Maha Aldhahi, Swansea University

Formulaic Sequences as Cross-Cultural Competence in the Translation Process

In this paper I will attempt to clarify the relationship between the translation of formulaic sequences and cross-cultural communication. Formulaic sequences (FS) - that have strong cultural elements - are stored and retrieved by speakers as if they were single words. Members of a cultural group learn how to use formulaic sequences to communicate effectively within the group. Thus the translator, in this sense, should reproduce the close nature equivalence in the target language (TL) that helps the members of the second group to communicate the message effectively. This poses some challenges for professional translators when they translate formulaic language as the meaning of individual word does not have the same meaning for whole. For instance, the English simile *as wise as an owl* corresponds to the Arabic simile حكيم كالقمان ; the back translation is *wise like Loqman (*a famous man of his wisdom in Arabic culture). Also the meaning for some FS does not have a direct translation equivalent in the TL. For instance, the Arabic idiom لا ناقة لي فيها ولا جمل translates literally as 'no female nor male camel' but a more suitable translation in English would be along the lines of *this matter doesn't concern me!*, for example. That is clear in such expressions that depend upon cultural background knowledge such as idioms, proverbs, similes, clichés, common sayings, commandments and prayers, which reflect differences between the two languages involved in this study, namely English and Arabic. These challenges happen when either the image or the meaning of the source language (SL) expression does not exist in or is unfamiliar in the TL; the lack of knowledge of different conceptual beliefs, attitudes, values, etc. can lead to mistranslation between the TL and the SL. The role of translators is to find the most approximately close expressions in the TL that have the same effect between the receivers on the SL with the original expression.