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Strategies for translating Turkish, English and French animal proverbs: Comparative study

Abstract

Each language contains distinctive properties that are a part of its culture. Throughout history there has been a constant interest in designing and collecting proverbs, as far as they are reflective of both cultural resemblances and dissimilarities. Culture- and language-specific proverbs frequently cannot be translated into the target language literally, although, it can be assumed that their messages can be transferred to be adequately comprehended in the target language. The current study examines the proverbs that are equivalent in context in Turkish, English and French where at least one of them is animal-related. It looks into the techniques used in translating these proverbs among the three languages. Two of the five Mona Baker's strategies were applied to the analyzed material: (i) similarity both in meaning and form, (ii) similarity in meaning and dissimilarity in form. As a result, among 18 groups of proverbs selected for analysis (each including Turkish, English and French equivalents and 2 literal translation – Turkish-to-English and French-to-English), 5 demonstrated equivalence of form, context and meaning with the same animal nominations. Among the 13 groups, 9 showed higher equivalence between English and French proverbs, 3 – between Turkish and French proverbs and only 1 – between Turkish and English proverbs. The reason why one or two languages of the three have an animal nomination in a proverb while the other(s) does/ do not have any may be traditional, religious, geographical or historical differences.

Keywords: concept, proverb, translation strategy, equivalent, literal translation, similarity of meaning, similarity of form

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