

Indirect Techniques of Translation

Definition of Adaptation in Translation

Adaptation is a translation technique in which elements of the source text are modified to better fit the target culture, language, or audience. It is often used when a direct translation would not convey the same meaning, impact, or cultural relevance. Adaptation may involve changing cultural references, humor, or even entire sentences to achieve such an equivalence in effect rather than in literal meaning.

Examples of Adaptation

1. Cultural References

- **English (ST):** "He is as famous as Batman."
- **Arabic (TT):** "إنه مشهور مثل عنتر" (*He is as famous as Antar.*)

If the audience is unfamiliar with Batman, a well-known local figure might be used instead.

2. Brand Names and Advertising Slogans

- **McDonald's English slogan:** "I'm lovin' it."
- **French adaptation:** "C'est tout ce que j'aime." (*That's everything I love.*)

Instead of a literal translation, the French version maintains the essence of the message while making it sound natural.

3. Children's Literature

- **English (ST):** "The itsy-bitsy spider climbed up the water spout."
- **French (TT):** "L'araignée Gypsie monte à la gouttière." (*Gypsie the spider climbs up the gutter.*)

Here, "itsy-bitsy" has been replaced with a name, and "water spout" has been adapted to "gutter" to fit rhyme and meter in French.

4. Greetings and Common Expressions

- **English (ST):** "What's up?"
- **French (TT):** "Ça va ?" (*How's it going?*)

A literal translation ("*Qu'est-ce qui se passe ?*") would sound unnatural. Instead, an adapted expression is used.

5. Food and Drinks

- **English (ST):** "He had bacon and eggs for breakfast."
- **Arabic (TT):** "تناول الفول والخبز على الإفطار" (*He had fava beans and bread for breakfast.*)

Since bacon is not commonly eaten in Arab cultures, it is adapted to a more familiar breakfast food.

6. School Grades

- **English (ST):** "She is in the 10th grade."
- **British English (TT):** "She is in Year 11."
- **French (TT):** "*Elle est en seconde.*"

Education systems differ, so the grade level is adapted to match the target audience's system.

7. Currency and Measurements

- **English (ST):** "The jacket costs \$50."
- **European French (TT):** "*La veste coûte 45 euros.*"

Since different currencies are used, the price is adapted rather than directly translated.

8. Animals and Cultural Symbolism

- **English (ST):** "As wise as an owl."
- **Chinese (TT):** "聪明如猴子." (*As clever as a monkey.*) **Partager**

9. Time and Weather Expressions

- **English (ST):** "It's freezing outside!"
- **Arabic (TT):** "الجو بارد جدًا!" (*The weather is very cold!*)

The word *freezing* doesn't always have an exact equivalent, so it is adapted to a natural expression.

10. Celebrations and Holidays

- **English (ST):** "We had a big Thanksgiving dinner."
- **French (TT):** "*Nous avons fait un grand repas de fête.*" (*We had a big holiday meal.*)

Since Thanksgiving is not celebrated in France, the sentence is adapted to a general holiday meal.

Exercise: Translation the following sentences by using adaptation, even if these sentences could be idioms or proverbs.

- **English (ST):** "It's raining cats and dogs!"
- **Arabic (TT):** -----
- **English (ST):** "He woke up at the crack of dawn."
- **Arabic (TT):** -----
- **English (ST):** "They are as different as night and day."
- **Arabic (TT):** -----
- **English (ST):** "Break a leg!" (used to wish someone good luck)
- **Arabic (TT):** -----
- **English (ST):** "He has a sweet tooth."
- **Arabic (TT):** -----
- **English (ST):** "A little bird told me."
- **Arabic (TT):** -----
- **English (ST):** "Keep your fingers crossed!"
- **Arabic (TT):** -----
- **English (ST):** "Don't put all your eggs in one basket."
- **Arabic (TT):** -----
- **English (ST):** "The ball is in your court."
- **Arabic (TT):**-----