

The Importance Of Cultural Knowledge In Translation: A Partial Replication Of Olk (2003)

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ABSTRACT

This study partially replicates the study conducted by Olk in 2003 to assess the importance of cultural knowledge in comprehending and translating the texts loaded with cultural references. Considering the fact that language and culture are interwoven, the study aims to show the influence of possessing sufficient cultural knowledge about the foreign language that students learn on their performance. The results of the study confirm the findings obtained by Olk to a certain extent and indicate that Turkish students of English have serious problems in translating cultural concepts. These findings imply that students should be instructed with authentic sources containing cultural references to cope with these problems in foreign language learning.

Keywords: Translation, language, cultural knowledge, authentic materials, cultural references

Çeviride Kültürel Bilginin Önemi: Olk (2003)'ün Kısmi Kopyası

ÖZET

Bu çalışma kültürel öğelerle dolu olan metinlerin çevirisi ve anlaşılmasında kültürel bilginin önemini ölçmek için Olk tarafından 2003 yılında yürütülen çalışmayı kısmen kopyalar. Dil ve kültürün iç içe geçmiş olduğu gerçeğini dikkate alarak çalışma öğrencilerin öğrendikleri dil hakkında yeterli kültürel bilgiye sahip olmasının performansları üzerindeki etkisini göstermeyi amaçlar. Çalışmanın sonuçları Olk'un elde ettiği sonuçları belli ölçüde onaylar ve İngilizce öğrenen Türk öğrencilerin kültürel kavramları çevirmede ciddi problemleri olduğunu gösterir. Bu bulgular öğrencilerin yabancı dil öğrenmede bu öğelerle başa çıkmaları için kültürel öğeler içeren orijinal kaynaklarla eğitilmeleri gereğini belirtir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çeviri, dil, kültürel bilgi, gerçek materyaller, kültürel gönderimler,

Introduction

It is a fact that a close relationship exists between language and culture¹. Pulverness² points out this relationship by putting emphasis on

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¹ F. Klippel, "Cultural aspects in foreign language teaching." *Best of ELTECS*, The British Culture, Manchester, 1995, pp. 106-118 and E. Peterson and B. Coltrane, "Culture in second language teaching." *Eric Digest EDO-FL-03-09*, Center for Applied Linguistics.

the social circumstances which shape language. A similar view is expressed by Bassnett-McGuire³ to indicate the inseparability of language and culture:

No language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its center, the structure of natural language. Language, then, is the heart within the body of culture, and it is the interaction between the two that results in the continuation of life-energy.

In fact, the relationship between language and culture becomes obvious when the definitions provided for the term culture are carefully examined. Thriveni⁴ describes it as an item covering all aspects of life expanding from history to traditional customs. A similar definition is made by Edward Burnett Tylor⁵.

Torop⁶ writes that culture has its own languages or sign systems which the members of the culture use to communicate and the languages of the culture are to be learned to understand it. According to Peterson and Coltrane⁷, language reflects culture and hence cultural knowledge is a must in learning a foreign language. Klippel⁸ draws the attention to the same point by stating that “learning a language therefore implies learning something about culture as well.” Students can have a better command of the foreign language if they gain a background knowledge and understanding about the cultures using the language they learn.

However, as a natural result of the general trend giving importance to structure more than any other component of language, the teaching of culture has been neglected for a long time. After the 1960s it was accepted that there was a link between language learning and culture learning⁹. Translation studies have greatly contributed to raising an awareness of the importance of cultural knowledge. Translation has been seen as the transfer of culture in the West besides accepting it one

² A. Pulverness, “English as a foreign culture: ELT and British Cultural Studies.” *British Studies Now Anthology Issues 6-10*, The British Culture, 1999, p. 101.

³ S. Bassnett-McGuire, *Translation Studies*, Routledge, New York, 1980, p.14.

⁴ C. Thriveni, “Cultural elements in translation: The Indian perspective.” *Translation Journal*, vol. 6/1, 2002, p.46.

⁵ Edward Burnett Tylor’s definition is cited in D. Katan, *Translating Cultures: An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters and Mediators*, St. Jerome Publishing, Manchester, 1999, p.16.

⁶ P. Torop, “Translation as translating as culture.” *Sign Systems Studies*, vol. 30/2, 2002, p. 600.

⁷ Peterson and Coltrane, *ibid*, p.1.

⁸ Klippel, *ibid*, p.107.

⁹ Klippel, *ibid*, p.107.

of the components forming culture¹⁰. In her book *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*, Snell-Hornby¹¹ writes that the translation process can be envisaged between two cultures involving “cross-cultural transfer” rather than between two languages. Bassnett-McGuire¹² has provided support to this view and argued that a text must be translated by considering culture. For House¹³, ‘meaning’ is really important in translation and translation can be understood within a cultural frame or reference.

These explanations have made the prominent place of culture in foreign language teaching clear and language teaching has been seen as culture teaching¹⁴. This has given way to the integration of culture into foreign language teaching programs and various strategies and materials have been offered to incorporate culture to the curriculum. Authentic sources taken from the foreign language taught to students are discussed as good examples of these materials¹⁵, because authentic materials expose students to the ‘real’ language and increase students’ motivation for learning in a foreign language classroom¹⁶. Peterson and Coltrane¹⁷ also note that using authentic sources “helps to engage students in authentic cultural experiences.” Parallel to this note, Kılıçkaya¹⁸ argues that authentic materials provide authentic cultural information in foreign language teaching.

In his article dealing with the issue of authenticity, which is defined as having a close approximation to the world outside the classroom¹⁹ in the language classroom Breen²⁰ identifies four types of

¹⁰ B. Aksoy, “Kültür odaklı çeviri ve çevirmen.” *Türk Dili*, vol.583, 2000, p.51.

¹¹ M. Snell-Hornby, *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*, John Benjamins Publishing Co., Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1988, pp. 39-64.

¹² Bassnett-McGuire, *ibid*, p.13.

¹³ J. House, “Universality versus culture specificity”, in A. Riccardi (ed.) *Translation Studies: Perspectives on an Emerging Discipline*. Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 92-109.

¹⁴ C. Kramersch, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993, p. 27.

¹⁵ This view has been expressed by the following researchers: C. Edelhoff, “English language learning in Europe: issues, tasks and problems.” *Best of ELTECS*, The British Culture, Manchester, 1995, p.30; F. Kılıçkaya, “Authentic materials and cultural content in EFL classrooms.” *The Internet TESL Journal*, vol. 10/7, 2004, p.2; Kramersch, *ibid*, p. 177; Peterson and Coltrane, *ibid*, 2.

¹⁶ S. McKay, “Teaching English as an international language: Implications for cultural materials in the classroom.” *TESOL Journal*, vol. 9/4, 2000, p. 7.

¹⁷ Peterson and Coltrane, *ibid*, p. 2.

¹⁸ Kılıçkaya, *ibid*, p.2.

¹⁹ This view expressed by McDonough and Shaw (1993:43) is cited in M. MacDonald, R. G. Badger and G. White, “The real thing?: authenticity and academic listening.” *English for Specific Purposes Journal*, vol.19/3, 2000, p.2.

authenticity: text authenticity, learner authenticity, task authenticity and classroom authenticity and stresses the importance of all these items. In relation to text authenticity, he writes:

Authentic texts for language learning are any sources of data which will serve as a means to help the learner to develop an authentic interpretation. That is, any text which can help the learner to discover those conventions of communication in the target language which will enable him or her to gradually come to interpret meaning within the text – or within any other texts – in ways which are likely to be shared with fluent users of the language.

Various sources such as books, journals, newspaper articles, internet, corpora, etc. can be regarded as authentic materials according to the quotation given above. In fact, many of these sources, especially second language (L2) newspaper articles are used in reading, speaking, writing and translation classes to familiarize students with culture as well as the foreign language they learn.

Although L2 newspaper articles are good examples of authentic materials in translation classes, they pose some problems to students since they are loaded with cultural concepts. Students may experience difficulties in translating them into their own language as they require a considerable level of cultural background relating to the target language. Riccardi²¹ expresses the view that the translator will experience some difficulties while transposing the original text as it contains “culture-bound expressions and situations”.

It might seem that students can solve the problems they encounter in decoding the culturally-loaded content with a good dictionary; however, the problems are not so simple. Firstly, as pointed out by Sechrest, Fay and Zaidi²² dictionary language is often not the language used by the people. Secondly, there are many ways of defining words occurring in the dictionary and various terms are employed in the definitions. Therefore it is not easy for students to select the right terms for the translation.

²⁰ M. Breen, “Authenticity in the language classroom.” *Applied Linguistics*, vol.6/1, 1985, p.68.

²¹ A. Riccardi, “Translation and interpretation”, in A. Riccardi (ed.) *Translation Studies: Perspectives on an Emerging Discipline*. Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.86.

²² L. Sechrest, T. L. Fay and S. M. Zaidi, “Problems of translation in cross-cultural communication”, in L. A. Samovar and R. E. Porter (eds.) *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*, Wadsworth Publishing Company, California, 1972, p.161.

The use of authentic materials in translation is beneficial for students, yet as Olk²³ states that little is known about how students solve the problems they experience in translation activities and how their level of cultural knowledge affects the translations they make from the target language into their language. In order to investigate the effect of British cultural knowledge on the translation performance of German degree-level students of English, Olk has carried out an empirical study. This study aims to partially replicate Olk's study to examine whether similar results are obtained when the participants' proficiency level and cultural background are different from the German students. In addition, the strategies used by Turkish students are researched to figure out how students overcome the problems concerning cultural references existing in authentic texts.

Design Of The Study

Olk (2003) conducted his study with 19 German students of English at a German University. The subjects were given a text which was based on an article taken from the newspaper called *The Observer*, and asked to translate this for publication in a German newsmagazine. Olk²⁴ had chosen this text since 'it featured a significant number of British cultural references', such as 'House of Lords', 'Tory', 'Inns of Court', 'barrister', 'public school', 'Victorian', and 'Home Counties'. In fact, the whole text includes many culture-specific items, but Olk studied direct references such as the ones given above as well as connotatively highly meaningful words such as 'class'. The students were allowed to use various culture and learners' dictionaries from English to Turkish and from English to English during the translation. The text used in the data collection is presented in the appendix.

Olk²⁵ also distinguished three different types of comprehension situation to find out where British concepts posed cultural knowledge problems to German students. These were:

- *an overt knowledge problem* which occurs in at least one of the following situations: when a student indicates during the translation or retrospection that he or she is not sure about the meaning of a cultural reference or any feature of its meaning related to its translation; to set up or accept a meaning hypothesis a student looks up the cultural dictionary and he formulates a wrong meaning hypothesis, but corrects this when translating the text.

²³ H. Olk, "Cultural knowledge in translation." *ELT Journal*, vol.57/2, 2003, p. 167.

²⁴ Olk, *ibid*, p.168.

²⁵ Olk, *ibid*, pp.168-169.

- *no knowledge problem* is accepted as the reason of difficulty when none of the processes identified for overt knowledge problems occurred, and the student's written translation did not reveal an apparent misunderstanding of the reference, and finally,
- *a covert knowledge problem* which occurs in at least one of the following situations: when a student generates a wrong meaning hypothesis during the translation task or the retrospection; a student faces a translation problem concerning a cultural reference or chooses an unsuitable solution for a cultural reference, but he or she does not seem to be aware of the culture specific nature of the item; and also the written translation of a student indicates that although no knowledge problem was stated, there is a clear misunderstanding of a cultural reference.

This is a partial replication of Olk's study. Fifty final year English major students attending the Department of English Language and Literature at a university in Turkey participated in the study. The participants were asked to translate the newspaper article given to German students by Olk. The translation activity was administered to the students as a classroom activity in a translation class. The students were allotted enough time to complete the activity. The students whose levels of English proficiency were upper-intermediate according to a cloze test²⁶ administered before collecting the data, translated the text in writing.

As indicated before, the study is a partial replication due to the fact that some modifications have been made in this study: First, in Olk's study the subjects were asked to think aloud while translating the text to gain deeper insight into any problem they encounter in translating the text into German and think-aloud protocols were tape-recorded. Since the number of the students²⁷ taking part in the study was nearly three times bigger than Olk's study the students were not instructed to think aloud.

²⁶ A cloze test assessing the students' proficiency level was given to the students taking part in the data collection. The cloze test was designed from a short text called 'Mary had a Little Lamb' taken from L.G. Alexander's (1964) *Developing Skills* (London: Longman). There were thirty three blanks that should be filled in with the appropriate words. The test was piloted with a small number of students (6 students) from a different class to figure out whether it causes any difficulty to the students and needs any modification before administering to the students. The results obtained from the test were evaluated to see whether most of the students managed to fill in the blanks with the appropriate words by using the contextual clues. The mean score was twenty three with a low standard deviation. Thus, the results of the test showed that the students provided the correct and acceptable answers for two thirds of the blanks in the test.

²⁷ While discussing the implications of his study, Olk (2003:172) describes his own study as a small-scale study with 19 participants. Taking this explanation into account, the number of the students was increased in this study.

Another difference is related to the task, retrospection. That is, each subject in Olk's study was questioned about his/her approach to translating individual cultural references in the text. However, in this study only a small number of all the participants (i.e. 15 students) were questioned about the strategies they used to translate the target items because of the large number of the students included in the data collection.

The third modification is concerned with the students' profile. The students involved in Olk's data gathering had attended at least two 'Landeskunde' (area studies) aiming at presenting a general background of British 'Landeskunde' to the students beside examining key areas of the L2 culture. Furthermore, all of the students except for two students had spent between nine and twelve months in the UK, with the purpose of studying or working as language assistants. Thus they had first hand-experience about the target culture. In the case of the Turkish students, although there is a similarity as regards taking a course about Britain and its cultural structure (i.e. the course 'the History of British Culture'), none of the students have been in the UK before.

Results And Discussion

After collecting the data, the correct answers were analysed. In this analysis the answers which are the correct paraphrase or the translation equivalents of the cultural references investigated in the study were accepted as the correct answers. For example, the translation of the cultural reference item 'the House of Lords' was accepted as correct if the translation equivalent was related to the part of the British parliament including members who are not elected but have positions connected with their rank or title. That is, the target item was correct when the Turkish translation equivalent was the expression 'Lordlar kamarası', but not 'Lordlar evi'.

According to the data analysis procedure explained above the results of the correct answers for each cultural reference item were found and converted into percentage scores. The results obtained from these scores are presented in Table 1. Cultural items presented in the table are given according to the order they occur in the text.

Table 1. The results of the correctly translated cultural items

Cultural item	Raw score	Percentage score %
Britain	50	100
upper class	40	80
Oxbridge	1	2
Clubland	0	0
the Inns of Court	10	20
the House of Lords	26	52
the City of London	0	0
Corporation	12	24
Lord Mayor	28	56
Victorian	43	86
hereditary peers	22	44
public schools	10	20
Royal Opera	45	90
barristers	26	52
Wales	27	54
QC	9	18
Whitehall	1	2
Tory	12	24
Home Counties	15	30
Total	377	754

The results of the correct translation equivalents provided for the cultural reference items showed that 39 per cent of the answers was correct. However, the overall percentage suggested that the students had not acquired sufficient knowledge about British cultural concepts during their studies as the total percentage of correct answers was below 50 percent. The results also revealed that several cultural items such as 'Britain', 'upper class', 'Victorian', or 'Royal Opera' were not problematic for the students because they did not require any specific expertise in British culture. The overall percentage score calculated for these words was nearly 90% and this provided supporting evidence that these words were easy to translate.

As a brief remainder, the results presented in Olk's study restrict the direct comparison of the present study with it as the raw score for each cultural reference is not given and also the approximate percentage scores with the expressions 'more than' and 'almost' are provided in the discussion of the results. Some words or word combinations such as *barristers*, *public schools*, *Home Counties*, *The House of Lords*, etc. are given as cultural reference items but it is not indicated whether these words or word combinations have been included in the data set for the analysis. Only an overall result (i.e. 57%) is presented for the cultural

references which do not create knowledge problem, but it is unknown which items, apart from 'Britain', 'upper class', 'Victorian', and 'Royal Opera', were classified as items creating no knowledge problem.

The rest of the percentage score was divided into two parts as the percentage score for the items causing overt knowledge problems (i.e. 35 percent) and that for the items causing covert knowledge problems (i.e. 8 percent) in Olk's study. As to the overt knowledge problems nearly 80 percent or more than 80 percent of the German students had difficulty with 'Whitehall', 'Inns of Court', 'Home Counties' and 'Corporation'. The percentage score of the correct translations for the word combination 'hereditary peers' which was presented as an item causing overt as well as covert knowledge problems was 26% in the study. All the participants confessed that they have not come across the term 'QC' before. The correct percentage scores of the cultural references 'City of London' and 'Clubland' were quite low as they were the items causing covert knowledge problems. Some students attempted to translate these concepts through guessing at their meanings but mostly they misinterpreted them. Olk attributed the incorrect translations provided by the students to the insufficient cultural knowledge they possess about the terms.

The results of this study were similar to Olk's results in terms of the items causing serious knowledge problems to the students. More than one third of cultural references (i.e. Oxbridge, Clubland, the Inns of Court, the City of London, Corporation, QCs, Whitehall, Tory) were difficult since few students provided translation equivalents for the concepts 'the Inns of Court' (20%), 'Corporation' (24%), 'QCs' (18%), 'Whitehall' (2%) and 'Tory' (24%), and none of the students, except for one student who guessed the meaning of the term 'Oxbridge' from the beginning of the word 'Oxford' and the end of the word 'Cambridge', translated the other two items but kept them in their original forms in the Turkish text.

Among these cultural references, 'Whitehall', 'Inns of Court', 'Home Counties', 'Corporation' and 'QC' were given as items causing overt knowledge problems in Olk's study. Including the cultural reference hereditary peers whose percentage score is 44, the total percentage score for all these items is nearly 23% and it corresponds to a little more than the half of percentage score calculated for these items by Olk. The percentage score calculated for the hereditary peers was higher than the other words as almost half of the students looked up this word combination in monolingual dictionaries and found the English definition given for it. No correct translation was present for the expressions City of London and Clubland. Therefore the results showed that Turkish

students did not provide a correct translation equivalent, except for borrowing the expressions directly from the target language, for these two items causing covert knowledge problems. In Olk's study 21% of the students gave the correct answer for 'city of London' whereas only 5% understood 'Clubland.' Many of his students expressed their uncertainty and lack of knowledge for the cultural references.

In the present study the students taking part in the retrospection stated that they considered most of the items as proper nouns and left them untranslated. In fact they put forward this reason for all the items whose translation equivalents in Turkish were not given. They mentioned that they thought like that since they were written in capital letters. Most of the students did not even check the dictionary to find out if there is a corresponding item in Turkish. They treated 'Whitehall', 'Tory' and 'Wales' as proper nouns which should be used in their original form though they have heard these in their courses. Additionally, most of the students reported that so far they have not come across the concepts 'QCs', 'Oxbridge', 'the City of London' and 'Clubland'.

Roughly 50% of the students achieved success in translating the items 'Lord Mayor' (56%), 'the House of Lords' (52%), 'New Labour' (58%), 'Wales' (54 %) and finally 'barrister' (52%), through making use of dictionaries, yet 70% of the participants had no ideas about the meanings of 'Home Counties' and 80% about the concept 'public schools'. Some of the students made an attempt to translate the item 'Home Counties' by misinterpreting the second word 'County' as 'country'. A similar case was observed in the translation of the term 'public schools'. Relying on the meaning of the word 'public' in its individual use they provided the expression 'state school' or 'college' for this compound word.

The term 'City of London' was translated but none of the translations were correct. It was used to refer to London as a whole or just only the city centre, but not to describe the financial centre of London. The translation of this item implied that students had inadequate cultural knowledge about the target language they study. The retrospective data showed that the students combined the meanings of the components as in the translation of the item 'public school' and produced the corresponding expression in their own language.

One striking feature of the data was, as mentioned above, that most of the students did not translate most of cultural reference items, thinking that they should leave them in their original forms because they

are proper nouns. As expressed by Olk²⁸, this is a safe solution from the students' point of view yet unsatisfactory in terms of communication, since the students of English do not know these items which are impossible for 'average' readers to comprehend. In fact, transferring the titles, institutions and geographical, historical places and names, newspaper, book, magazine names to the target language is one of the methods suggested by Newmark²⁹ to overcome the difficulty students have in translating a text. Vinay Darbelnet³⁰ proposes the term borrowing to describe the procedure of transferring the second language word directly to the target language. This is a strategy students can use while translating a text but the results of the study indicated that the students need help to understand where a proper noun or word is transferred from the source language to the target language as they may not identify it because of lack of sufficient cultural knowledge.

To overcome the cultural knowledge problems students consulted dictionaries, either reference dictionaries or learners' dictionaries in their own language or in the target language; however, dictionaries do not sometimes present a word as the definition of the unknown word but include a long explanation with some examples. The students showed the tendency of paraphrasing this long explanation instead of finding the corresponding expression in their native language. Thus insufficient cultural knowledge led the students to include details and to make explicit explanations about cultural references. This strategy gave the impression that the students had not the skill of transforming formal information into target-text expressions. Olk³¹ reached the same conclusion with regard to dictionary use in his study.

The comparison of Olk's study with this study showed that despite the existence of several differences as regards overall percentage scores and also evaluation procedures between the studies, the cultural references causing difficulty to German students were not comprehended by Turkish students, either. The comprehension problems were bigger for Turkish students as their acquaintance with British culture was restricted to the knowledge they acquired in different courses during their studies. For that reason the percentages of the overall correct answers and those of the individual items were low for most of the cultural

²⁸ Olk, *ibid*, p.171

²⁹ The methods suggested by P. Newmark (1982:96-98) are given in B. Aksoy, *Geçmişten Günümüze Metin Çevirisi*, İmge Kitabevi, Ankara, 2002, pp.91-92

³⁰ The explanation made by V. Darbelnet (2000:84-93) is cited in J. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, Routledge, London and New York, 2001, pp.57-58.

³¹ Olk, *ibid*, p. 172

references. Few higher percentage scores calculated for Turkish students were the result of the aid learners got from the dictionaries.

Implications

Although this study has some limitations in terms of the design and evaluation criteria in comparison with Olk's study, it still sheds light on several important points relevant to the application of cultural knowledge to translation. Therefore, in view of the findings of the study, some suggestions can be made for tutors and students.

As can be seen in the results of the study, the students doing an undergraduate degree in L2 and getting explicit instruction about the target language and culture do not possess adequate cultural knowledge they can employ while translating culture-specific concepts. It is a real truism, as expressed by Cordero³², that "culture-bound concepts, even where the two cultures involved are not too distant, can be more problematic for the translator than the semantic and syntactic difficulties of a text." This implies that students should be exposed to authentic sources including factual references to familiarise them with cultural references. Researchers offer literary texts as rich authentic resources in which the language and the culture interact³³. McCarthy and Carter³⁴ explain the challenge and the necessity of attending to literary texts as follows:

... understanding a text that can depend not simply on knowledge of word or sentence meaning but also, crucially, on cultural frames of reference and meanings [...] language is not unproblematically transparent and neutral; language is a site in which beliefs, values and points of view are produced, encoded and contested.

Literary texts with their culturally bounded context can raise students awareness of the interaction between culture and language. In addition to literary texts, Peterson and Coltrane present some useful ideas as materials such as using proverbs, culture capsules, film and television segments, photographs, web-sites, etc.

In the light of the findings of the study, common strategies employed by the students are to transfer the cultural reference whose initial letter starts with an upper case to the translation text without

³² Cordero (1984: 473)'s view is cited in R. Leppihalme, *Culture Bumps: An Empirical Approach to the Translation of Allusions*, Multilingual Matters Ltd., Clevedon, 1997, p.2.

³³ Pulverness, *ibid*, p.102, and Peterson and Coltrane, *ibid*, p.2.

³⁴ The explanation made by McCarthy and Carter (1994:155) is cited in Pulverness, *ibid*, pp. 102-103

finding a corresponding translation equivalent, even if there is one; to look up a reference source for identifying the translation equivalent and to combine the meanings of the individual words in a word combination to translate the expression from the source language to the target language. Nevertheless, as given above, these strategies do not sometimes work. Therefore students need guidance from their tutors to understand when and where they can apply these strategies. Tutors should use the texts which include proper nouns whose translation equivalents exist and make them translate these items with their translation equivalents into the students' native language.

Tutors should not think that students can survive by consulting dictionaries if they encounter any comprehension and production problems because they may not have the skill of adapting the information or definition presented in such sources to the acceptable cultural translation equivalents in their native language. They should be provided with the texts which help them gain the skills of using, paraphrasing and expressing the dictionary definitions properly. They should also be informed about cultural aspects of the language they learn and offered some opportunities to practice how they can transform the encyclopaedic information into corresponding expressions in their own language. Tutors should instruct them about compound words and word combinations whose meanings are not composed of core meanings of their components. In addition, they should make use of findings of the research studies about translation and cultural knowledge in the design of curriculum. This can increase the quality of the translation course offered to students.

Furthermore, students should be careful about the specific cultural references. They should also make special efforts to learn and accumulate information about such concepts in order to find a translation equivalent in their own language rather than to accept these concepts as items that should be rendered in their original form. They should always bear in mind the fact that the culture and language of a nation are inseparable as two sides of the same coin and they need to learn the cultural references beside the language.

Conclusion

Culture should be considered a vital component of language learning and foreign language teachers should instruct students about key cultural references at the relevant points. Lack of adequate cultural knowledge causes difficulty in comprehending texts full of cultural references when translating them into the students' native language. This may not be seen to be the most crucial problem in the language learning process but culture and language are interwoven and students

should be endowed with the skills of comprehending cultural meanings as well as producing them properly in the target language. Students of foreign language can achieve better mastery of the target language if they gain enough cultural knowledge.