the word "*faDiiHa*" as well as using the borrowing method in which 'Watergate' was translated into "*wawatarjītu*". Further, the translator chose "*Hiqba*" as an equivalent for 'era.' Using the incorrect method of literal translation resulted in 48 translation

errors, while the remaining two translations were considered partially correct because both translations missed the translation of one main part of the collocation which is 'era.'

Meanwhile, a look at the translation errors of this collocation reveals that all produced errors were the result of using literal translation "*ḥaqbatamābaʿudawawatarḡiyatu*" followed by another incorrect literal translation which included a peculiar translation of Watergate as "*wayataraḡātī*". Further, different translations were produced for the prefix "post" which included "*marḥalatimābaʿda*", "*baʿdafatratin*", and "*baʿdaaṣri*". Interestingly, two translation errors of this collocation were the result of translating this collocation into "*mābaʿdaaṣrialmiyāhi*", while four translation errors were the result of employing wrongful omission which hindered the comprehension of the (TL) text to a great extent.

The third problematic collocation "macho man" is usually used in a gender context that affirms male superiority and dominance, which is grounded upon a stereotypical masculine image of males who are depicted as physically strong, assertive, and dominating. In fact, the context itself, when read carefully, facilitates comprehension of this collocation and the previous sentence reflects how macho man is the opposite of men "acting like the wife." This same collocation is the title of a hit song by the Village People music band that was very popular in the 1970s. The song is a critique of the macho man stereotypical image and male oppression in general, but the article itself clarifies how Trump used it nevertheless in his rallies to affirm the prevailing image of presidents as necessarily macho men, a trait that Biden, the Democratic presidential nominee does not have.

The nearest Arabic equivalent of this collocation is usually depicted in Egyptian films and TV series as "siyaalssayyidu" although it is strictly used for married men who are usually obeyed by the wife and children and whose orders, demands, and wishes and fulfilled without any objection for fear of repercussions, including verbal and physical abuse.

As such, the Arabic equivalent is limited and the suggested translation of this collocation provides a wider context of understanding of its meaning. Interestingly, the percentage of translation errors was 100% when comparing students' translations to the suggested translation. The number of translation errors that resulted in the production of *"rajulunmaftūlaalʿaḍalāti"* was 18. The lack of understanding of the collocation led to the production of translations that only depict the physical strength of "macho man," a trait that even Trump himself does not have

yet he regularly played this song title at his rallies, a sign that this collocation should be translated in a wider context that incorporates personality traits that transcend physical strength.

Within the same context, 11 translation errors were the result of using the wrongful English transliterations by which nine students kept the collocation in English as "macho man" while two errors were the result of using the same method but instead of macho man, students reversed the collocation as "man macho."

However, 19 of the translation errors were the result of using the borrowing strategy with which students produced different variations that included

"*mātishūmāna*", "*mākūmāni*," *maytishūmāna*" and "*rajulunmātishū.*" Finally, only two translation errors were the result of using the omissions.

The analysis of the translations of the fourth collocation "tough guy...nice guy" which is in the title of the *Washington Post* article reveals that none of the translations produced were correct translations, when compared to the suggested translation. Further, all produced translations provided partial synonyms of both 'tough' and 'nice.' Two students resorted to omission while two other students selected the word "*Siyaasa*" as an equivalent for 'guy' in the nice guy phrase. Similarly, different partial synonyms were produced for translating 'tough,' including. "*Al-mutashaddidi*" and "*Al-qawii*" "*Aṣ-ṣārimi*" "*Aṣ-ṣulbi*" "*Al-qaasii*". The wrongful translations resulted in that the readers would assume that the translation is about one guy who is both tough and nice, which, in turn, distorts the intended meaning in the source text (ST).

The fifth metaphorical collocation "man card" which reflects male dominance and superiority was used in the New York Times to reflect the title of a book that discusses the seemingly necessary approach to assert the proper male traits of presidential nominees, students' translations failed to incorporate the cultural context of this collocation. When compared to the suggested translation, none of the students' translations rendered the meaning of this collocation correctly. Translation errors varied because of selecting different incorrect method, including omission which was used by 11 students; both wrongful borrowing and translating with English transliteration were used, resulting in the production of 19 translation errors, while the rest of the translation errors were the result of using literal translation.

With regards to the literal translation, a number of students chose different equivalents for 'card,' none of which matched the suggested translation. 18 students selected *"biTaaqa"* while two selected *"kart"*. Further, 'man' was translated either as *"ar-rajulu"* or *"al-iānisāni"*, both of which failed to convey the intended meaning of masculinity as proposed by the suggested translation. Finally, the number of translation errors that resulted from omission amounted to 11, which is considered high when comparing this number to the translation errors produced by using omission for the previously discussed collocation. A more appropriate rendering of the collocation necessarily requires an in-depth understanding of the cultural-boundedness that (Hatim and Mason, 1990) that engulfs this collocation. Thus, a literal translation of 'card' in this context does not convey to the target culture readers the author's intended use of this metaphoric collocation which stands for the acknowledged and accepted societal requirements for male behaviors in the American society (Urban Dictionary).

The sixth collocation "new age" is a name of religious/spiritual movement that has had a political impact since its inception in the late 1960s in the U.S. The new age movement reflects a counter-hegemonic approach to military invasion and the so-called U.S. Exceptionalism that still dominates the U.S. ideology. The so-called Hippies belong to this new age movement which incorporates Eastern habits, ideologies, and norms. With regard to translating this collocation, the percentage of translation errors reached 100% when compared to the suggested translation. A total of 38 translation errors were the result of using literal translation, producing *"Al-ʿaṣraaljadīdi"*, while 6 translation errors were the result of translating the name of this movement into *"Al-ʿaṣraalḥadīṯa"*, and, finally, two translation errors were the result of incorrect paraphrasing of the selected collocation as *"ASrii"*; omission, meanwhile was not used significantly with only two students resorting to this method. Interestingly, two translation errors were the result of incorrect choice of collocation as *"AalwaqtalHaaDir"*, which failed to convey the intended meaning of the collocation, while the other translation error was the result of translating the collocation by paraphrasing into *"Sannunjadīdun"*, which also distorts the meaning of the collocation.

The seventh metaphorical collocation "Glass Ceiling" which was used to depict gender discrimination and the superiority of males over females in politics as well as economic contexts where women earn less income than men. In the New York Times article, the shattering of 200 pounds of "confetti shaped like glass shards" is a symbolic gesture of Hillary Clinton's electoral

progress in the presidential elections who was the first U.S. woman to enter the presidential race. The "crumbling" of this glass ceiling meant that Clinton was able to bridge the gap between male and female in political and economic contexts. Interestingly, translation errors of this metaphorical collocation amounted to four errors only, when compared to the suggested translation. 46 students rendered this concept correctly when compared to the suggested translation, while two errors were because of translating the collocation into *"nijāḥunḡayrumarʾiyyin"* as a result of using the paraphrasing strategy which failed to convey the intended meaning of this collocation correctly. Finally, only two errors were the result of omissions, of course, which impacted the comprehension of the translated text.

The eighth metaphoric collocation "size of his nuclear button" selected from the New York Times article refers to Trump's bragging of U.S. nuclear power when compared to that of North Korea. In terms of translating this metaphor, students' translations revealed 37 translation errors in students' translations by wrongful literal translation as *"ḥajamazirrahualnnawawiyyu"* , while three others provided a similar literal translation as *"ḥajmialzzirrialnnawawiyyu"*. Only two translation errors were the result of using omission, while the remaining of translation errors were the results of paraphrasing that failed to convey fully the intended meaning.

In fact, participants' failure to render this metaphoric collocation correctly is a main feature of their cultural incompetence which they could have easily minimize by browsing tens of news reports in American press that tackled this issue for a number of days following Trump's controversial and misleading bragging remarks.

Similar to the above metaphorical collocation, the ninth collocation "Red states as well as blue" depicts blue and red colors, in reference to Americans' allegiance to either the Democrats (blue) or the Republicans (red). When compared to the suggested translation, the use of literal translation as *"al-"wilāyātialzzarqāʾiwaalḥamrāʾi"* (28 errors) resulted in the production of 46 translation errors, whereas incorrect omission resulted in producing two additional translation errors. However, only one of the translation errors was the result incorrect omission. Only two students produced correct translations of the selected collocation with a slight variation from the suggested translation as follows: *"al-wilāyātialjumhūriyyatiwakathalikaalddīmūqirāṭiyyatu"* reflecting a thorough understanding of this metaphoric collocation which the majority failed to correctly translate.

Clearly, a lack of cultural competence is the main reason that led to translation errors, for a correct translation of collocations depends on the translator's semantic, lexical, and cultural knowledge of the SLT and TLT (Mahdi and Yasin, 2015). Resorting to literal translation and omission seems common among translation students and novice translators when tasked with translating culture-bound collocations.

3.4 synonyms and metaphors

The translation errors found in translating the two culture-specific synonyms "undertow" and 'majeure were mainly paraphrasing, omission, literal translation, and incorrect use of borrowing. When compared to the suggested translation, several translation errors resulted from incorrect paraphrasing (27 errors) and incorrect literal translation (12 errors) of "undertow" such as "*AlTyar aldahkali*". Several translation errors were the result of providing incorrect synonyms such as "*Riasiit Trump*" and incorrect borrowing. However, only 5 students resorted to omission possibly due to lack of comprehension. In translating "majeure" omission resulted in 28 translation errors, even though it could have been simply looked up in a dictionary to avoid distortion in the translated text. The use of incorrect synonyms was also found such as "*Kabeer*" instead of "*alkabeeera*". This indicates that students did not take into consideration the relation between text and context (Hatim and Mason, 1992).

As for metaphors, when analyzing students' translations of the three selected metaphors, literal translation was the main reason for producing the majority of translation errors. For example, translation errors amounted to 50 for translating the first selected metaphor, 'Newt Gingrich-led tsunami.' 49 errors were the result of using the method of literal translation, while one additional error was the result of using the transfer strategy. Similarly, literal translation led to the production of 40 translation errors when analyzing students' translation of 'blue wave,' while 42 errors were the result of using the same strategy when analyzing their translations of 'salt of the earth.' None of the translations were able to capture the metaphorical meaning of these lexical forms, when compared to the suggested translation. Finally, it is apparent that students seem to resort to the borrowing method when the answer is not readily available especially when tasked with translating metaphors.

Political discourse is considered (Penninck, 2014) as a type that contains metaphoric language to fulfill its purpose, which is usually persuading the target audience with the writer's intended message. Since the target readership comprises of people who share a common cultural understanding of abstract notions, metaphors in political discourse help the audience to fully grasp the meaning of the intended message and stir their feelings. The same should be applied for the produced (TT) as well. Employing literal translation method shows that students failed to seize the meaning of connotation selecting figures of speech as a result of their failure to grasp the meaning of figures of speech in (SL).

When the translator fails to provide suitable equivalents, as such, the (TT) will be distorted and its intended meaning might be lost; hence, the translator has failed not only to correctly translate a source text, but also s/he has failed to bridge cultural gaps between source and target cultures, a matter that should be taken seriously (House ,2015).

The above findings clearly indicate that gaps in students' cultural translation competence led to the problems discussed above and consequently resulted in the translation errors identified. The frequent use of incorrect literal translation and omission for example, is indicative of lack of cultural knowledge.

4. Conclusion

The study examined the type of translation errors that students make when translating culture-bound political concepts and the extent to which the identified translation errors are the result of translation problems, namely, a lack of cultural competence, and/or, for example, a lack of other necessary translation skills, including lack of comprehension. Based on the above discussion of the translation errors and problems, an evident lack of cultural competence is responsible for students' failure to correctly translate the selected 16 cultural references. The majority of the selected concepts were not translated correctly due to the wrongful use of literal translation, omission, and other methods but to a lesser extent. These include paraphrasing, borrowing, and errors of incorrect synonyms.

Further studies are encouraged to investigate cultural political concepts using a large of set of data.

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Appendix

Figure 1: Percentages of Collocational Translation Errors in Students' Translation