CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND SEMIOTIC VARIATIONS IN ENGLISH AND PERSIAN: A STUDY OF TRANSLATION PROBLEMS

MASOUD SHARIFIFAR

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

2007

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND SEMIOTIC VARIATIONS IN ENGLISH AND PERSIAN: A STUDY OF TRANSLATION PROBLEMS

BY

MASOUD SHARIFIFAR

THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN TRANSLATION

JUNE 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Tengku Sepora binti Mahadi for her guidance, advice and constructive comments. This thesis would never have been written had I not had her support, patience and encouragements, though the shortcomings to be found in here are my responsibility. Honestly no acknowledgement can adequately describe my debt to her.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my late father and mother, particularly the latter whom I lost during my studies in Malaysia. May God bless them.

Warmest thanks to my wife and daughters who missed me badly during my studies and for their unswerving patience as I have been writing.

A word of thanks to all Malaysians from whose hospitality and friendliness I enjoyed so much and I never forget their kindness.

Finally and most importantly, I thank my God for granting me health and fitness and inspiring me hope and encouragement to accomplish this work. Thank you my God, you helped me to achieve one of the most fascinating activities I have ever had the privilege to do.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLES AND THEIR SUBDIVISIONS
Page

TITLE PAGE
i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ii

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ix

LIST OF SYMBOLS USED

ix

ABSTRAK

x

ABSTRACT

xii

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

4

1.2. THE OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

10

1.3. THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

11

1.4. THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 13

1.5. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 14

1.6. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY 16

1.7. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS 17

1.8. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PERSIAN TRANSLATION 20

1.9. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY 26

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE 29

2.1. ENGLISH LITERATURE 30

2.1.1. CULTURE 30

2.1.2. LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION 31

2.1.3. LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND TRANSLATION 31

2.1.4. LADO’S FRAMEWORK 32

2.1.5. SAPIR AND WHORF HYPOTHESIS: RELATIVITY

AND UNTRANSLATIBILITY OF TRANSLATION 34
2.1.6. CONTRARY OPINIONS: POSSIBILITY OF TRANSLATION 37
2.1.7. TRANSLATION STUDIES: CULTURAL TRANSLATION 39
2.1.8. PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES 45
2.1.9. NEW TERMS AND CONCEPTS 47
2.1.10. SEMIOTICS AND SYMBOLS 52
2.1.11. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS 55
2.1.12. TRANSLATION OF DRAMA AND NON-VERBAL ELEMENTS 59
2.1.13. TRANSLATION OF NOVEL 64
2.2. PERSIAN LITERATURE 65
2.3. CONCLUSION 69

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 71

3.1. DEFINITION OF CULTURE 71

3.1.1. SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CULTURE 72

3.1.2. NON-VERBAL ELEMENTS 73

3.2. CORPUS 74

3.3. JUSTIFICATION OF THE ENGLISH CORPUS 76

3.4. JUSTIFICATION OF THE PERSIAN CORPUS 77

3.5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 78

3.6. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS 81

3.7. OUTLINE FOR ANALYZING THE TEXTS AND CLASSIFICATION OF HIGHLIGHTED PASSAGES 82

3.8. MICRO- AND MACRO-STRUCTURE 82

3.9. THE SELECTED METHODS 83

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE 89

4.1. MACROSTRUCTURE 89

4.1.1. PLOT 90

4.1.2. THEME AND PERIOD 91

4.1.3. CHARACTERS 93

4.1.4. COMPOSITION OF THE DRAMA 94

4.2. INTRODUCTION 95
4.2.1. NON-VERBAL VISUAL SIGNS 96
4.2.2. NON-VERBAL ACOUSTIC SIGNS 102
4.2.3. NON-VERBAL VISUAL AND ACOUSTIC SIGNS 108
4.2.4. LINGUISTIC SIGNS 109
4.2.5. ACOUSTIC AND LINGUISTIC SIGNS 115
4.3. OTHER CULTURAL TERMS 116
4.3.1. SYMBOLS 116
4.3.2. TRANSLATION OF VERBS 121
4.3.3. LOAN WORDS 122
4.3.4. PROVERBS 123
4.4. ANSWER TO RQ. 1 124
4.5. ANSWER TO RQ. 2 125
4.6. CONCLUSION 126

CHAPTER 5. ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN

6.1.1. PROPER NAMES 184
6.1.2. LEXICAL GAPS 185
6.1.3. SYMBOLS 185
6.1.4. ALCOHOLIC DRINKS 187
6.2. ANSWER TO RQ. 1 188
6.3. ANSWER TO RQ. 2 189
6.4. CONCLUSION 190

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION 193

7.1. ANSWER TO RQ. 1 193
7.2. ANSWER TO RQ. 2 194
7.3. CONCLUSION 196
7.4. FURTHER RESEARCH 199

BIBLIOGRAPHY 200

APPENDICES 212

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USDE

?	NO PROCEDURE FOUND
BE	BRITISH ENGLISH
CA	COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS
Mn.	MOLLANAZAR
N.M.	NEWMARK
P.	PAGE
RQ	RESEARCH QUESTION
SL	SOURCE LANGUAGE
ST	SOURCE TEXT
TL	TARGET LANGUAGE
TT	TARGET TEXT
V & D	VINAY AND DARBELNET

LIST OF SYMBOLS USED

PERSIAN SYMBOL	**ENGLISH EQUIVALENT**
a	æ
ā	a:
u	u
o	o
ע	NO EQUIVALENT
q	NO EQUIVALENT
x	NO EQUIVALENT
?	NO EQUIVALENT

Perbezaan budaya dan variasi semiotik dalam bahasa Inggeris dan bahasa Parsi : Kajian tentang masalah menterjemah

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan mengkaji perbezaan antara unsur-unsur budaya Inggeris dan budaya Parsi yang mungkin menimbulkan masalah dalam penterjemahan daripada bahasa Inggeris ke dalam bahasa Parsi. Kajian ini juga bertujuan mengkaji cara sesuatu unsur budaya itu diperlakukan dalam korpus yang terpilih dan untuk menyemak sama ada prosedur penterjemahan yang dicadangkan oleh Newmark, Vinay & Darbelnet dan Mollanazar adalah mencukupi dan sesuai digunakan untuk menterjemahkan unsur-unsur budaya daripada bahasa Inggeris ke dalam bahasa Parsi.

Dalam kajian ini, dua buah drama iaitu A Streetcar named Desire oleh T. Williams dan The Pilgrim's Progress oleh J. Bunyan dan sebuah novel, The Great Gatsby oleh S. Fitzgerald dan terjemahan bahasa Parsi yang sepadan di analisis. Kajian juga dibatas oleh unsur-unsur budaya yang berbentuk sosial, keagamaan dan bukan verbal. Teori penterjemahan yang diutarakan oleh Newmark (1998) digunakan dalam kajian ini.

Dapatan yang diperoleh daripada analisis teks data-data yang berkaitan menunjukkan bahawa pemindahan unsur budaya sosial paling kurang menimbulkan masalah manakala unsur bukan verbal, termasuk petanda linguistik dan akustik serta unsur keagamaan paling banyak menimbulkan masalah kepada penterjemah.

Dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa tidak terdapat sebarang bukti yang menyatakan bahawa terdapatnya usaha yang berterusan dalam kalangan penterjemah untuk menggunakan pendekatan penterjemahan yang tertentu dalam proses menghasilkan terjemahan yang berjaya. Analisis teks terjemahan menunjukkan bahawa penterjemah drama lebih kerap menggunakan pendekatan komunikatif dalam terjemahan manakala penterjemah novel pula menggunakan pendekatan semantik.

Dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa prosedur penterjemahan yang disyorkan oleh Newmark, Vinay & Darbelnet dan Mollanazar telah diambil kira dalam pemindahan unsur- unsur sosial. Untuk unsur bukan verbal dan unsur keagamaan pula, pengkaji mendapati bahawa julat prosedur yang dicadangkan oleh Newmark adalah komprehensif dan boleh digunakan untuk menterjemah hampir kesemua unsur budaya yang terkandung dalam korpus yang terpilih. Walau bagaimanapun, prosedur penterjemahan yang dicadangkan oleh Vinay & Darbelnet dan Mollanazar kurang komprehensif dan kekurangan ini mungkin menyebabkan kelemahan prosedur tersebut.

Secara ringkas, walaupun terdapat sedikit perbezaan antara budaya Inggeris dan budaya Parsi, namun tema yang terdapat dalam teks-teks tersebut telah berjaya dipindahkan ke dalam bahasa sasaran, dan strategi yang digunakan oleh penterjemah, kecuali dalam beberapa kes tertentu, telah diambil kira untuk memindahkan unsur-unsur budaya.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND SEMIOTICVARIATIONS IN ENGLISH AND PERSIAN: A STUDY OF TRANSLATION PROBLEMS

ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the cultural differences between English and Persian which may be problematic in translating from English into Persian. The study aims also to investigate the way cultural elements are dealt with in the selected corpora and to check whether the procedures proposed by Newmark, Vinay and Darbelnet and Mollanazar are sufficient and adequate for the translation of cultural elements from English into Persian.

Two dramas, A Streetcar named Desire by T. Williams and The Pilgrim's Progress by J. Bunyan and one novel, The Great Gatsby by S.Fitzgerald and their corresponding translated Persian versions are analyzed. This study is also narrowed down to only non-verbal, religious and social cultural elements. This investigation uses Newmark's theory of translation (1998).

The findings obtained from the textual analyses of the related data show that the transfer of social cultural elements is the least problematic and of non-verbal elements including acoustic and linguistic signs as well as religious elements are the most problematic for the translators.

The findings also indicate that there is no evidence to show a consistent effort on the part of translators to use any particular translation approach in the process of achieving adequate translations. The textual analyses of the translated works demonstrate that the translators of the dramas have mostly adopted a communicative translation approach, while the translator of the novel had a semantic approach.

The findings show that procedures suggested by Newmark, Vinay and Darbelnet and Mollanazar have accounted well for the transfer of social elements. For non-verbal and religious elements, it is observed that Newmark's range of procedures is comprehensive and works well nearly for all cultural elements included in the selected corpora Vinay and Darbelnet's and Mollanazar's procedures, however, lack some which may be considered as their shortcomings.

In brief, regardless of some inevitable differences between English and Persian cultures, the themes of the works have adequately been transferred into the target language, and the strategies used by the translators , except for a few cases, accounted well for the transfer of cultural elements.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Translation is a skilful art, which has become increasingly important in today's world. Translators are responsible for better and more accurate transfer of this art. In the modern world the vast geographical distances are extremely decreased through communication facilities and the need to exchange thoughts and opinions among different nations is strongly felt. Being aware of other people's experiences, knowledge, technical and cultural achievements help man in improving the standard of life.

This kind of communication is obviously possible by means of language. And language cannot exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture. Language is the heart within the body of culture and it is the interaction between the two that results in the continuation of life. So language should not be seen as an isolated phenomenon suspended in a vacuum but as an integral part of culture.

The role of a translator becomes more crucial since a good translation can be useful, a bad or a wrong one can be misguiding and to some extent dangerous. Thus, translation from one language to another cannot be done adequately without knowledge of the two cultures.

According to Nida as discussed in Delisle (1980:132), in order to translate, one must not only know a language but also must be familiar with the culture i.e. customs, civilization and mores of those who speak it .Nida also emphasizes that translation takes place in the context of the relation between two cultures, two worlds of thought and perception.

If the translator's first task is to contribute to understanding between nations and secondly transmit knowledge, then his third task is to mediate the cultural features. This is done not so much in terms of target language, because cultural features are pragmatically vivid but usually inaccurate in terms of universal experience. For this reason translation is always more or less possible because language is a substantial but partial reflection of culture and culture is mutually an aspect of social language.

Since a one to one correspondence may not necessarily exist between two languages, translation from one language like English into Persian and vice versa, with regard to cultural differences and semiotic variations, may also not always be possible.

There have always been arguments about the feasibility of translation, in general, and translation of cultural terms, in particular. While some of them are optimistic, some others are pessimistic .For example Humboldt, as quoted by Snell-Hornby (1988:41), believes:

> The principle of linguistic relativity has far-reaching implications for translation; taken to its extreme, the notion that language conditions thought and that both are inextricably bound up with the individual culture of the community that speaks the language concerned would mean that ultimately translation is impossible.

Wilss (1982: 56) also supports this idea. He argues that, since there are differences between languages and their cultures, we should all accept that perfect translatability is impossible. The principle of perfection, immutability and absolutes belong perhaps to mathematics and not to translation.

However, Mounin as quoted by Bassnett- Mc.Guire (1992:36) has a moderate view. He believes that translation can be accomplished with relative success. He continues:

> Translation may always start with the clearest situations, the most concrete messages, the most elementary universals, but it involves the consideration of a language in its entirety. Together with its most subjective messages, through an examination of common situations and multiplication of contacts that need clarifying, there is no doubt that communication through translation can never be completely finished, which also demonstrates that it is never wholly impossible either.

While this is one extreme of this continuum, the Universalists such as Newmark (1988) believe that since human beings have common thoughts and feelings, they should have no difficulty in communicating with each other, whatever language they use. Newmark accepts the existence of untranslatable expressions but extends them to the field of lexicon. He defines them as the words that have no ready one-to-one equivalents in target language; they can be qualities or actions, descriptive or mental words. He also states that cultural terms are rather more likely to be translated or given a cultural equivalent in a play than in fiction.

However, as we know translating is not merely passing from one text to another, transferring words from one language to another. Rather, it involves transposing one entire culture to another. According to Sapir (1949: 39) translation is an essential means through which access to the cultures of the different nations is possible. Thus we realize just how important it is to be conscious of the ideology that underlies a translation i.e. when to add, what to leave out, how to choose the words and how to substitute cultural terms. It is no longer possible to limit oneself to the word or sentence as a translation unit: the translator must take into consideration both the original and target cultures with which he or she is connected. If we accept that most people are shaped to the form of their culture because of the enormous malleability of their original endowments and they are plastic to the moulding force of the society into which they are born or may be exposed to, then we can claim that translation from one culture to another is to some extent possible. This thesis intends to examine the cultural differences and semiotic variations between English and Persian and the probable problems in translation. This will cause my emphasis on the necessity of a cross-cultural comparative textual analysis between these two languages.

1.1. **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Problems of cultural translation fall naturally in the same areas of language which are to be mastered by anyone who seeks the title of a "translator", i.e. vocabulary, writing, grammar etc. Thus, lack of ability in this area causes inevitable errors, which change the efforts of a translator to something meaningless or ridiculous.

Translators are always faced with an alien culture that requires that its message be conveyed in anything but an alien way. Every culture expresses its idiosyncrasies in ways that are culture-bound: cultural words, proverbs and of course idiomatic expressions, whose origin and use are intrinsically and uniquely bound to the culture concerned. When translators are called upon to do a cross-cultural translation, their success will depend on their understanding of the culture they are working with.

Since language is an integral part of culture, and the concept of culture is a totality of knowledge, proficiency and perception, then the translator needs to be not only bilingual but also bicultural.

The culture of every nation is considered to be an important aspect of the identity of that nation. It may be claimed that culture has a profound effect on the structure and lexicon of the language of that nation, i.e. every statement in any language has its local colour. Since different nations enjoy different cultures, it could simply be understood why the role of a translator is so crucial and transfer of a culture is so difficult. The domain of a culture is as vast as vocabulary and even more extensive than it. Because a culture word is always less context-bound than ordinary language and several cultures may be found within one language (Newmark: 1988), it is not as limited as the grammatical patterns to deal with easily.

One of the most difficult problems in translating is found in the difference between cultures. The people of a given culture look at the things from their own perspectives. Many words look like equivalents but are not. They have special connotations, or have different focuses in different cultures. For example, the culture of America, according to Larson (1984) focuses on working, earning money, sports; schooling and marriage while another one may not and in one language there may be a great concentration of vocabulary that has to do with farming but in another a great concentration with fishing.

Even when words seem to be synonyms from one cultural setting to another, they carry their own cultural baggage, for example, Rabassa (1984) believes that it would be difficult to maintain that the English "house" was completely synonymous with the French "maison".

Furthermore, in every culture, there will be certain actions, which will be symbolic. If the action is simply translated literally, it may result in a wrong meaning. Social relationships are also a cultural element. In some cultures people used to live with their extended families which eventually resulted in a need to address each relative. For this reason, those people have different words to refer to each relation.

Customs and traditions are parts of a culture as well. Be it a marriage, funeral or festival, the story and the significance or hidden symbolism behind it becomes a stumbling block for the translator. Beliefs and feelings change from culture to culture. While dragon is kind and protective in Chinese, it is evil in English. For mourning the English wear black, but the Chinese wear white (Newmark, 1991). The colour white may represent purity and black evil in some cultures, but it may not be the same in another culture. What is considered a good omen, whether an event, an animal or a bird, may not symbolize the same thing in another culture. Bhatia (1993) shows the existence of cultural differences through various types of evidence. For example, one would do well in India to avoid zero and numbers ending in zero. In English the number 88 recently has taken an offensive connotation in England because it is thought to be related to a terrorist gang.

Again, speakers of different languages do not divide the spectrum of colours up in a natural consistent way. We would never hesitate to affirm the importance of the difference between red and orange. Another language employs a set of basic colour terms very similar in application to our own, and does not have separate forms to indicate these two colours. As a result that language does not have separate meanings for red and orange.

Religious elements, myths and the like are major components of any culture as well. They present major obstacles in translating a text. There are crucial issues, which demand the translator’s full attention. Nida and Taber (1982:178) elaborates on this difference as” In America, jokes from the pulpit are usually acceptable in fact, some of the best preachers regularly elicit laughs from their congregations, but in Europe similar language in the pulpit would generally be regarded as at least inappropriate if not decidedly uncouth.”

Geographical and environmental elements are also part of one’s culture. While Eskimos and Finnish have different units for different states of snow, in Saudi Arabia there are different words for different kinds of camel (Bassnett, S. 1980/1991); Europeans as well as Iranians have only one word for each.

Simple formalities can be confusing. In a language, for example,” thank you” can be translated in several different ways depending on the situation as thanking someone for a gift, for a service, etc. Articles of dress, ornaments and values can also present problems for the translator. To give another example: the very flavour behind a food or its significance is untranslatable to an audience who has never heard of it.

Even the gestures and certain actions will be symbolic in different cultures; for example, the various movements of the head are symbolic in most languages. In most English speaking countries, as Larson (1984; 138) states “a person points to himself with his finger towards his chest when saying “I”, but this is not true for a Chinese who puts his finger on the side of his nose when saying “I”.

In sum, the things people say and do, their social arrangements and events are products or by-products of their culture as they apply it to the task of perceiving and dealing with their circumstances, all meaning is culturally conditioned, and the response to a given text is also culturally conditioned. Each society will interpret a message in terms of its own culture. The receptor audience will decode the translation in terms of his own culture and experience not by virtue of the culture and experience of the audience of original text. Therefore, a translator should pay close attention to the differences in the cultural backgrounds between the readers of the original and the readers of translation.

Anyway, concepts, which present translation problems, are so numerous that cannot be defined in strict categorization. The translator should be aware of the difference between the two linguistic cultures and should know what is considered an appropriate or polite expression in one culture might not be true in another one. A factor, which is vital or very important in one linguistic culture, might not have a place in another culture.

While numerous strides have been achieved in the area of lexical and grammatical translation, comparatively little ground has been gained in the area of translation of cultural elements. For this reason, even the simplest and most basic requirements we make of translation cannot be met without difficulty. One cannot always match the content of a message in a language with an expression with exactly the same content in another language.

However, Nida (1964:55) has a more optimistic view about translation of culture. He says:

> Of the major elements of culture, namely, material, social, religious, linguistic and aesthetic, all societies participate in all phases and in rather analogous ways. Accordingly, even though specific behaviour within any one area of life may differ, the range of common human experience is sufficiently similar to provide a basis for mutual understanding. Certainly the similarities that unite mankind as a cultural species are much greater than the differences that separate.

There is, however, no doubt that the task of a translator is very crucible in cultural translation and this fact has been reflected in Newmark's words (1981; 185) in this way "I believe that translation is an exceptionally difficult and challenging exercise, that it demands infinite curiosity about things as well as words, requires the consultation of people as well as books, that it is collaborative, but finally is usually the responsibility of one person."

For the importance of a translator’s task it suffices to say that Victor Hugo as quoted by Lefèvre (1992: 14) states:” when you offer a translation to a nation, that nation will almost always look on the translation as an act of violence against itself.”

1.2. THE OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is to analyze three English literary works and their Persian translated versions through textual analysis, and to compare and contrast the extracted cultural elements. Based on the methodology presented in capter three, the suggested procedures and strategies for translation of cultural elements are examined in order to check whether they are applicable for transfer of cultural elements from English to Persian. The study also seeks to provide answers to the two research questions. Due to the qualitative nature of research that this study undertakes, it is felt that research questions are better able to provide answers to the problem area. It is cultural elements that the study sets out to investigate. Thus, this study does not offer any hypothesis in advance and aims at obtaining solutions to the following questions:

1-How are cultural differences dealt with in the selected Persian translations of the corpus?

2- how well do the procedures and strategies suggested by Newmark, Vinay and Darbelnet, and Mollanazar adequate and sufficient for translation of cultural elements from English to Persian or not.

1.3. THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is at the same time both ambitious and modest. It is ambitious in the range of its aims and content. It has necessarily been modest because the grounds it covers are still new. Given the limited sources available this thesis can provide only an initial survey of the problems and is more likely to raise questions than provide the answers to them. It may show the way the cultural and semiotic variations have been transferred by the translators than to criticize them. At the same time, this study does not presume to delineate all the principles and procedures of cultural translation .The attempt has been made to include those elements, which might have the greatest interest and relevance to cultural analysis in more general sense.

This research deals only with translation problems from English into Persian and of the major relevant problematic forms; this study is limited mainly to cultural differences and semiotic variations between the two languages. Considering the fact that other forms are important as well, this thesis avoids them deliberately because it is neither possible nor plausible to deal with all aspects of untranslatable elements within the scope of the present work.

The main problem, the researcher may encounter, is an undeniable fact that the subject of the thesis is virgin and the study of cultural translation is still in infancy. The research will step on the rarely trodden paths. This is mostly due to the abstractness of culture and the broad scope it covers. The previous studies more or less have dealt with cultural translation within the framework of an article or a chapter of a book. Sofar, nobody has denied the importance of culture in translation, and nobody has dealt with it broadly either.

A textual analysis will be carried on some works, which have been translated into Persian. These are two dramas, i.e. A Streetcar Named Desire (1947) by Tennessee Williams and The Pilgrim's Progress (1982) by John Bunyan and one novel i.e. The Great Gatsby (1991) by S.F.Fitzgerald. The study of their corresponding Persian translations will contribute to the clarification of the findings of the cultural contrastive analysis of English and Persian.

Since the realm of culture is so vast to deal with, this work is narrowed down to only social, religious and non-verbal cultural elements selected from the classification presented by Newmark in his book (1988). He has adopted Nida's (1964) breakdown of the various aspects of culture and offers his own scheme along the following lines :(1) ecology (2) material culture (3) social culture (4) organizations, customs, ideas: political, social, legal, religious, artistic (5) gestures and habits. However, it may be difficult to draw a clear-cut distinction between them and overlapping is unavoidable.

The contention of the researcher is only to highlight the transfer of cultural and semiotic elements into Persian and not to focus on the translators' shortcomings, if any. There is no doubt that these Persian translators are among the prolific and competent Iranian contemporary translators and they have translated many novels and dramas into Persian so far.

There is no need to mention that the phonology, grammar and even vocabulary of a language can be learned and translated more easily than culture. Being familiar with a culture, and transferring cultural terms are far more difficult and in some cases impossible. The researcher hopes this work may open new windows to the cultural translation and reveal the hidden aspects of it.

1.4. THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The notion of culture is so wide and extensive that it cannot be limited. Though this study is restricted to non-verbal elements and religious as well as social cultures, in some cases, other aspects of culture are involved. On one hand, the boundary between these aspects is not made clear-cut by Newmark. Since it is fuzzy and vague, overlapping is unavoidable. On the other, the different definitions of culture presented in different disciplines worsen the problem. Thus probable limitations arising from these inconsistencies are predictable. Furthermore, only one Persian version of the selected works is available. It means that there will not be a comparison between Persian works. Though one of the books, that is, A Streetcar Named Desire, was translated into Persian nearly thirty years ago, but it is not available. Even researcher's resorting to the National Library of Iran was in vain. Thus the analysis is limited to only one version of each book.

This work would be very cautious against making too direct an application of any ideas about cultural and religious values in discussion of intercultural communications lest it may offend other nation's values and beliefs. Neither will it venture into discussing the realm of political as well as social and religious taboos of Iran. Except for the Persian translation of The Great Gatsby, done in 1975 (four years before the Islamic revolution in Iran), the other two works which came out in 2002 and 2004, show the influence of a sort of self-censorship imposed on them. This, however, may affect the authenticity of the analysis and the assumed conclusion.

1.5. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is one of the rare works to investigate the transfer of cultural elements through a comparative textual analysis between two languages and their problems in translation.

Concerning these cultural problems, many studies have been made about the problems of translation from English into other languages and vice versa, but only a few attempts have been done for English and Persian. It is believed that this study is one of the few studies to research the problem of cultural differences and semiotic variations from English into Persian. It will highlight, through a contrastive textual analysis of English and Persian cultures, those cultural differences that are difficult for the translator to transfer. Further it will also pinpoint the applicability of suggested procedures for translating of cultural terms in selected corpus.

The findings, if presented to translators, could make them more aware of their problematic areas. Language teachers, students and also experts in linguistics may benefit equally from this research. Even though testing in translation is virtually a virgin field, for example, we are able to describe specific patterns of behaviour in a given culture. Through comparison with the native culture of the student we can discover the misunderstandings that take place again and again. Good experimental test items may be worked out from the information yielded by the comparison of two cultures.

From the point of view of error analysis, cultural differences very often cause awkwardness, uneasiness, embarrassment or even communication breakdown. These involve some deviation from the norms of target language, and are regarded as errors. These kinds of errors can be said with certainty are the results of transfer process, since they are related to culture and culture is often unique and not universal.

Anyway, the likelihood of all these desiderata coming together in every translation is rather remote. They are always likely to be goals rather than achieved aims. When translation involves a flow across cultures, then the scope for conceptual problems, and the possibility of confusion in the target public, is increased.

As my final note, a work like this cannot cause an individual to grow to be a good translator or to translate well. The best it can do is to present some general descriptions through analysis of the problems and set out various principles within the methods of translation.

1.6. Rationale of The Study

Translation, in general, and cultural translation, in particular, have led to many heated discussions between translation theorists, linguists, language teachers, contrastive analysts and error analysts. This shows the importance of translation in today's world. No longer is translation considered just "a window opened to another world ", rather it is a channel opened through which foreign influences can penetrate the native culture.

Translators can create windows through which the foreigner gains access to the culture of other nations and countries. Nowadays cultural knowledge and cultural differences have become a major focus of all translator training curricula, translation theories, and second language teaching and learning programs. Translators in the new millennium are likely to have a broader training that stresses the importance of cultural background knowledge as well as linguistic competence. The main concern has traditionally been with so called realia, words and phrases that are so heavily grounded in one culture that they are almost impossible to translate into another one.

If we ignore the cultural differences, we will misjudge our cultural neighbours for forms of behaviour that to them has one meaning but may have another one to us. If, on the other hand, we know that an item of behaviour has a different meaning in the other culture, we will not misunderstand. For example, apologies show considerable cross-cultural variation and pose problems for translators as well as linguists and language teachers.

One of the basic challenges in the study of politeness is to understand the differences of interpretations that different cultures make of certain kinds of behaviour. What counts as an apology in one culture may be seen, as an expression of thanks in another and what constitutes a proper request in one culture may seem very rude in another.

These variations among the cultures, however, are problematic in translation. The way a translator may deal with problems depends heavily on his knowledge about these differences as well as his awareness of the strategies suggested and applied for transfer of cultural elements. This study, however, may highlight the rational laid beyond the importance of these procedures.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Since the following terms are considered to be the key terms encountered in review literature, a short definition for each may be helpful for a better understanding:

Allusion: one type of culture-bound elements in a text. It is expected to convey a meaning that goes beyond the mere words used.

Integrated approach: focuses on the macro and the micro levels in accordance with the Gestalt principle that states that an analysis of parts cannot provide an understanding of the whole. The importance of individual items is decided by their relevance within the larger context, that is, text, situation and culture.

Intersemiotic translation: an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems. In an intersemiotic translation, for example, a novel into a film, more attention will be paid to the content substance.

Culture: the kind of knowledge, which we learn from other people either by direct instruction or by watching their behaviour. It is the total range of activities and ideas and their material expression in objects and processes, which are peculiar to a group of people or their environment. Basnett-McGuire (1992:13) defines culture in this way "It includes history, social structure, religion, traditional customs and everyday usage."

Culture Bump: occurs between speakers of different cultural backgrounds. It may be observed when culture bound elements hinder communication of the meaning to a reader in another language culture. Culture bump happens when an individual finds himself in a different, strange and uncomfortable situation when interacting with persons of a different culture.

Cultural competence: the general knowledge about historical, political, economic and cultural aspects in the respective countries.

Cultural context: that part of the context that includes both the total culture within which a communication takes place, and the specific non-linguistic circumstances of the act of communication.

Cultural focus: that aspect of a culture, which is most central, most fully developed, and most constantly in the conscious thinking of the people; consequently, that part which is represented by the richest and most precise kind of vocabulary.

Cultural shock: according to Encyclopaedia Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1999) is an experience an individual has when comes into contact with a culture different from his own. An individual may experience anxiety, fear, disorientation and inability to cope with the communicative and environmental conditions of life in a non-native context.

Cultural translation: types of translation, which function as a tool for cross-cultural or anthological research or any translation, which is sensitive to cultural and linguistic factors. According to *Dictionary of Translation Studies* (1997:35) “A translator who uses a cultural approach is simply recognizing that each language contains elements which are derived from its culture (such as greetings, fixed expressions and realia) that every text is anchored in a specific culture and the conventions of the text production and reception vary from culture to culture."

Realia: words of a national language, which denote objects, concepts and phenomena characteristic of the geographical environment, culture and realities of a nation and conveys national, local and historical colour. These words have no exact equivalents in other languages.

Related items: a wide variety of classes likewise seem to be in its specific form, a property of every individual language and not of language in general.

Semiotics: the science of signs. Since language is man's most important sign system; language use cannot be fully discussed without reference to it as a semiotic system. Semiotics is the social interpretation of language. It is a reality, which cannot be simply explained away by cultural relativity but rather in terms of variables in the social experience the language is used to communicate to culture, These are the basic determinant of semiotics.

Signifier: The spoken or written expression, which calls up a specific signified.

Signified: the concept in the mind of a speaker, which he intends to convey to the listener.

Symbol: a linguistic or non-linguistic form, which is arbitrary and conventionally associated with a meaning. Linguistic symbols are words and idioms.

1.8 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PERSIAN TRANSLATION

The background presented below draws heavily from the works of Yarshater (1988), Karimi- Hakak (1995), and Rashidi (1981). It covers only a short history of translation into Persian and not vice versa. It shows also that theoretical aspects of translation have nearly been ignored and only translations made have been considered. This part, supplemented with the Persian review literature, also demonstrates that the translation of culture is lacking in the translation studies in Iran, and once more shows the importance of this work.

Translation into Persian has a long and eventful history. It has played an important part in the evolution of Iranian civilization through Western Asia and beyond.

Information about transformation activity before the advent of Islam in the seventh century is scant. In Medieval Persia, the interaction between Arabic and Persian was the determining feature of the activity. Following the Mongol and Tartar invasions of the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, new patterns of interaction emerged between Persian and a number of Indian and Turkic languages.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, translation from European languages has been an integral part of various modernization projects, both in Iran and in Persian-speaking areas outside it.

With the establishment of the Sasanian dynasty in Persia (AD 224-652) and rise of Middle Persia also known as Pahlavi, sufficient information about intercultural exchange was gained. A Middle Persian translation of parts of Avesta (the religious book of Zoroastrians) is available albeit in literal renditions which at times make the meaning unclear. We also know the Sasanian kings encouraged translations from Greek and Latin. More importantly, the wider currency of Greek philosophy and sciences in Iran just before the advent of Islam may be attributed principally to translations, which have now been largely lost.

In the second half of the seventh century, Islam began to spread over the Iranian plateau gradually but steadily. This marks a unique turning point in the life of the Iranians, not only religious but culturally and linguistically as well. The Persian language constitutes the most concrete link between Islamic and pre-Islamic Iranian cultures. In the two centuries that followed, a succession of cultured Persians spearheaded a translation effort aimed at preserving pre-Islamic Iranian texts. The most significant literary and religious documents were translated into Arabic. Such texts, later translated from Arabic back into New Persian, formed the basis for much of our information about pre-Islamic Iranian culture, particularly its textual tradition.

In the tenth to twelfth centuries, translation into Persian gathered tremendous momentum, making available to Persian readers an impressive array of knowledge in fields as diverse as medicine, astronomy, geography, history and philosophy. During this time, translators thought it necessary, important or useful to translate certain works and they did so efficiently and without much pretension. Translators of secular texts gave more priority to the grammatical features of Persian than had the translators of the Quran and Islamic text.

As elsewhere in the Muslim world, Arabic was the lingua franca in Medieval Persia. Almost all Persian writers and scholars were bilingual and an extraordinary number of scientists and philosophers continued to write entirely or primarily in Arabic. This is one reason why the border between translation and original work, as envisaged in that culture, appears blurred to us. Before the Mongol invasions of thirteenth century, Persian was primarily the language of literature and Arabic mainly the language of scientific enquiry in Western Asia**.** Anyway, in medieval time Persian was the second most important language of the Muslim world, a position that it has preserved ever since. It is the main language through which Islamic sciences have made their way to Eastern Muslim Lands.

By the thirteenth century, Persian was becoming well established in India as the language of religious, literary and legal learning and communication. A number of important translations began to be made from Sanskrit and other Indian languages into Persian. During the dynasty of Emperor Akbar, the Great, his minister Todor Mal issued a decree making Persian the official governmental language of the Mongol empire.(Dictionary of Translation Studies:1997). Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, Persian cultural centers outside Iran became more important. The officiating of Shi'ism in Iran in sixteenth century shifted the emphasis in translation back to religious texts. However, in 1832, the British colonialism in India initiated the process that resulted in the virtual removal of Persian from the Indian subcontinent. All the affected translation activities in Persian seriously undermined the international character of the language.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, a number of developments resulted in a renaissance of translation activity in Iran. After a century and half of political instability, the Qajar dynasty had returned a semblance of stability to Iranian society early in the century. Soon, translation activity was directed towards disciplines such as history, politics and literature and became an integral part of various modernization projects. The new translation movement was at least as significant in terms of its cultural impact as was the knowledge it transmitted or generated.

By the end of century, translation had made a considerable portion of European sciences and arts available to Iranians, and literary translation of European works had led to new movements aimed at modernizing Persian literature. Thus, Iran entered the twentieth century with an insatiable appetite for translation brought about by a deep thirst for restructuring its state, society and culture along European lines. Translation became the base of a great many philosophical and scientific enquiries, cultural speculations, social activities and political agendas in Iran throughout the twentieth century. It has been considered a necessary component of the drive towards modernity, no less so in the Islamic Republic than in the monarchical state which preceded it. As a result, it has been pursued with an enthusiasm and determination unparalleled in the history of Persian language.

Today, almost all-important works of Western civilization, from Aristotle and Plato to examples of the latest trends in American or French fiction, are available in Persian translation. Still, a distinction can be made between earlier translation activities and those prevailing since World War Two. In the earlier period, translation was considered the best to inform Iranians about the west. Typically, translators conceived of translation as a vehicle to speed up Iran's drive toward modernization. Whether literary, philosophical or historical, they envisioned translation as a vehicle for social or cultural change. In their hands, translation was used primarily as a means of education, as well as a tool for nation building and cultural integration.

Meanwhile, translation had remained a central component of the language learning process, particularly at university level. However, the activity was pursued in fairly traditional ways, which was not always successful for training competent, professional translators and interpreters. The main activity consisted of actual translations, with little discussion of the theoretical underpinnings or the principles governing the process of text production. Typically, students would offer their own translations, discussions would ensue, and a text would be suggested as the best possible rendition of a given original. Through the 1970s,