CULTURE, MEDIA & FILM | RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Emic-Etic approach to the rendition of emotiveness in Mourid Barghouti’s autobiography: As an intercultural communication encounter

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Abstract: There is always some aspect of meaning which appears to be difficult to capture and transmit to the target culture (TC) and it happens to be as important as any other denotive aspects. The primary purpose of this study is to account for the cultural losses resulting from overlooking “the translatability of emotiveness” in an autobiography titled I Saw Ramallah. This study underlies the problems which have resulted form not acting as a cultural insider in both the source and target cultures and relying on a specific translation strategy which did not take into account such emotive aspects of countless culture-bound expressions (CBEs): over-looking the rendition of emotive or culture-bound expressions constitutes an intercultural translation impediment for the target language (TL) readers. The corpus consists of a thorough analysis of excerpts from the autobiography of I Saw Ramallah with reference to the application of Kenneth Pike's concept of “etic” and “emic” approach to translation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I have had a wide range of teaching experience whether at home or abroad in the U.S.A. I have also been instrumental in supervising more than a dozen M.A. theses in our M.A. Program in Applied Linguistics and Translation. My research focuses on the interplay between language and culture. I frequently explore semantic and pragmatic aspects in the rendition of various texts in an effort to minimize cultural misunderstanding. I have been able to publish several articles in peer-referred journals. My publications include: The Translation of idiomatic Expressions as a Non-Canonical and Marked Structures. Difficulties Encountered by Arabic-Speaking Undergraduate and Graduate English Language Students in Interpreting English Formulaic Expressions. Skopos Theory: as a Paradigm Change. Translation as an Intercultural Communication Encounter. Quranic Verses as a Religious and Cultural Identity. The Pragmatic Functions of the Recitation of Qur’anic Verses: The case of Insha’Allah, “God’s willing”. The Ethnography of Communication of Arabic-Speaking Individuals (in Diplomatic discourse).

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

It has been said that translation is an act of understanding between two cultures by linguistic means. I chose this autobiography as a case study on account that it is a cultural encounter of the traumatic events and unforgettable experience of a person who has been away from his country for more than 45 years. Edward Said considered it to be “one if the finest existential accounts of Palestinian displacement that we now have”. It recounts the daily scenes of Palestinians. Translating autobiography appears to be challenging due to the complexity of tackling cultural differences and accounting for their semiotic and pragmatic functions. The primary purpose of this study is to account for the emotive and associative aspects (connotative meaning) embedded in various textual instances which can’t be culturally transmitted into the target culture. Thus, the translation of such genre might constitute a real challenge to the translator since the translation of an autobiography encompasses the translation of facts, memories, imagination, and fiction.
1. Introduction

The findings of studies on the translation of emotiveness are exceedingly vital in cross-cultural communication; they are bound to reduce the possibilities of having intercultural communication breakdown and maximize the chances for constructive cross-cultural dialogue (see, Mahasneh, 2016; Al-Shunnag et al., 2011; Almanna & Farghal, 2015; Abudallah and Muhammad 2017; Arifin and Abuisaac, 2017, December). It is my contention that translation is an act of understanding between two cultures by linguistic means; it renders itself as a social conduit through which the exchange of cross-cultural ideas flows smoothly; and by virtue of that translation promotes interdisciplinary understanding between/among cultures. The following insightful comment summarizes the essence and urgency of this matter: “The treatment of the emotive component of language is wanting” (Alon, 2005:2). Translating emotion is an important matter since by doing that the chances for intercultural dialogue increase (see, Alon, 2005; Mahasneh, 2016). Alon (ibid) remarks that, “The need for improved tools of communication between ‘westerners’ and Arab-speakers is strongly felt. It results, in part, from language problems, and seems particularly acute for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict” (Alon, 2005: 1).

I saw Ramallah, is an autobiography and at the same time can be regarded as an ethnographic account of a Palestinian poet. It narrates the traumatic events and unforgettable experiences which have lead to the displacement of Palestinians and the circumstances imposed on them by their own occupier. It underscores the role which language plays in reflecting the mindset of an entire community. This autobiography happens to be laden with political and cultural expressions whose meaning goes beyond the conceptual one and by virtue of that accounting for the associative meanings becomes of great significance in this narrative. This has motivated me to explore the invaluable information embedded in this literary genre. It is as Edward Said described it, “one of the finest existential account of Palestinian displacement.” In fact, I dare to say that it is an autobiography of an entire community. According to Taylor (2014) the significance of this type of literary genre stems from having referential meaning rather than fictitious.

I have become interested in this autobiography on account that it is replete with aspects of emotiveness and culture-bound expressions (CBEs) which begs the need for deep investigation of whether the translatability of emotiveness can be transmitted coherently to the host culture and be experienced by the readers of the target language (referred to hereinafter as TL) the way they are experienced by the source language readers (referred to hereinafter as SL) or not. Translation is an intercultural communication encounter whose sole purpose is to transmit the same intended meaning of any rendition and its effects on the TL audience (Nazzal, 2012). The findings of pertinent studies on emotiveness point out that the translatability of emotiveness constitutes a real impediment in intercultural communication since it may not arouse the same feeling or reaction in the TL readers as it is likely to stir in the SL readers or users (see, Mahasneh, 2016; Al-Shunnag et al., 2011). This is exactly the primary contribution of this manuscript. It highlight the importance of exposing the TL readers to the same experience that of the SL readers on account that emotive expressions are both culture and language specific (see, Mahasneh, 2016; Al-Shunnag et al., 2011).

Indeed, the most sensible finding that can be inferred from the translation of this particular genre is that the act of translation wouldn’t be adequate unless it captures all associative elements deemed important for the overall meaning of this referential autobiography (Albzour, 2016; Hatim & Mason, 1990). This autobiography is culture-specific; it contains countless number...
of words with emotive and culture-bound expressions (CB/SEs). Focusing on the denotative meaning of such words would not suffice the task of the translator particularly when the reader of such text is bound to perceive such words differently and arrive at a different conclusion. As a result of that, opting for the literal translation strategy of certain expressions may not be the optimal way to transmit the emotive aspect (or the symbolic meaning/ the “emic”) of the SL to the TC since its audience members would not be able to elicit the same responses which the readers of the SL have conceived of. As a consequence, the translator is hard-pressed to use other translation strategies to fully and adequately transmit the same response and minimize the consequences of such an impediment particularly if the languages involved have descended from two distinct families of languages (Garcia, 1996; Mahasneh, 2016).

In this article I focus on several but related issues to the translatability of emotiveness: the problem of emotiveness as a symbolic/deep meaning which should be accounted for by the translator as a cultural insider; the application of Kenneth Pike’s (1954) approach to account for the cultural losses resulting from overlooking the emotive aspect embedded in the rendition of this autobiography; the merits of applying Kenneth Pike’s (ibid) approach to the rendition of culture-specific expressions since its primary focus is on the interplay between the rules of language and those of culture. The last component of this article constitutes the most contributing and significant part; it provides a thorough analysis of excerpts attesting to such cultural losses which the TL readers would not be able to be exposed to or experience as a result of the translator’s opting for a specific translation strategy over another and not acting as a cultural insider in both cultures (the SL & TL).

1.1. Definition of Pike’s (1954) Etic-Emic concept
Pike’s concept of “etic” and “emic” is derived from the words phonetics and phonemics to account for both the superficial “outside” and deep/symbolic “insider” level of meaning of any cultural or emotionally charged expressions. Pike (ibid) believed that just as there are two distinct but related levels to the analysis of language: the phonetic and phonemic form; there are also two distinct perspectives to account for a specific culture and its interpretation. The application of Pike’s dichotomy initially was done to account for the “need to include nonverbal behavior in linguistic description” (Pike, 1990: 18). This concept is used to account for the assumption that any linguistic sound system has two levels: the “outsider” or “etic” level of the language and the “emic” or insider’s level. Anderson (Anderson, 2003:391) has illustrated Pike’s dichotomy further by highlighting the importance of taking into account both the “etics”, i.e. the superficial level of the language and “emics”, i.e. the symbolic level of the language while dealing with the text at hand. Another scholar who has explicated this dichotomy persuasively was Mason who stated that “Etic approaches involve analyzing cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who does not participate in the culture being studied [...]. In contrast, emic approaches involve investigating and explaining cultural patterns from the standpoint of one immersed within a culture.” (Mason, 2014, p. 1) By all means, the application of Pike’s (1954, 1990) dichotomy affords us the opportunity to acknowledge the existence of two distinct but meaningful levels linguistically and culturally. These two distinct levels have to be taken into consideration when one is looking at language analysis phonetically or phonemically or when one is interpreting a culture-bound instance. To spell out the real meaning of this approach, let me cite an instance (or an excerpt) from the same autobiography to show the merits of applying this approach to any cultural-bound/specific expressions.

"Widad’s brother held my shoulders tight. I heard him say: “for God’s sake, Mourid, calm down, my brother, calm down, so that we can stay on our feet.” P.17"
One of the merits of applying this approach is that it affords the researcher the mechanism to uncover the subtle interaction of the rules of language and culture; it also assists the researcher in finding the distinction between the conceptual and figurative meaning of any culture-bound /specific expression. The Arabic expression “so that we can stand on our feet” in the above excerpt has two distinct meanings contingent upon the context where this expression is being said or communicated. Conceptually or denotatively this expression means to be able for someone to stand physically on one’s feet. Such a perception represents the outsider’s or the etic perspective. However, this expression has symbolic or emic meaning; it was being uttered to Mourid while he was burying his close friend. It was meant to encourage Mourid to be strong and stand the hardships and restrictions imposed on Palestinian by the occupier. This particular expression was communicated to Mourid on the day they had to bury the Palestinian novelist Ghassan Kanafani who was assassinated. Mourid was told to stay strong and endure such calamity. The translator has been able to be an insider in the source culture (SC) by encoding the same experience in the target culture since it appears that both Arabic and English conceptualize such experience in the same way or manner. If for some reason the translator fails to account for both the ‘emic and “etic” meaning, then he/she falls into what Al-Masri (2009) calls the trap of being “a cognitive blinder”. What this implies is that when the translator’s over-familiarity with the source language induces him to assume that the target reader is familiar with this cultural expression, he/she gets trapped. To adequately account for an “etic, emic” approach the translator has to be an insider in the source culture and being able to encode such cultural experience in the target culture. He/she has to find harmony between the source and target culture with regard to both the conceptual and symbolic meaning of any culture-bound/specific expression. Otherwise, he/she is destined to commit a cultural loss which in turns cause an intercultural misunderstanding. Pike’s (ibid) dichotomy is being used as a mechanism to underlie the subtle interplay between language and culture; and by virtue of that avoiding cultural losses requires that one can account for both conceptual and symbolic meaning of any culture-bound /specific expression.

2. The problem of Emotiveness

“Emotiveness”, as a stylistic concept appears to be pervasive in this lyrical narrative. The meaning of emotive expressions is part of the associative meaning since different readers are destined to draw different feelings of elation or sadness depending on their familiarity with the narrative they are dealing with. Such expressions are bound to arouse certain feelings and reaction in the text users (Mahasneh, 2010, 2016; Al-Shunnaq et al., 2011). Emotive aspects can be considered a species of CSEs since they are culture-specific. This makes the task of accounting for the emotive meaning extremely difficult. Emotiveness appears to be contingent on various elements such as context and culture; therefore, some languages seem to harbor more emotive aspects than other languages. Arabic is such language as Mahasneh (2010) claims; it is one of these languages whose vocabulary words conjure a lot of emotiveness. According to her (ibid) “emotiveness has different layers and therefore when translated, it certainly has different degrees of intensity” (P. 109).

Emotiveness has been discussed and dealt with by many scholars who have expressed their different views and perspectives on this particular concept (Arifin and Abuissaac, 2017; Shunnaq, 1993; Nida, 1964; Leech, 1974; Volek, 1987). To start Shunnaq (1993, 2000) claims that the use of rhetorical devices provides and creates a fertile matrix for the invocation of emotiveness. However, emotiveness in this narrative does not seem to depend solely on the use of rhetorical devices since the text reader can elicit emotive meaning upon encountering instances of political and cultural expressions and therefore emotiveness is not necessarily confined to the use f rhetorical devices only. Emotions are also difficult to account for since they are culture-specific and situation-bound (see, Mahasneh, 2016; Al-Shunnaq et al., 2011). They vary from one individual to another depending on various factors. This makes the task of accounting for them exceedingly difficult. Such perplexity has been exemplified intelligibly in the following comments by Hare on the interpretation of emotion: “How do we know which words are the words for emotions? Only from the role
they play in the local culture, picking out displays that seem to express judgments of one’s own and other people’s behavior along dimensions familiar to all of us, having to do with loss, possession, and enjoyment and so on” (Hare, 1998: 46).

**It is my contention that** “emotiveness” can be an aspect of manifold functions and by virtue of that it can potentially be a real challenge to be tackled by the translator/reader in this autobiography. **Such a conclusion has been reached in the translation of irony and other rhetorical devices such as puns and euphemism in Quranic text** (see, Abuisaac et al., 2018). For instance, the translation of certain lexical items such as “common and abstract nouns which are politically charged like ‘the uprising’ and ‘Generation of stones’ and the word ‘uprooting’, are highly emotive expressions since they evoke the feelings of SL readers on account that they are related to the Palestinians” struggle against the Israeli occupation. Consequently, rendering such expressions into English with the same force as they are in Arabic would be a mammoth task. According to Newmark (1996) language reflects the influence of politics in every aspect of our life. Such influence usually and frequently manifests itself in certain emotive expressions. The challenges that the rendition of this narrative pose to the target audience stems from the cultural loss which the target audience is likely to experience upon reading the rendition of this narrative. Only acquainted readers with the SC and the political context of such expressions would probably feel and experience the emotive aspects embedded in such expressions. As a result of that, failure to account for the rendition of emotiveness would constitute a sheer instance of an intercultural translation impediment.

Unlike other scholars, Volek (1987) states that people have a tendency to associate certain feeling and emotion upon encountering such expressions since they remind them of important events or occasions which have some lasting effect on their lives. While emotive expressions can be translated, they constitute a real impediment for both the translator and text readers/users on account that the rendition of any emotive expression may not transmit the same response or experience to the TL audience; and by virtue of that the perception of the SL audience is destined to be partially different and not identical. **According to Abuisaac et al. (2018) the rendition of emotive expressions constitutes a real challenge since it has a wide range of meanings which are difficult to account for adequately.**

Emotive meaning is culture-specific and it varies from one language to another particularly when the languages concerned are too distant languages like English and Arabic (see, Leech, 1974; Mahasneh, 2010, 2016; Al-Shunnaq et al., 2011; Ouided, 2016). According to Pike (1990) translation should account for both implied (the emic) and surface level meaning (the etic) to achieve cultural equivalence. This implies that unless the translator demonstrates an emic understanding of both cultures, s/he would not be able to achieve an etic understanding (see, Al-Masri, 2009). Unlike denotative meaning, associative meaning constitutes a real problem since people may differ on its aspects and as a result of that it constitutes a real problem for the translator.

3. Culture and translation
One of the primary functions of intercultural translation is the ability of the translator to transmit the values of a specific concept from the SL to the TL audience as intelligibly as possible. Following Bassinet’s (1992) views, the process of translation is not a mere transfer of a linguistic code from one system to another but it rather involves finding harmony between two cultural systems. In fact, Snell-Hornby (Snell-Hornby, 1988/1995, p. 46) considered this act to be “a cross-cultural transfer and the translator should be bicultural, if not pluri-cultural”. What Bassinet (Ibid) and Snell-Hornby (Ibid) claim coincides with other scholars’ views that the act of translation proves to be an intercultural communication encounter (see, Nazzal, 2012; Vermeer, 2000). If so, then it should not surprise us to run into countless instances in which the translator finds himself in a peculiar situation and can’t find a TL equivalent.
Many scholars acknowledge the influence of a specific culture on the mindset of its speakers; while this influence is not easy to discern, such influence manifests itself in the attitudes that speakers of that culture manifest in their behavior or in the worldview they hold (Feiq, 2004; Suleiman & Dweik, 2013; Whorf, 1956). Others define culture and its influence on our thinking and perception as “a shared mental model or map” used to account for reality and organize one’s life (Katan, 1999, p. 26). Such ideas have manifested themselves in the translator’s rendition of this autobiography.

Emotiveness is an integral component of culture; it is possible to transmit it through translation, considering that translation renders itself as a means for the transmission of ideas from one culture to another. In the rendition of this autobiography, the translator should have provided a historical background on certain highly charged lexical items deemed important for the TL audience. As a consequence, translation renders itself as a highly significant means with which the transfer of intercultural meaning occurs. According to Bahameed (2008), “lexical items” may have cross-linguistic equivalents but such lexical items can bear or conjure up different connotations and by virtue of that they are perceived differently cross-culturally. This seems to pertain to the impediment which the translatability of emotiveness in this autobiography has probably caused for the target audience. Other scholars claim that such cultural differences between two genetically remote languages appear and manifest themselves in the lexical function of certain words (Ilyas, 1989).

4. Methodology
This autobiography is genuinely an ethnographic work. It embodies some of the concepts which Alfred Schultz’s talked about i.e., the interpretation of social reality as it is manifested in the meanings that people hold about that reality (as cited in Russell, 1995, p. 15). Because of the complexity of accounting for emotiveness, the methodology in this study relied on the application of Pike’s (1954) concept of “etic” and “emic” to account for the cultural losses in the rendition of emotive and culture-specific expressions (CSEs). The relevance of this approach stems from the fact that Pike’s (ibid) concept focuses on the interplay between language and culture. It affords the researcher to account for both the conceptual meaning as well as the figurative one in emotive and culture-specific expressions. As a consequence, cultural equivalences can be accomplished between the SC and TC.

According to Bourgois (1995) there are two different perspectives when dealing and applying Pike’s etic-emic approach culturally. The etic view focuses on the outsider’s perspective on the culture he/she is studying without immersing himself/herself in it. So in this respect the researcher is acting as an outsider who observes and looks into a specific culture. Such process is called data-gathering process in which the researcher engages in for the sake of understanding specific cultural ritual or practice. The drawback about this view/perspective is that the researcher imposes his/her own system on the target culture and therefore is influenced by his/her background knowledge. The other view is the emic one and in which the researcher focuses on the intrinsic cultural aspects which are meaningful to the members of specific community. Such view represents an insider’s view or perspective. In this instance the researcher’s perspective relies on his/her immersion in that specific culture. The merit of the insider’s perspective is that it reveals the real meaning of specific practice or ritual as perceived by the insider of that culture so it is more reliable than the outsider’s view/perspective.

The corpus of data in this study consists of instances of cultural losses resulting from overlooking the emotive aspects in such excerpts. These excerpts are taken from the autobiography itself and represent a set of cultural losses and highly charged expressions. In addition, the excerpts cited in this study chronicle cultural encounters with some important events in the life of Mourid Barghouti and his own community. The rendition of this autobiography is done by Ahdaf Soueif, an Egyptian novelist and reputable critic. Soueif became highly known after she has published two great literary pieces in English, titled, In the Eye of the Sun and the Map of Love. I am highly impressed by her excellent rendition of this autobiography. Her insightful
rendition has successfully communicated the conceptual meaning of this autobiography and has indeed given this existential account of the Palestinian experience more vitality, urgency, and lasting humane dimension. I am highly indebted to her intellect and scholarship. However, there is another aspect of meaning which happens to be as important as the conceptual one. It has to do with the associative meaning embedded in some emotive and culture-specific expressions. This study is carried out to underline the importance of this aspect of meaning since overlooking it deprives the target audience of the opportunity to elicit the same experience that of the readers of the SC. Such a discrepancy constitutes an intercultural communication impediment.

5. Instances of emotiveness
At the outset, it is highly important to point out that the rendition of emotive or CB/CSs is contingent upon achieving cultural harmony between two different cultures and languages. This process becomes exceedingly challenging since Arabic and English belong to two distinct families of languages. Arabic is a Semitic language whereas English is Germanic. This is bound to widen the cultural gap between these two distinct languages and at the same time increases the need for more cross-cultural dialogue for the sake of achieving cultural harmony. The task of the translator becomes highly enormous since she has to act as an insider in both cultures for the sake of finding cultural equivalences. This brings us to the merits of using Pike’s etic-emic approach to account for any cultural losses found in the rendition of this autobiography.

Cultural losses are losses of the cultural identity of the SC and mostly associated with connotative meaning. They consist of cultural beliefs, customs, and cultural practices deemed important for the understanding of that specific culture. According to Al-Masri (2009) there is a typology of cultural losses which one has to be acquainted with to adequately account for them. She spelled out these losses in the following: “Cultural losses could be explicit (causing a loss of the cultural meaning of the source text both on the surface and deep levels), implicit loss (causing a loss on the deep level/concealed cultural information), modified (altering the realities of the source text, as experienced by the source readers), or complete (deleting cultural characteristics that are unique to the source language)”(Al-Masri, 2009, p. 15).

The following is an analysis of the cultural losses of some of the excerpts containing emotiveness and CSEs. Cultural losses can potentially consist of cultural practices, attitudes, and norms, political and religious beliefs which represent the cultural identity of the source culture. Cultural losses occurred as a result of (a) relying on a specific translation strategy or (b) failing to provide the historical and social context deemed vital for the target audience to comprehend the emotive aspects embedded in some cultural expressions. Most of these cultural losses are ‘implicit losses’ which obligates the translator to include some cultural information deemed necessary for the target audience to become acquainted with since such type of losses according to Al-Masri (2009, p. 22) are part of the “emics” of the source culture.

According to Newmark (1996, p. 163) “the only way to assess the deficiencies of the translation is to examine the linguistic differences between it and the original”. A close analysis of these excerpts reveal the countless cultural losses which have resulted from overlooking the emotive aspects in the source language thus depriving the TL readers of experiencing the same cultural meaning which the SL readers can. Such cultural loss has resulted primarily from two probable reasons: The translator’s “over-familiarity” with the source text has contributed greatly to her adopting the literal or free translation strategy over other strategies. According to Al-Masri (2009, p. 37) “When the translator’s over-familiarity with the source language leads him to assume/presuppose the target readers’ familiarity with what they read. This makes the translator blind of what could be marked (implicit) to target readers.” The second reason is that she opted for free translation of cultural elements but did not provide any historical or political material to supplement such cultural expressions in the source text. As a result of that, she deprived the target audience of the opportunity to elicit the same response elicited by the SL readers. Of course, this
cultural loss has resulted from two major factors: The unfamiliarity of the TL readers of the inherent nature of the emotive aspect in such expressions and the failure to translate the implicit meaning (or the emics) of the SL /C into the TC. In the following, I point out some of the problems encountered in the translatability of emotiveness in this narrative.

6. Data analysis & discussion

6.1. Excerpt # one. Culture-specific expressions

Culture-specific expressions consist of words and expressions used in this genre. These expressions conjure up meanings other than the conceptual meanings. This seems to be consistent with Bell’s (1991) claim that the majority of words have both conventional and nonconventional meaning. For instance, the citation of proper names in this narrative may have special importance particularly when they pertain to historical places or to the history of the Palestinian people. The transliteration of such proper names might not appeal or stir the same affective meanings in the TL readers, because of the particularity of the political and social circumstances of Palestine and the nature of Arabic language as a lyrical language (Mahasneh, 2016, 2010; Chenje, 1969; Al-Shunnaq et al., 2011). Therefore, Proper names and geographical names constitute a real problem when they are transliterated from Arabic into English. They are highly charged with emotions and remind people of important and special events: For example, the citation of “Sabra and Shatila, and Der Yaseen” are highly emotive proper names for the informed Arab or Palestinian, because they remind Palestinians of the sites of mass murders carried out in different times by Israeli troops against Palestinian civilians (see, Mahasneh, 2010). Their transliteration would not reveal the emotiveness embedded in such proper names that they produce when mentioned in Arabic. Therefore, this study is concerned about pointing out the cultural losses resulting from failing to find harmony between the ‘emic of both the SC and TC in the rendition of this autobiography on account that a great deal of cultural information has not been transmitted to the target audience. This could be attributed to the translator’s over-familiarity with the SL. According to Nida and Taber translators have a tendency to fall into such situation when they expect TL readers to be familiar with the rendition they produce. Such an instance has prompted them to make the following comment: “too much knowledge of the subject matter can be a deterrent to effective translation” (Nida & Taber, 1974, p. 99). Of course the logical and sensible way is to provide explanatory information accounting for the cultural beliefs and attitudes which are associated with these names and to acquaint the TL readers with the implicit meaning which such proper names conjure up (see, Al-Qinaí, 1999; Farghal, 1995a). Failing to provide adequate historical and cultural information about specific proper names or culture—specific expressions would be unfair to both the SL and TL cultures.

The mere citation of historical and political events such as the 1967 war (known as Al-Naksa which means a setback) or proper names of highly reputable figures in the Palestinian culture are destined to invoke a lot of memories and feelings of indignation and despair. For instance, the narrator’s citation of the events which led to the assassination of the novelist Ghassan Kanafani and the cartoonist Nají Al-Alí point out that talented Palestinians are like all other Palestinians vulnerable to sudden death and that their lives are exposed to unjustified disappearance. The citation of such important figures is bound to ignite people’s feelings and emotions since they remind people of a lot of memories. The key point to be drawn from this is that emotive aspects constitute a hindrance in Arabic-English translation since the emotion which can be elicited by SL readers would not be accessible to those in TC unless the latter is culturally and politically literate and versed.

The findings of cross-cultural studies seem to attribute communication breakdown to the distinct role which specific language plays in the minds of its speakers (see, Cohen, 1987; Zaharna, 1995). In this particular genre language is being used referentially and enacted not only as a means of communication but also as a resource for the accomplishment of certain purposes and actions. In fact, this particular phenomenon has been spelled out and emphasized
intelligibly in the following comments about the nature of Arabic language as an oral and poetic language: “Arabic has maintained a strong hold on literary and the masses alike, anyone who has witnessed a public address in an Arabic setting will soon realize the powerful almost magical effect of the language on the audience” (Chenje, 1969, p. 5).

It has been noted in Bahameed’s (2008) study that overlooking meaningful aspects of emotive expressions in the rendition of any text would be a real impediment since it deprives the TL readers from having and enjoying the cultural experience of the SL. The critical point in the rendition of this autobiography is that the target audience may not always relate to such type of meaning (associative) on account that the target audience may not always share the same cultural and linguistic experience which exists in the SL/C. This can be accomplished by providing historical and background context and relevant information when citing such expressions.

This cultural gap which Bahameed (2008) calls “an alien experience” echoes the same sentiments expressed in the following comments by Milton Bennett concerning the experience which participants frequently formulate in any intercultural encounter. “How do people understand one another when they do not share a common cultural experience?” (Bennett, 1998, p. 1). The relevance of Bennett’s comments to the translation of I Saw Ramallah is that translation is considered in various studies as a hyponym of an intercultural communication encounter (see Nazzal, 2012), or as “a cross-cultural transfer and the translator should be bicultural, if not pluri-cultural”, as Snell-Hornby claims (1988/1995, p. 46). For instance, in the following excerpt from the same autobiography, the narrator expresses his indignation in the words he uses when he recounts his feeling upon his return to Palestine by saying that, “It is enough for a person to go through the first experience of uprooting, to become uprooted forever.” Such a statement if read or narrated to the TL readers, it would not stir the same feeling or experience as it would in the mind of the SL readers since some of the words cited are symbolically and emotively charged and evoke certain feelings in the SL readers. The translator could have provided some explanatory information to acquaint the TL readers with such beliefs. According to Pike (1990) marginalizing the social context is destined to deprive the TL readers of becoming oriented with the social attitudes and cultural beliefs in the emotive & CSEs expressions in the above rendition.

Excerpts: #. Two. Implicit loss

الديارنة لدائم، الجرير كنعلم أن الديار هو الشريح الذي يحجب للباتح، ثم دخلنا إلى يهيرك مراد جاهد الرجل للنور، ادعنا أننا نذكر الأشياء بال lưới.

“Displacement is like death. One thinks it happens only to other people. From the summer of 67, I became that displaced stranger whom I had always thought was someone else.”

The translator has communicated the conceptual meaning successfully but she has not highlighted the cultural meaning of some of the expressions in this excerpt. The concepts tackled by the translator stir different feeling in the text reader on account that the acquainted text reader is likely to associate certain things and conjure up ideas associated with certain concepts conveyed in the words themselves which invoke feelings of indignation and apprehension. The reader has to be a specific person to relate to the incidents and circumstances in which such a message was produced. Therefore, emotiveness is a personal feeling invoked as a result of hearing or reading certain words which induce the reader to associate certain emotions of joy or despair with.

One of the challenges encountered in the rendition of the above excerpt is the translation of the word “اللغريب” in the source text (ST) into “the stranger” in the target language (TL). This rendition conveys the literal or conceptual meaning and doesn’t convey its associative meaning. There is some sort of cultural loss resulting from the loss of implicit meaning of the expression “the stranger”. In fact, the author of the ST means by “the stranger” “اللغريب”: the displaced person
who doesn’t come to this place willingly. Therefore, the literal or conceptual translation of this word doesn’t reflect the accurate image of the original word “الإنكاب”. Consequently, we note that the associative dimension has been sacrificed at the expense of the denotative meaning (see, Shamasneh, 2016). Overlooking such cultural information causes some sort of a distortion in the rendition of this text.

Concerning the citation of the word “stranger” I am willing to say that there are two cultural losses in the citation of the word “stranger”. The first loss has to do with its implicit meaning which is something other than what its conceptual meaning entails. No wonder why Mourid expressed his shock upon his arrival to his country when he claimed that the feeling of alienation did not leave him at all. The second loss is pragmatic loss which deals with the political and social attitude of the narrator of this narrative which happens to be full of pessimism and sarcasm of the Palestinian situation in general. How could one feel strange at home or be at odds in his home country

I argue that such feelings can’t be invoked unless you belong to the members of that community of people who have lived that experience. It should be noted that the meaning of “speech Community” varies from one sociolinguist to another. For instance, according to both William Labov (1972a) and Dell Hymes (1972) the members of a speech community have to share a set of rules of speaking and interpretation of language use and cultural events. So a speech community is usually defined by a set of criteria which the speakers of that specific speech community use to assess and evaluate any social phenomenon. Hymes’s (ibid) definition applies elegantly to the situation concerning the excerpts I am citing to advance the proposition that “emotiveness” is not only a species of associative meaning but it also has certain properties or characteristics. As one can see that Hymes’s (ibid) concept of “speech community” involves that its members share a set of criteria by which they assess and evaluate any social phenomenon rather than speak a specific linguistic variety /form of language.

This particular instance is consistent with the implication of Voloshinov/Bakhtin’s concept of “hetero-glossia”, which purports that, “the linguistic sign is open to different orientation and evaluations in the social world”, (as cited in Mesthrie et al., 2000, p. 321). The translator’s rendition of this word, “الإنكاب”, “stranger” captured its denotative meaning; thus, one can claim that the translator’s rendition was functionally and communicatively successful since she captured its denotative meaning; however, it failed to treat this expression as a loss of culture-specific expression.

The above excerpt contains some other cultural references which are very likely to invoke various emotive feeling emanating from the citation of fully charged words such as the simile in displacement is like death which brings bad memories to those who were dispelled and left their towns and villages. The feeling which the SL readers are destined to elicit would not be accessible to the TL readers due to cultural and political implications which are missing and therefore this constitutes a real constraint for readers of TLC. Cultural losses are part of the source culture and its identity as Al-Masri (2009, p. 29) claims, “An explanation of these implicit values is essential to the target readers in order to provide them with the pleasure of exploring the beliefs and attitudes of another different culture (which is the main purpose of literature after all).”

It should be pointed out that intercultural translation impendiment arises in this particular instance as a result of citing expressions which are emotively charged and have symbolic meaning, so they are bound to play a very significant role in invoking lots of memories in the minds of the local people. As consequence, TL readers would not be able to have the same reaction unless the translator has provided some historical information to the TL readers. For instance, the expression the year 1967, is an important occasion for people since it reminds them of the loss of land and thus the mere citation of such an important occasion without providing the TL readers with some historical background would be a loss for both the SL and TL readers. Besides, such expression is an emotively charged expression since it is bound to invoke a lot of glaring images of the 67 year war known as “al-naksa war” which means a setback. While the translator has conceptually accounted for the rendition of this expression,
I believe that the element of emotiveness is being lost when one juxtaposes the source text with its rendition. According to Al-Masri (2009, p. 22) “verbal signs convey positive or negative connotation beyond their literal meaning”. The citation of the 67 year war has an important implicit or “emic” meaning on account that it invokes lots of sad memories and underlies a very pessimistic political attitude towards countless matters which the target language readers are unaware of and about. Overlooking such cultural information causes some distortion in the rendition of this text.

Excerpt #. Three “implicit & explicit loss”

فيكتور زاچيدے جسر الیودیة الباردیکی کسیمیات کے ساتھ جسر الحبل، جسر الیودیة خیز کی سربراہی کے متعلق جو نہیں کسی مدد کی صورت میں کسی کوری کو "سنسکرت" جسر کیا کیا ہے.

“Fayruz calls it the Bridge of Return. The Jordanians call it the King Hussein Bridge. The Palestinian Authority calls it al-Karama Crossing. The common people and the bus and taxi drivers call it the Allenby Bridge. My mother and before her grandmother and my father and my uncle’s wife, Umm Talal, call it simply the Bridge”.

The rendition of excerpt three represents an instance of both “implicit and explicit loss”, simultaneously. According to Al-Masri, “explicit cultural losses in translation are loss of the ‘etic’ and ‘emic’ of the source text. They affect the content of the message causing a distortion in the decoding and understanding of the translated text. Accordingly, the resulting translation would be awkward, unnatural, and unclear to the target readers” (Al-Masri, 2009, p. 22). The crucial thing in this context is that the translator accounted for the conceptual meaning of the word “bridge” only and did not pay attention to what this word stands for in the perception of the SL readers. Despite the fact that the word bridge is a common noun, people have associated it with different feelings and sentiment on account that it stands for so many things in their lives. Therefore, the various names people use to refer to this bridge reflect the emotions people have formulated over the years concerning such a geographical place. It stands and represents the border between the West Bank and Jordan. It is some sort of a gateway to enter or exit either geographical area. It has become this way since the year 1967 when Israel occupied the West Bank. In this particular context one can note that people have used certain names or modifiers attached to the word “bridge” to express their perception of what this bridge stands for and the type of cultural or political identity it represents for them. It is also noted that the translator has only transliterated these modifiers attached to the word “bridge” without giving any cultural information deemed necessary for the TL readers to become acquainted with. Failing to do that has resulted in some discrepancy between the “emic” of both the SL and TL readers’ understanding and perception of this rendition. The explicit loss occurred in the transliteration of the word “al-karama bridge” which deprives the TL readers of the denotative and connotative content of this transliteration and by virtue of that such discrepancy causes a distortion in the content of what the word “al-karama” implies in this autobiography.

Her rendition of the above excerpt has obviously accounted for the conceptual meaning rather than the associative meaning of the words modifying the word bridge. According to Al-Masri (2009, p. 39) “Cultural losses occurring in the translation of literary texts are losses of the source-culture expressions that have deep/symbolic values. Accordingly, cultural losses are marked on the grounds of the unmarked surface/truth-value expressions.” The fact that different people use different names to refer to this bridge is likely to induce one to realize that this particular word conjures up lots of memories in the minds of most Palestinians.

In fact this bridge has semiotic-ally rendered itself as an icon for so many various things. She did not account for the emotive senses involved in the mind of the narrator when he used such word. No wonder why the narrator uses different names to refer to the same “bridge”. The contention in this respect is not about the linguistic sign or code but rather about what it stands for; it is about
what it represents in the minds of the people who conceive of this word to mean so many things. Such a claim is being exemplified intelligibly by Hanks who claims that “two systems could, in theory, share some of the exact same sign forms, but these would never be truly equivalent because their respective values would not be identical.” (Hanks, 1996, p. 50).

Semiotically speaking, the concept of “sign” for Voloshinov and Bakhtin is distinct from that of Saussure because the two scholars associate the analysis of texts with ‘a conflict understanding of society (as cited in Mesthrie et al. (2000). Voloshinov’s and Bakhtin’s conception of the “sign” constitute a real paradigm shift, by reversing the Saussurean’s priority of langue over parole; and by virtue of that the “sign” can’t be interpreted outside the social interaction of human beings. Since the modifiers attached to the word bridge conjure up more associative meaning than what the translator provided, the translator did not capture the implicit (or “emic”) meaning ingrained in them.

The bridge can potentially stands as a metaphor for various things: first it reminds people of the 67 war and the setback the Arab regime suffered during this time and the calamity which has befallen the Arab nation as a result of that. The rendition of this word negates the cultural details and regards such cultural information unworthy of reporting. According to Al-Masri (2009, p. 36) cultural loss occurs, “when the translator fails to translate the “emics” (symbolic/implicit meaning) of his source culture into the target culture. The failure in this instance occurred as a result of adopting the literal translation strategy to account for the denotative meaning of an expression which is culture-bound. Consequently, this particular instance is considered “an implicit loss” in Al-Masri’s (2009) typology of cultural losses (or loss of an emic aspect borrowing Pike’s conception of etic-emic-etic) of the source culture. According to Al-Masri (2009, p. 37) “In order to achieve an optimal equivalence, it is suggested that the translator has to demonstrate his ability to translate on two levels of understanding: understanding the emics of the source culture, and understanding the emics of the target culture, and then relate both faithfully.”

The expected impediment in intercultural translation is that the “alien experience” which Bahameed (2008) talks about in his study seems consistent and resonates with this particular situation in this narrative. It is highly inconceivable for TL readers to grasp the implied meaning in the transliterated expression ‘al-karama the way the SL readers perceive it since the translator appeared to have failed to translate the symbolic level (or the ‘emics” of the source culture) of this expression by providing explanatory information about what the attached modifiers to the word bridge culturally imply. To demonstrate an etic understanding of any emotive or culture-bound expression, the translator has to find harmony between the emic of both cultures. Achieving an emic understanding implies finding consistency in both cultures concerning the rendition of any specific expressions. According to Pike (Pike, 1990, p. 34) a translator has a dual role” just as an outsider can learn to act like an insider, so the insider can learn to analyze like an outsider”.

Excerpt #. Four

If you hear a speaker on some platform use the phrase ‘dismantling the settlements’ then laugh to your heart’s content. These are not children’s fortresses of Lego. These are Israel itself; Israel the idea and the ideology and the geography and the trick and the excuse. It is the place that is ours and that they have made theirs. The settlements are their book, their first form. They are our absence. The settlements are the Palestinian Diaspora itself.”

The translator was successful in conveying the conceptual meaning of most of the words in the SL and she was also successful in encoding this conceptual meaning in the TL. However, this
particular excerpt is replete with emotive words, highly charged with glaring images and actions which induce SL readers to draw a lot of anger and emotions which can’t possibly be accessed by TL readers. These actions and images are of prime pertinence to Palestinians. They are culture-specific. In fact some aspects of emotiveness can potentially be considered a form of untranslatability in the sense that the SL context can’t be transmitted into the TL context on account that it might not yield itself intelligibly to the TL readers. According to Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) the meaning of any communicated message is likely to be influenced by both the context and the situation where this process takes place. The meaning of the above mentioned expression depends upon the context in which it occurred and the relevance of the situation to the text. This seems to be consistent with the ideas of other scholars who put great emphasis on the role of context in shaping and creating meaning (see, Carbonell, 1996; Derrida, 1980). They claim that meaning changes constantly from one context into another. The cultural loss which exists in the above rendition did not prevent the understanding of the message but “marked losses” requires that the target audience put more efforts to grasp the cultural meaning in highly charged expressions (see, Al-Masri, 2009). As a consequence, it can be fully captured if and only if the translator demonstrates in her rendition an adequate understanding of the “emics” of both the SC and TC, and transmit the SC world view harmoniously to the target culture then there would be a real cultural equivalence.

According to Bahameed (2008) intercultural non-equivalence occurs when an associative feature is relevant to the source text but absent in the target language text. That is to say, sometimes the translator can’t translate the context and as a result of that the TL readers would not be able to elicit the same response or reaction intelligibly or conceive of the intended idea of the translated message. Emotiveness is an associative feature and it has a function in the source language text (Arabic) but it can’t be conveyed coherently in the target language text (English) always. For example, the following expressions are bound to invoke a lot of feelings and emotions in the SL readers on account that they are all emotively charged “The settlements are their book, their first form. They are our absence. The settlements are the Palestinian Diaspora itself.” Such an excerpt is replete with subtle and culture-bound metaphors which call for intercultural understanding. Such metaphors may qualify to be “complete losses” in Al-Masri’s (2009) definition of “cultural losses” on the ground that such metaphors stand for things which may not have equivalents in the target culture. To explicate this further the word settlements does not conjure the same meaning it does in the Palestinian context as it does in any culture. In the Palestinian culture it negates their existence as well as their presence. For Israelis it announces their presence and confirms their existence. No wonder why the word settlement is associated with the word absence. These words conjure up a lot of implicit meaning in the minds of the concerned parties (Israelis and Palestinians). It has been claimed that “Cultural variability in the accuracy of emotion recognition has also been attributed to differences in language. The words used to translate emotional concepts and labels may convey somewhat different meanings to cultures other than that from which the experiment originated . . . . The vocabulary of some languages might be better equipped to express emotional concepts than those of other languages” (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002, p. 204)

Despite the fact that emotive or CSEs vary from one language to language particularly when the languages concerned are genetically too distant like Arabic and English, there remains a set of universal characteristics or features shared by all cultures. Such an assumption appears to resonate with Pell’s conception of emotiveness: “The ability to understand vocally-expressed emotions in speech is partly independent of linguistic ability and involves universal principles, although this ability is also shaped by linguistic and cultural variables” (Pell et al., 2009, p. 107)

7. Conclusion
This study has focused on the importance of the translatable of emotiveness and culture-bound /specific expressions (CB/CSEs) on account that it can potentially eliminate cross-cultural misunderstanding. And by virtue of that it enhances cross-cultural dialogue among nations. The
importance of this study stems from the fact that it has pointed out the cultural losses occurring in the rendition of Arabic text (autobiography). These cultural losses have resulted from overlooking the cultural information embedded in the deep/symbolic level of the source culture; and as a result of that it has deprived the TL readers of eliciting the same experience that of the SL readers.

Some of these cultural losses have resulted from the absence of shared cultural knowledge or lack of cultural equivalences. This study has attributed these cultural losses to (a) the failure of the translator to act as an insider in both cultures and by virtue of that the translator has not been able to achieve a cultural consistence or equivalence in the rendition of emotiveness in some CB/SEs; and (b) the adoption of a specific translation strategy over another.

The initial findings seem to indicate that such cultural losses constitute a real impediment in intercultural translation. In all the excerpts cited in this study the TL readers were deprived of eliciting the same experience or be exposed to the same cultural information available to the SL readers. Such a cultural loss is of great significance since the translator could have avoided such a discrepancy or loss had he/she provided explanatory information vital to the readers of the TC. The adoption of a theoretical framework (such as the “emic-etic” approach) is an effective mechanism for the cultural information deemed necessary for the TL readers to become acquainted with SC. At the same time it defines the dual role which the translator has to assume in order to avoid any cultural losses and achieve cross-cultural understanding. Finally, the adoption of Pike’s “emic” “etic” approach as a theoretical framework is likely to enable the researcher to account for the cultural information necessary for the accomplishment of cultural consistencies in the rendition of any literary text.

Funding
The author received no direct funding for this research.

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Disclosure statement
I do acknowledge that there is no any financial interest or conflict arising in the direct application of this research.

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I have had a wide range of teaching experience whether at home or abroad in the U.S.A. I have also been instrumental in supervising more than a dozen M.A. theses in our M.A. Program in Applied Linguistics and Translation. My research focuses on the interplay between language and culture. I frequently explore semantic and pragmatic aspects in the rendition of various texts in an effort to minimize cultural misunderstanding. I have been able to publish several articles in peer-referred journals. My publications include: The Translation of idiomatic Expressions as a Non-Canonical and Marked Structures. Difficulties Encountered by Arabic-Speaking Undergraduate and Graduate English Language Students in Interpreting English Formulaic Expressions. Skopas Theory: as a Paradigm Change. Translation as an Intercultural Communication Encouter. Qurasic Verses as a Religious and Cultural Identity. The Pragmatic Functions of the Recitation of Qurasic Verses: the case of Insha’Allah, ‘God’s willing’. The Ethnography of Communication of Arabic-Speaking Individuals (in Diplomatic discourse).

Citation information
Cite this article as: An Emblematic approach to the rendition of emotiveness in Maudir Barghouti’s autobiography: As an intercultural communication encounter, Ayman R. Nazzal, Cogent Arts & Humanities (2022), 9: 2009686.

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