

## Why Is Translator's Competence Heterogeneously Distributed Among Linguistically Acculturated Persons?

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### □ ABSTRACT □

This piece of research endeavours to explain why translator's competence is not homogeneously distributed among linguistically acculturated members of society. It transpires that the cross-cultural communication skills possessed by a translator are not often born or merely characteristics of his natural ability. Professional translation is an evolved natural translation. Undoubtedly, it is training, deepened expertise, and constant upgraded and updated cognizance of the technicalities and strategies of translation that qualify a translator to overcome the ever arising problems of translation. The cognitive activity of translator's communicative competence underlies his professionalism concerning the issues of invisibility, interference, creative restructuring process of problem-solving and decision-making. Quite contrasted to translator as transmitter, accumulative malleable communicative competence creates the translator who is a genuine cultural mediator.

**Keywords:** Translation; Translation Competence; Novice Translator; Professional Translator; Cross-cultural Communication.

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## لماذا تتوزع كفاءة المترجم بشكل متغير بين الأشخاص المثقفين لغوياً؟

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### □ ملخص □

يحاول هذا البحث إيضاح ماهية عدم توزع كفاءة المترجم بشكل متجانس بين أفراد المجتمع المثقفين لغوياً. من الجلي أنّ مهارات التخاطب عبر الثقافات والتي يمتلكها المترجم ليست على الغالب مولودةً أو أنّها مجرد خصائص لمقدرته الطبيعية. فالترجمة الحرفية ترجمةً طبيعية متطورة. إنّه التدريب، دون شك، والخبرة المعمّقة، والإلمام المباشر المحدث والمطوّر لتقنيات واستراتيجيات الترجمة والتي تخوّل المترجم التغلب على مشاكل الترجمة المستدامة الظهور. والنشاط المكتسب لكفاءة المترجم التخاطبية يشكّل الأساس لجريته فيما يخصّ مسائل البتون، والتدخلّ وعمليات إعادة البناء الخلاقة المتمنّة في حلّ المشاكل وصناعة القرار. وبشكل مغاير للمترجم الناقل، فإنّ كفاءة المترجم التخاطبية المرنة والتراكمية تخلق المترجم الذي يُعدّ وسيطاً ثقافياً حقيقياً.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الترجمة؛ الكفاءة في الترجمة؛ المترجم المبتدئ؛ المترجم المحترف؛ التخاطب عبر الثقافات.

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## Introduction:

Since "in fact, all texts are multi-functional" as is stated by Mason (1998: 32), the translator "must qualify as an expert in interlingual and intercultural communication", Newmark (2000: 159) confirms. Such statements motivate other translation theorists and professionals to propound that there is no translation without transformation (Biguenet and Schulte 1989: x), that the traditional view of translator as decoder and encoder of TT is extended into translator as communicator (Mason 1998: 30), and that there is no communication without translation (Biguenet and Schulte ix, Newmark 2003: 187).

This piece of research focuses on three significant points. First, it attempts to highlight the essence of the translator's competence. It compares and contrasts translation competence to communicative competence. Shreve (1997: 120) expounds "translator competence is a specialised form of communicative competence. It is both knowing about translation and about knowing how to do translation". Second, it closely debates the heterogeneous distribution of translator's competence. Bassnett (2005: 34) believes that it takes an intelligent person to become a translator. Shreve (1997: 121) observes, "unlike communicative competence, translation competence is not homogeneously distributed among the linguistically enculturated members of a society. Not everyone can translate; those that learn how to translate do so by acquiring a history of translation experience". Third, the subjects/targeteers are linguistically acculturated persons, so an attempt is made to figure out the question of heterogeneous, not homogeneous, distribution of translation competence among linguistically acculturated persons [See **Endnote 01**].

## Essentiality of Conducting This Research

Many believe or claim that having lived abroad or known, in one way or another, the language and the culture of the ST guarantees the ability to be a good translator. Such a claim or belief implies that translation is reduced to being a matter of knowing languages and cultures. Proponents of such a claim or belief ignore that as there is the craft of fiction, the craft of writing poems, the craft of creating texts of all types, there is the craft of translation. Under this subheading, two basic points are raised: the required delicate linguistic and cultural manoeuvre and the natural translation ability.

### 1-Required Delicate Linguistic and Cultural Manoeuvre

To decode the ST and re-encode the TT with all relevant and contributing procedures of transforming and transplanting, delicate cognizance of linguistic and cultural aspects are significant prerequisites for translators. Neubert and Shreve (1992: 41) view translation as "a kind of text production", because, to them, the result of translation process is a target text. As a matter of fact, for the translator to play the role of a successful text producer, he has to disclose his translation competence in probing the web of interrelationships that constitute the ST at all levels, and suggest reasonable and appropriate solutions for the ever constant intricacies emerging throughout the translation process. He has also to reveal and manipulate his translation skilfulness through the act of transplanting the SL message into the TL culture. With this in mind, do all translators translate equally? If not, why do they translate overtly differently? Is it possible for them to translate equally, how, and to what extent? If translators depend on their linguistic competence, then, they will be tracing the semantic translation where equivalence dominates. If they rely on their translation competence, they will perform communicative translation, where they extend equivalence to the focus on the TL recipients and their needs. [For more information on the difference between semantic translation and communicative translation, see Newmark 1996: 10]

## 2-Natural Translation Ability

Much debate has been on the discrepancy between natural translation ability and acquired translation ability. Shreve (1997: 121) believes that "Translation ability is not an innate human skill, but there is considerable disagreement about the nature and distribution of translation ability". Shreve argues that some consider bilingualism as the foundation of translation competence, some researchers suggest that communicative competencies in both languages necessarily intersect and thus emerges the translation competence; other researchers claim that professional translation is evolved natural translation.

The two components of the dichotomy *natural translation ability and acquired translation ability* creates indubitably debatable issues such as: Is translation learned and rule-governed? Is translation an art, skill or science? Is translation dependent or independent science? What is good translation, and who is the good translator? (See Savory 1968: 50; Tytler 1978: 13 and 16; Biguenet and Schulte 1992; and Snell-Hornby 2006: 47; etc.).

When an individual lives in a foreign country for many a year, masters the foreign language, will he be able to prove proficiency in translation through displaying his masterly linguistic skills? That is, does bilingualism potentially guarantee good translation? Is the bilingual natural translation ability liable to improve and crystallize? **Abslutely** he is keen to have been following some training and learning in order to create normal TL text. Bearing in mind that almost all translation theorists believe that perfect translation does not exist. However, the extent of the translator's professionalism would specify his end-product as either formally corresponding TT, textually equivalent, or idiomatically produced TT. With the formal correspondence and textual equivalence, the translator engages himself in traditional equivalence-based translation approaches. With the idiomatic production of the TT, he engages in the modern approaches to translation. In either case, the translator's competence is decisive to attribute his end-product to each of these classificatory types, and respond to the demands apparently lagging behind translation the ST.

## Essence of Translator's Communicative Competence

The translator's communicative competence should undeniably present his ability to compensate for readers who do not know the foreign language, since some theorists consider translation as "an imperialist move", Venuti (1995: 40). Other translation theorists see that translation "should be seen as a form of linguistic and conceptual enrichment", Schulte and Biguenet (1992: 9). The latter view implies that when a text is translated, it is granted another chance to promote, to gain circulation and new readership, and to extend the scope of being familiarized and no longer having the relegated position as peripheral literature compared to the creative mother tongue central literature. (For more information on central and peripheral literatures, see Munday 2001: 109).

However, to place translated texts within the classificatory division of the central not the peripheral literature, it is the qualified and competent translator who is capable of achieving this mission. Under this subheading, four points will be discussed as follows: definition of TCC, components and implications; essential keys for translator's creative restructuring including problem-solving and decision-making; translator's invisibility and finally, translator's interference.

### 1-TCC: Definition, Components and Implications

Most approaches to translation theory share a view of translation as communication and therefore base their view of the translation process on an underlying theory of communication. From a communicative point of view, the translator is a receiver of the ST and producer of the TT. A model of translational competence of an ideal translator has been hypothesized by Kopczynski (1980: 23) in the form of the following elements:

**a.** Perfect knowledge of grammars of L1 and L2 including the knowledge of rules at all levels: semantic, syntactic, morphological and phonological. The knowledge of the totality of lexicons of L1 and L2 including the ability to use all of terminological fields, registers and styles.

**b.** Possession of an unfailing transcoding mechanism, which consists of:

**b1.** Decoding mechanism which enables the translator to perceive and interpret all of the texts of L1 and L2.

**b2.** A transcoding mechanism which enables the translator to convert grammar 1 (G1) of L1 into an equivalent grammar 2 (G2) of L2 of all potential texts in L1 and L2, or vice versa.

**b3.** An encoding mechanism which enables the translator to generate equivalent texts in L2 (on the basis of B1 and B2 and vice versa).

[For more information on components and implications of TCC, see **Endnote 2**]

The translator is expected to be able to realise the context of ST, TT, cultural milieu and the ideology that underlies a translation. Such a realization contributes to the most important step in the translation process: comprehending the ST. Dancette (1997: 78) defines the comprehension of ST in terms of linguistic competence, as the ability "to actualise links...established between linguistic elements in the textual structure, and non-linguistic elements pertaining to intertextual or extratextual information". This is so because the translator can not depend only on the entity of the text as words, sentences or paragraphs expressing specific ideas. Rather, he is obsessed with absorbing the global components of the ST, simply because, as Fawcett (1997: 3) puts it, "nothing has meaning in isolation". [**Endnote 03** for more information on comprehension of ST, see Dancette (1997: 82-89)].

### 2-Essential Keys for Translator's Creative Restructuring: Problem-solving and decision-making

No doubt that translator's creative restructuring varies according to the age of the translator and the circumstances of the translation task. As a matter of fact, different translation settings require different degrees of creativity. Viewing the field of translation as thorny and awlays encountering problems, Bassnett (2005: 44) proposes that "it is clearly the task of the translator to find a solution to even the most daunting of problems". But to be competent in responding to the ever arising problems throughout the translation process, Wilss (1996: 48), believes that translation creativity is some trait that "can be expected of a translator who has accumulated a wide range of translation knowledge and can now apply this knowledge appropriately and judiciously in translation circumstances".

However, the creative restructuring of the TL text requires the translator's awareness of decision-making processes that are inextricably connected with problem-solving activities. Such an awareness has been also defined by translation theorists. Wilss (1998: 57) observes that "in order to solve a problem, a human being must basically possess two types of knowledge, declarative and procedural". On the other hand, one significant form of creativity in translation is the **situation management**. Neubert and

Shreve (1992: 86) advocate, "situation management is a dynamic monitoring of the translation which guides it toward the receiver and his or her needs. It is a specific form of **problem-solving**". [For more information on translation techniques, see Fawcett 1997: 27].

Two apparent problems are facing translators all the time and concurrently require constant effort to solve them: **untranslatability** (see Pym and Turk 1998: 273), and **CSIs** (i.e. culture specific items; see Esmail 2010: 32). Untranslatability, to start with, emerges from the differences among cultures. Larson notes that "different cultures have different focuses. Some societies are more technical and others less technical." This difference is reflected in the amount of vocabulary which is available to talk about a particular topic (Larson 1984: 95). Larson adds that there may also be both "technical and non-technical" vocabulary to talk about the same thing within a given society. Therefore, if the SL text originates from a highly technical society it may be much more difficult to translate it into the language of a nontechnical society. When the cultures are similar, there is less difficulty in translating. This is because both languages will probably have terms that are more or less equivalent for the various aspects of the culture.

CSIs (Culture-Specific Items), however, form another constant problem in translation. Aixela (1996: 52) defines CSIs as "'in translation a CSI does not exist of itself, but as the result of a conflict arising from any linguistically represented reference in a source text which, when transferred to a target language, poses a translation problem due to the nonexistence or to the different value of the given item in the target language culture". It is also observed that "in a language everything is culturally produced, beginning with language itself" (Aixela Ibid.: 57). The thing that proves the fact that cultures create a variability factor the translator will have to take into account, and it may take one of the following forms: linguistic diversity, interpretive diversity, pragmatic diversity and cultural diversity.

### 3-Translator's Invisibility

Translator's invisibility is another significant constituent of his communicative competence. Invisibility of the translator does not in any way imply the absence of his creative personality; rather, it means his creative unseen processing of the ST while constantly eschewing literal translation, and transforming the ST message quite normally and domestically. Venuti (1995: 8) observes, "the translator's invisibility is thus a weird self-annihilation, a way of conceiving and practicing translation". Translators are very much aware that any sense of authorial presence in a translation is an illusion. Such an individualistic conception of authorship devalues translation, it is so pervasive that it shapes translators' selfpresentations. Again, this means the translator's constant attempt to preserve the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities, while carefully handling the exigencies of communication due to the differences existing among cultures.

Translator's invisibility can be highlighted through tracing the two notions of domesticating and foreignizing. According to Venuti (1995: 19) the translator has to choose between a domesticating method, an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home, and a foreignizing method, an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad

### 4-Translator's Interference

At certain occasions, the translator finds himself in an urgent need to interfere throughout the process of translation. Interference, according to Newmark (1996: 78),

"includes cases when sentence length, punctuation, proper names, neologisms, or cultural words are evidently transformed in the translation, in fact all cases where the language of the translation is manifestly affected whether appropriately or not by the language of the original". In essence, interference with its various degrees including both idiolectal and cultural, is often meant to enrich the translation, as Schulte and Biguenet (1992: 9) suggest, "translation should be seen as a form of linguistic and conceptual enrichment".

However, translator's interference is considered positive "where it improves communication" and negative "when it produces a loose lowest common denominator of jargon", according to Newmark (Ibid.: 80), who (Ibid.: 83) enumerates categories of interference, when it is a mistake, as follows: a) syntactic—when structures become ungrammatical, but perfectly comprehensible, b) lexical—it can distort the meaning of a sentence, c) figurative—it can take many forms, d) word order—many functions, e) culture—a feature of the SL culture may be an obtrusive factor in a 'persuasive' text translated for a different type of readership, f) third language—due to translator's knowledge of another language exceeding his or her knowledge of the SL and is normally translationese.

### 5-TCC: A Cognitive Activity

The processes of decision-making and the strategies of problem-solving, among many other recognizable techniques of translation, are to most translation theorists the result of the acquisition of organized knowledge. Albir and Alves (2009: 54) debated the essence of translation as a cognitive activity and a knowledge-based activity. Two types of knowledge are needed for translators: the declarative and the procedural. However, decision making processes could be learned through induction, as is proposed by Wilss (1998: 59), but it is necessary to group translation problems because translation situations are very numerous. Otherwise, there will be infinite decision-making heuristics. Generally speaking, there is consensus on six procedures that relate to decision-making (Wilss Ibid.: 60): problem identification, problem clarification (description), information collection, deliberation on how to proceed, moment of choice and post-choice behavior (evaluation of translation results).

Albir and Alves (2009: 65) mention that many theorists who investigated translator's competence refer to acquisition as a process of gradual automatization based on five stages of skill acquisition: *novice* (recognition of predefined features and rules), *advanced beginner* (recognition of non-defined but relevant features), *competence* (hierarchical and goal-oriented decision-making), *proficiency* (intuitive understanding plus deliberative action) and *expertise* (fluid performance plus deliberative rationality).

To add, Baker (2006: 2) reflexes on the secret of every respectable profession which wants to be recognized as such that it "therefore attempts to provide its members with systematic training in the field". She provides as example: One of the first things that the Institute of Translation and Interpreting of Great Britain did as soon as it was formed was to set up an Education Committee to design and run training courses for members of the profession. This proves the significance and essentiality of training in any field in general and in translating in particular since Baker (Ibid.) admits that "theoretical knowledge is itself of no value unless it is firmly grounded in practical experience".

### Translator's Skills: Innate and Acquired

Much intense debate has been on whether or not the translator's skills are innate or acquired. According to what has been so far propounded, it transpires that translator's skills

are more acquired and learned than being innate. Shreve (1997: 121) postulates that "translation ability is not an innate human skill, but there is considerable disagreement about the nature and distribution of translation ability". Here, two apparent conceptions are consecutively traced as follows: cross-cultural skills and malleability of translator's competence vs. public misconception about translators.

### 1-Cross-Cultural Skills

Understanding a culture implies grasping all the components of this culture including the social customs and norms, language, history, etc. However, Cowley and Hanna (2005: 5) believe that "culture comes in layers, like an onion. To understand it you have to unpeel it layer by layer". Elsewhere they (Ibid.: 7) reveal in their analysis the cross-cultural skills as involving:

- ❖ finding culture,
- ❖ making contact with culture,
- ❖ experiencing, and being transformed by, an appreciation of cultural difference (not culturally, but morally transformed, as this knowledge would free students from the ignorance from which racism is supposed to proceed),
- ❖ analysing the experience,
- ❖ reporting observations.

It is apparent that these cross-cultural skills lack any mention of language and its central role to translator's skills. Bell (1993: 36), to add, confirms that "the translator must, as a communicator, possess the knowledge and skills that are common to all communicators...in two languages (at least)".

Probably, Samuelsson-Brown's (2004: 2) cluster has already summed up almost all the translation skills that a translator must possess, including: cultural understanding, language and literacy, project management, communication, information technology, and making decisions. A detailed relevant analysis of these skills is provided in the following diagramme:

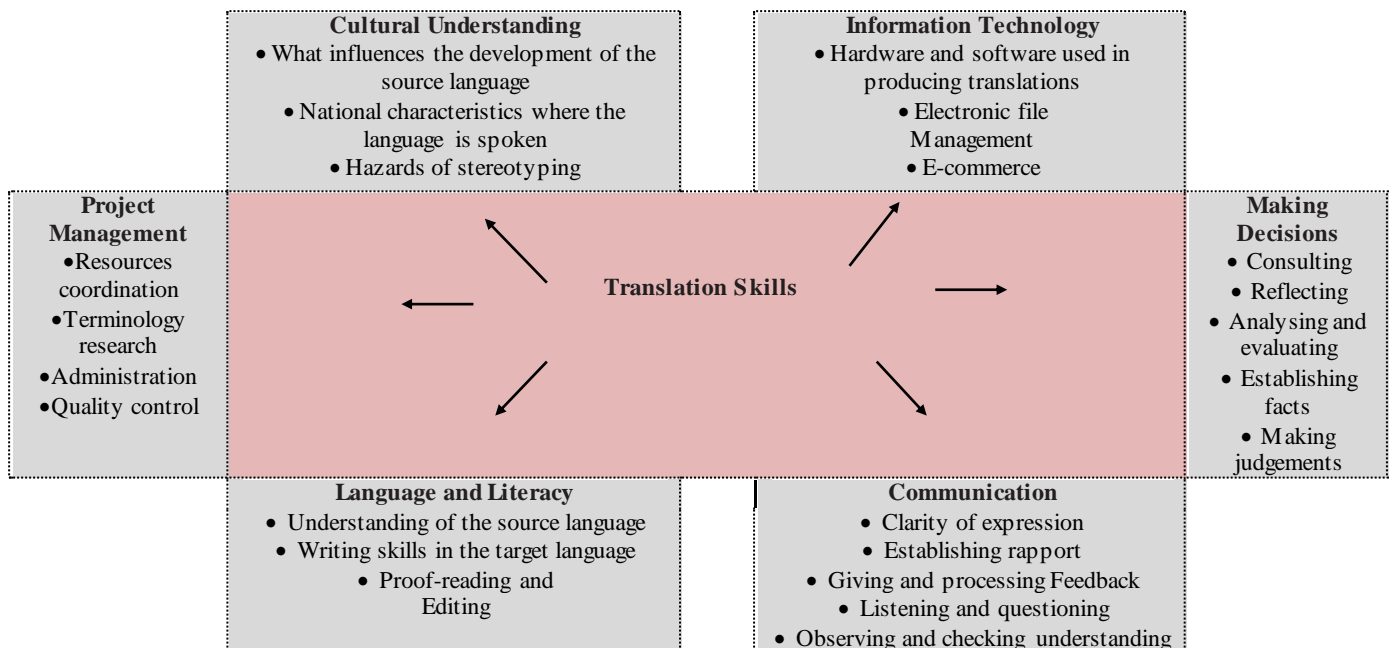


Figure 1. Translation skills clusters

Samuelsson-Brown (2004: 2)



## 2-Malleability of Translator's Competence

### Vs. Public Misconceptions about Translators

Not all translations achieved by professional translators are identical. Some of them are much closer to perfect translation. Probably, the best criteria to consider a translation more acceptable or attractive than others is the degree of translator's professionalism or expertise. In fact, "translation ability is malleable, capable of being formed and of being deformed", Shreve (1997: 123) proposes. In other words, professional translation is highly affiliated to communicative experiences. But to deepen the translation awareness, the translator is keen to follow some sort of organized and gradual training on different text-types and different genres. However, "all translation ability is learned; even the rudimentary translation ability of bilinguals derives from the parallel or consecutive learning of the second language", according to Shreve (Ibid.: 130)

With this in mind, Newmark not only demonstrates the necessity of training for translation students, but also for translation teachers as well. He (Ibid.: 138) believes that "the translator teacher has to be not only a solid classroom teacher, but a person of wide cultural background, normally engaged in one of the at least eight areas of translation research, viz. linguistics-based translation theory; corpus-based bilingual translation research; translation and culture; translation and society; machine translation; terminology; translating processes; translation criticism". Thus, he ascertains, the translator needs much more 'encyclopaedic' information or explanation in order to attract the TL readership.

From a different perspective, Samuelsson-Brown (2004: 2) elaborates on the misconceptions by an overwhelming number of people of what is required to be a skilled translator:

- As a translator you can translate all subjects
- If you speak a foreign language *ipso facto* you can automatically translate into it
- If you can hold a conversation in a foreign language then you are bilingual
- Translators are mind-readers and can produce a perfect translation without having to consult the author of the original text, irrespective of whether it is ambiguous, vague or badly written
- No matter how many versions of the original were made before final copy was approved or how long the process took, the translator needs only one stab at the task, and very little time, since he gets it right first time without the need for checking or proof-reading. After all, the computer does all that for you".

If we scrutinise these proposals, we see that for a translator to be able to translate all subjects, he has to have been completed courses in all all branches of knowledge. Speaking a foreign language does not mean to be able to translate automatically into it, because translation demands are wider than speaking a foreign language. Perfect translation, again means a translator has comprehended the intra-textual and the intertextual aspects of the SL text. Finally, translation implies constant revision by the translator who does not depend entirely on computers or other machines that will not always provide the required TL equivalents because of extent of the input data that has been originally fed and stored into the memory of the computer or other machines.

### Functional Images of Competent Translator

Having stressed the significance of training for a translator to become competent, it is important to highlight the functional images of the competent translator in the form of contrastive dichotomies. This includes: competent reader Vs. competent writer, trainer translator Vs. professional translator, cultural mediator Vs. transmitter, and poor translator Vs. creative translator.

## 1-Competent Reader Vs. Competent Writer

The translator will always be dealing with two texts at the same time: the SL text and the TL text. The thing that demands disclosing his capabilities to decode the ST and to simultaneously re-encode the TT. Such capabilities are not ultimately born with the translator; and if so, they will more helpful and applicable if the translator has pursued certain training and completed specific courses in the field of translation.

Samuelsson-Brown (2004: 5) mentions a few points on the main qualities, rather qualifications, of a literary translator, as follows:

- ❖ the translator needs to have a feeling for language and a fascination with it,
- ❖ the translator must have an intimate knowledge of the source language and of the regional culture and literature, as well as a reasonable knowledge of any special subject that is dealt with in the work that is being published,
- ❖ The translator should be familiar with the original author's other work,
- ❖ The translator must be a skilled and creative writer in the target language and nearly always will be a native speaker of it,
- ❖ The translator should always be capable of moving from one style to another in the language when translating different works,
- ❖ The aim of the translator should be to convey the meaning of the original work as opposed to producing a mere accurate rendering of the words,
- ❖ The translator should be able to produce a text that reads well, while echoing the tone and style of the original – as if the original author were writing in the target language.

As is evident from this description, the flair, skill and experience that are required by a good literary translator resembles the qualities that are needed by an 'original' writer. It is not surprising that writing and translating often go hand in hand.

## 2-Trainer Translator Vs. Professional Translator

Professionalism in translation comes to disclose translator's long experience juxtaposed with crystallised expertise and awareness of the technicalities and strategies of translating. Bell (1993: 38) thinks that "translation theory is primarily concerned with an ideal bilingual reader-writer, who knows both languages perfectly...". In fact, Bell's proposition would have been much influential has he mentioned the translator's knowledge of the two cultures as well. Kuhlweck and Littau (2007: 6) sees that " translation maintains a priori the dialogue between the inside and the outside, not only of disciplines, but of cultures, languages and histories". Bassnett (2007: 15-16) discussed the role of translation as "an instrument of change, and in so doing alters the emphasis for today's student of classical languages". Accordingly, when translating the ancient text, Bassnett (Ibid.) argues, the translator aims to produce translations that go beyond the immediacy of 'transplantation' toward placing the text in the cultural framework within which that text is embedded. That is, she realizes, it is the very act of translation that enables contemporary readers to construct lost civilisations.

Needless to say that the translator does not always translate similar or homogeneous texts. Since texts have dissimilar features and generic specifications, they pose different demands and special treatment from translators. To disclose competence in translating various heterogeneous texts, translators must have followed training. But as Caminade and Pym (1998: 280) observe, translators and interpreters "have long been trained informally, then in translator-training institutions, up to the number of university-level institutions offering degrees or diplomas, masters and PhDs, specifically in translation and interpreting".

### 3-Cultural Mediator Vs. Transmitter

Among the conglomerate roles that the translator plays, two apparent ones are: a cultural mediator and as a transmitter. Bassnett (2005: 6) notices that "today the movement of peoples around the globe can be seen to mirror the very process of translation itself, for translation is not just the transfer of texts from one language into another, it is now rightly seen as a process of negotiation between texts and between cultures, a process during which all kinds of transactions take place mediated by the figure of the translator". Very impressive has been her proposal of drawing the analogy of the translator as "a creative artist mediating between cultures and languages", (Ibid.: 9).

Elaborating on the role of translator, Snell-Hornby (2006: 91) says that many translation theorists see travellers and translators as people engaged in a dialogue between languages and with other cultures: The translator and the interpreter, moving between disciplines, between the allusive language of general culture and the hermetic sublanguages of specialisms, are practitioners in a sense of the encyclopedic culture of travel, or a *third culture* that is inclusive not only of the classic polarities of the humanities and sciences but of many other areas of human enquiry.

Unlike the role of translator as cultural mediator who parallelistically creates the balance between the ST and the TT, when he translates literally, he plays the role of a transmitter. The image of 'a mime-transmitter' has been highlighted by Snell-Hornby (2006: 90) where the translator transfers every single movement and inclination presented in the ST quite literally into the TL text. But the ethics of translation point of view, Nord considers the translator as committed bilaterally to the ST and TT situations and is responsible to both the ST sender and the TT recipient. This commitment and responsibility toward both the ST and the TT is called, according to Nord (1991: 94) "loyalty" which replaces the precedent term 'faithfulness' and does relate the *ethics of translation*.

### 4-Poor Translator Vs. Creative Translator

Last but not least of the functional images of competent translator is that a competent translator must be creative as compared to the poor translator. However, the poor translator is the one who leaves features of the SL text as such in the TL text believing that correspondent, literal, textually/equivalent translation is the best solution. On the other hand, the creative translator is often obsessed with providing a normal, acceptable, mother-tongue like TL text. He claims liberty of choosing the most appropriate equivalent and restructuring the sentences in the TL text, together with repunctuating it as he sees relevant. Newmark (1996: 144) introduces the features of both poor and creative translators as: a poor translator "will translate the words as though they were isolated, will swallow any idiom or metaphor whole, or will write the kind of nonsense that makes sense but can't be visualized in any setting...". But a creative translator "will be aware that there's more to animation than 'inspiration' and the sooner or later has to introduce...".

### Heterogeneously Distributed Translator's Competence: A Selected Example

Here follows a selected example clarifying the observable characteristics of the competent translator. The English text is the ST which is translated by a professional and competent translator. Some vocabulary, terms, phrases and clauses have been underlined in both the ST and the TT to indicate how they have been transferred. Finally, a virtual image of the encyclopaedic competent translator is promptly referred to and introduced for some reasons that will be shortly highlighted.

### 1-Remarks on In/Competent Translator

The following example is quoted from *the Guardian* newspaper. Its translation is introduced with some underlined chunks. After the ST and the TT, the underlined chunks have been singly mentioned and allocated numbers, so that reference to them in the later debate, comparison and contrast and realization is apparently made easier:

#### SL Text (English)

The POUND is out of intensive care, though for how long is a matter for debate; but in other respects the economy continues to look like one of those harrowing battle landscapes of the first world war. In the pit of recession we are running a huge trade deficit. Unemployment is on its way back to three million (which on the old accountancy would be over three and a half). The fear of the Stamp Duty holiday have administered a further shot of valium to a comatose housing market. All over the country the boards of manufacturing companies and the owners of High Street shops are asking themselves whether it's worth going on. Five months into the fourth Tory term, almost every prospect displeases. And people in the Labour Party, as well as outside it, are beginning to ask: where in this time of trial is the Opposition?

*The Guardian*; September 4<sup>th</sup>, 1998

#### TL Text (Arabic)

لقد خرج الجنيه الإسترليني من "وحدة العناية المشددة". إلا أنّ تماثله للشفاء لا يزال أمراً مشكوكاً فيه. ومن جوانب كثيرة يبدو المشهد الاقتصادي البريطاني وكأنه خارج من ساحة دارت فيها رحى معارك الحرب العالمية الأولى.

ففي غياهب الكساد الاقتصادي الذي تعيشه البلاد، وصل العجز في الميزان التجاري إلى مستويات مرعبة، كما عادت أعداد العاطلين عن العمل إلى الإرتفاع لتصل إلى ثلاثة ملايين شخصاً (حيث كان عدد العاطلين في الإحصاءات السابقة حوالي ثلاثة ونصف مليون شخصاً).

أما الخوف من قدوم العطلة الرسمية فقد دسّ جرعةً مخدرةً زائدةً في سوق العقارات السكنية شبه الميت أصلاً. ولا يفوتنا حالة الإرباك التي تعيشها مجالس إدارة الشركات في البلاد طويلاً وعرضاً وكذلك أصحاب المحال التجارية الذين يتساعلون عن جدوى الاستمرار في العمل من أساسه. فخمسة شهورٍ مرّت على حكومة المحافظين الرابعة تمخّضت عن حالة من الإستياء لا تسرّ القلب ولا خاطر حيث أخذ منتسبو حزب العمال وغيرهم يتساعلون أين هي المعارضة في هذا الوقت العصيب؟

My Translation

#### ST item/s followed by TT item/s:

(1) *Intensive care*: "وحدة العناية المشددة"; (2) *a matter for debate*: لا يزال أمراً مشكوكاً فيه; (3) *economy*: المشهد الاقتصادي البريطاني; (4) *recession*: الكساد الاقتصادي; (5) *running a huge trade deficit*: وصل العجز في الميزان التجاري إلى مستويات مرعبة; (6) *on its way back to three million*: لتصل إلى ثلاثة ملايين عاقل عن العمل; (7) *Stamp Duty Holiday*: قدوم العطلة الرسمية; (8) *administered a further shot of valium to a comatose housing market*: فدسّ جرعة زائدة في سوق العقارات السكنية شبه الميت أصلاً; (9) *the boards*: مجالس إدارة الشركات; (10) *owners of High Street Shops*: أصحاب المحال التجارية; (11) *in...as well as outside*: الذين يتساعلون; and finally, (12) *trial is the Opposition*: المعارضة في هذا الوقت العصيب...

**Comments:**

This is an example on the argumentative text. It is one of the difficult types of texts because it needs a highly elevated style to deal with. Style is what makes it difficult. It uses a few idiomatic expressions, and literary embellishments. The thing that requires skilfulness and care from translator to transfer it as such to the TL, in which he is expected to provide equivalent style, idiomatic elements and literary embellishments.

**Debate, Comparison and Contrast**

If we scrutinise the ST and the TT, can we think of providing answers to the following arising questions: Is this text translated by a professional translator? What proves that it is translated by a professional translator? Can an undergraduate or novice translator translate it in the same way a professional does translate, and why? Will the undergraduate student or novice translator be able to provide such idiomatic expressions and use such literary embellishments?

**Realisation:**

From the above comments and points of comparison and contrast, it transpires that there are some reasons that make the translator a professional one who is capable of manoeuvring over the most daunting problems, of using the idiomatic equivalents in the TL text, and where necessary, of using the literary embellishments. The most recognisable reason that makes the translator a professional one is training. Training, as it seems, is a must. But for a beginner or novice translator, he can develop his capabilities, that is, skills can be developed and do pave the way to professionalism. Since the use of such technicalities is used by professional translators in the TL text, it seems that not every translator is qualified to produce a similar text as such. In other words, translator's competence is never homogeneously distributed.

**2-The Encyclopaedic Competent Translator**

The translator does not only work on one and the same type of texts that belongs to the same genre. Rather, he works on different types of texts that might belong to different genres, or is thought to be so. Newmark (1996: 144) "the main feature of translators is that they are writers; they can write plainly, economically, gracefully, elegantly in a repertoire of registers, factual as well as emotional, popular as well as technical, official as well as slang".

Training translators requires working on various areas that will qualify the would be translator as a professional translator. According to Newmark (1996: 138), "the translator teacher has to be not only a solid classroom teacher, but a person of wide cultural background, normally engaged in one of the at least eight areas of translation research, viz. linguistics-based translation theory; corpus-based bilingual translation research; translation and culture; translation and society; machine translation; terminology; translating processes; translation criticism". This does raise the question of how much extra encyclopaedia information or explanation is required for the TL readership, not only for cultural but for the technical data.

Even the image of encyclopedic translator is not a process that can be finalised and reached an end or a kind of completed session. It is, on the contrary, an open ended process of training and practising because of the changes that happen worldwide and related all aspects of life including the linguistic and the cultural. Above in this paper, a reference has been made to Samuelsson-Brown's (2004: 2) who elaborates on the skills required for translators and the misconceptions expressed by people on translators' skills. People think that a translator can translate all subjects, speaks different languages similarly

fluently, etc. However, special types of texts require specialised translators due to specialised subject matter. But unanimously, it is agreed that a translator should be qualified to translate texts of general purpose, that is those which are not highly specialised.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

An attempt has been made throughout this piece of research to answer the debate over whether, why and how translator's competence is heterogeneously distributed among linguistically acculturated persons. First translation and communication are inseparable concepts; Cowley and Hanna (2005: 7) stress the "cross-cultural communication' skills" that translator must possess. Second, the permanent role of the translator is two-tiered: a reader of the ST and a writer of the TT; as ascertained by Newmark (1996: 144). Third, professional translation is evolved natural translation, as is observed by Shreve (1997: 121).

Translator's competence is what qualifies the translator to overcome almost all possible and emerging problems of transferring the ST into the SL culture, that is to succeed in changing the unintelligible, incomprehensible and untranslatable easily graspable and absorbed by the TL recipients. The translator's knowledge and skills, i.e. competence, also helps him in making definite when, where and how to interfere while being invisible. Eventually, for a translator to keep abreast and capable of producing an acceptable, normal and creative TL text, he must have followed considerable training in translation, and must be keen enough to update and upgrade his translation cognizance. That is why translator's competence is absolutely heterogeneously distributed among linguistically acculturated persons.

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#### Endnote 01

"The translator teacher has to be not only a solid classroom teacher, but a person of wide cultural background, normally engaged in one of the at least eight areas of translation research, viz. linguistics-based translation theory; corpus-based bilingual translation research; translation and culture; translation and society; machine translation; terminology; translating processes; translation criticism"; Newmark (1996: 138)

#### Endnote 02

**Kelly** (2005: 33–4) describes the **components of TC as communicative and textual competence**, cultural and intercultural competence, subject area competence, professional and instrumental competence, attitudinal or psycho-physiological competence, strategic competence and interpersonal competence (ability to work with other professionals involved in the translation process), including team work, negotiation and leadership skills. Other theorists, in general argue That TC implies having access to (1) L1 and L2 linguistic knowledge, (2) cultural knowledge of the source and target culture, including knowledge of specialized subject domains, (3) textual knowledge of source and target textual conventions and (4) translation knowledge – knowledge of how to translate using strategies and procedures, amongst which are translation tools and information-seeking strategies.

#### Endnote 03

Dancette (1997) elaborates on the implications of the the concept of comprehending of the ST as follows:

1. Interpretation of textual units based on linguistic knowledge, and inferences and deductions based on extralinguistic and encyclopaedic knowledge.
2. Continuum of linguistic elements...

3. Transformations and inferences at all levels are to be tightly monitored...
4. Meaning is context-dependent. (Dancette Ibid.: 82)
5. Dancette (Ibid.: 85) states "Like it or not, he or she has to translate the entire text".
6. Behaviour, Strategy and process (Dancette Ibid.: 89)

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