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**A Frame Semantic Approach to the Study of Translating
Cultural Scripts in Salinger's *Franny and Zooey***

**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in
Translation Studies**

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Abbreviations

TS	Translation Studies
SL	Source Language
ST	Source Text
TL	Target Language
TT	Target Text
F.	Franny
Z.	Zoey

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Abstract

The Frame Semantic theory is a nascent approach in the area of Translation Studies which goes beyond the linguistic barriers and helps us to incorporate cognitive and cultural factors to the study of translation. Based on Rojo's analytical model (2002b), which centered in the frames or knowledge structures activated in the text, the present research explores the various translation problems that may arise in translating cultural scripts of Salinger's *Franny and Zooey* into Persian. It also discusses translation challenges under six sub-frames: Visual Frames, Situational Frames, Text Type Frames, Social Frames, Institutional frames, and Generic Frames. According to the statistical data analysis, social frames are the most frequent cases in the studied corpus. Based on frame analysis, the most challenging scripts in translation are those which are absent in TT readers' mind. The results of the study reveal that the overall images described in the corpus are actually retained in the translations. The applied model can also guide translators, helping them to develop a systematic method to the problems implied in the translation of culture-bound scripts. The thesis aims at providing, hopefully, some new insights into translation research for theorists and some concrete manageable skills for practicing translators as well.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Overview

Communication comprises reception and production, alternately and mutually preconditioning each other. Reading, interpretation and translation are all receptive and productive processes; they are inseparable. Reading is the achievement of primary experience; translation can be seen as the rearticulation of the experience, and interpretation constitutes part of both. The goal is to achieve perfect rearticulation at each level.

It is proved that interpretation is more than just an application of the linguistic knowledge necessary to decode words and to make connections between them and the units in which they are embedded. In fact, to arrive at an interpretation is obviously executed through schemes, scripts and frames. Therefore, translation requires understanding from the translator's part. A translator comprehends the text locally and globally, relying on the evoked central and peripheral frames. She or he reconstructs the text using these frames. If a translator does not understand a text, s/he cannot render it into the target language. The formation of meaning and rendering of it to the text must precede the linguistic transformation.

If the translator's first task is to contribute to understanding between nations and secondly transmit knowledge, then his third task is to mediate the cultural features. This is done not so much in terms of target language, because cultural features are pragmatically vivid but usually inaccurate in terms of universal experience. For this reason translation is always more or less possible because language is a substantial but partial reflection of culture and culture is mutually an aspect of social language.

It seems that a translator as a cultural mediator must be provided by a specific knowledge system, which derives not only from a linguistic proficiency and the ability to recognize denotative meaning of lexical items in a language system, but also the ability to identify the connotative meaning of those items. Thus, a cultural mediator is the one who can form associations between textual elements with those images they provide within a context, in other words, a translator of cultural elements should know the *Cognitive Science* of translation process. This knowledge is acquired by his/her experience of the world and the ability to derive

meaningful scenarios from what is read. This phenomenon has been described as sense-and-frame semantics (Frame semantics) proposed by Charles Fillmore in the 1970s.

Applying this theory, Marry Snell-Hornby (2005) tried to illustrate the process of translation, which is totally appropriate for rendering cultural scripts:

The translator starts from a presented frame (the source text and its linguistic components), which was produced by an author who drew from his/her own repertoire of partly prototypical scenes. Based on the frame(s) of the source text, the translator-reader build up his/her own scene as activated by personal experience and internalized knowledge of the material concerned. Depending on his/her proficiency in and knowledge of the source language and culture, the translator might well activate scenes that diverge from author's intention or deviate from those naturally activated by a native speaker of the source language (cf. Vannerem and Snell-Hornby, 1986, p.191). Based on the sense s/he has activated, the translator must now find suitable frames in the target language; this involves a constant process of decision-making, depending on his/her proficiency in and knowledge of the target language and culture (p.195).

In sum, it can be argued that the frame semantic theory of Fillmore (1976), as a model for describing the sense-and-frames interaction, can be effectively used in Translation Studies, especially for the field of the present research, i.e. translating cultural scripts. It should be mentioned that the data derived from the analysis, based on Fillmore's approach, can be interpreted in both micro and macro levels to have a comprehensive perspective of the translation and the role of the translator as a cultural mediator.

The present research involves a two-step procedure. The first is the identification of the frames of cultural scripts, which are evoked by reading the corpus. The second step is to compare the readings and observe the incidental divergences.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Scripts are basically culture-bound items whose interpretation requires the reference to a common frame where author and audience share a history and a way to interpret experience. Among the many problems facing any attempt by a western short story to reach Persian audience through translation, is transferring cultural scripts. The differences between the Iranian cultural

space and the dominant American cultural model may seem almost unbridgeable. However, the translation strategies suggest a number of frameworks which can help the translator to bridge this cultural gap.

Applying the theory of frame semantics by Charles Fillmore (1976) is a novel approach in translation studies which can be a useful tool for conveying culture-specific scripts in another language. In a translation process, it is the job of the translator to first recognize the cultural scripts and then reframe them in the target language (TL) in a way that they can be interpreted by both cultures the same.

Salinger's novels challenge the very frames associated with American culture in most of which the *American Dream* has been reflected. His oeuvres have marked a turning point in American literary and social culture. One of problematic issues in translating Salinger's stories is how to reframe these scripts for the Persian readers, knowing the fact that they have a different cultural background and belief system.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Having demonstrated the prevalence of cultural elements in human discourse, and taken into consideration the voluminous bulk done on intercultural studies, it can be realized that this field is in need of particular attention. The study of cultural items is a part of various different fields, including anthropology, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and many interdisciplinary researches, such as sociolinguistics, ethnopragmatics and Translation Studies (TS).

Scholars in Translation Studies (TS) have made many attempts mainly to explain procedures of translating Culture-Specific Items (CSI). However, for the most part, the studies have revolved the translator's approach around Domestication or Foreignization. Therefore, it seems that TS has not been able to answer certain vital questions regarding the translation of more abstract concepts, including scenes, schemes, and scripts from the point of view of cultural studies. These concepts are of some novelty in the field of Translation Studies and in comparison with other subfields in TS, few attempts have been made to study it. It is hoped that this research can present a comprehensive and wholesome approach to describing the process of dealing with

cultural scripts by the translator as a cultural mediator. Furthermore it tries to explain the reason why most cultural scripts experience less effectiveness compared to the original text.

During the course of this research, the researcher discovered that although much attention has been given to the fields of culture-based elements, we still lack a comprehensive view of how scripts and their translations influence one another. Cultural scripts have mostly been explored more as a reference to other works rather than as familiar frames in which social conventions are accepted.

Furthermore, little research has been done with regard to the relationship between frames and translations to create functional equivalents, which is particularly prevalent in Salinger's books. His works are an ideal platform to have a new vision on translation areas, allowing us to move away from a systematic and static approach to translation, and towards a more dynamic one.

This study is one of the rare works to investigate the transfer of cultural scripts through a comparative frame semantic analysis between two language systems and their problems in translation.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

Since the realm of culture is so vast to deal with, this work is narrowed down to only a frame semantic approach to the study of cultural frames. This attempt aims at studying cultural scripts from both linguistic and sociocultural perspectives. It investigates the extent to which the mechanism cultural scripts have been successfully reframed, whether similar effect has been achieved in terms of the linguistic structures and cultural values based on the knowledge system of the target audience. Therefore, the researcher applies the frame semantic approach to pave the way for a more comparative study of translating western cultural scripts into Persian. It can be claimed that the key purpose of the research is to clarify what contributions Fillmore's framework can make to the study of cultural "scene-and-frames".

There is no need to mention that lexical items of language can be learned and translated more easily than cultural ones. Being familiar with a culture, and transferring cultural frames are far more difficult and in some cases impossible. The researcher hopes this work may open new windows to the intercultural approaches to translation and reveal the hidden aspects of them.

1.5. Research Questions

What follows is a list of questions which triggered the researcher to start this research:

1. Which type of semantic frames is used more frequently in translation of American cultural scripts to Persian?
2. How do the semantic frames influence the acceptability of translated texts?
3. Which type of semantic frames poses more difficulties in translation of American cultural scripts to Persian?
4. Is there any need to reframe cultural scripts during translation process?
5. Have the cultural scripts been preserved in the Persian version of *Franny and Zooey* by Salinger?

1.6. Theoretical Framework

Fillmore (1976, as cited in Rojo, 2002a) was the first scholar to introduce the concept of Frame Semantics. He maintains that through the application of this theory, one can assume a new perspective through which the meaning of words could be studied; in addition, this theory also presents rules for "creating new words or phrases, attributing new meaning to words and finally assembling the meaning of elements in a text into the overall meaning of the text" (Fillmore, 1988). He further argues that the analysis of a language system cannot be based only on a description of lexis and grammar (Fillmore, 1976, as cited in Rojo, 2002a). In this view "any analysis of language system should necessarily incorporate the description of the cognitive and interactional frames speakers use to interpret their environment, formulate and understand messages and storage or create their own model of the world." (Fillmore, 1976, as cited in Rojo, 2002a).

In the present study as a descriptive-analytical one, Fillmore's (1976, cited in Rojo, 2002a) Frame Semantics serves as a means to the analysis of cultural scripts. Thereby, the instances of cultural scripts and the degree to which they have been functionally reproduced will be investigated with the help of a model proposed by Rojo (2002b) on the basis of the said framework.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

Culture: has been understood as the store of knowledge shared by a certain community, including a whole repertoire of common cognitive frames (Rojo, 2002a)

Frame: a cognitive construction which a linguistic form activates in a person's mind. Frames may include for example human beliefs, actions, experiences and can be large or small, simple, or complex, visual or non-visual and personal or shared by a group of people. (Fillmore, 1976)

Scene: the experienced or otherwise meaningful situation or scenario that finds expression in linguistic form (Snell-Hornby, 2005).

Script: a sequence of events or actions in a particular context which connects well-known everyday situations and actions into understandable chains. (Schank and Abelson 1977, p.23, 41)

Cultural scripts: The term cultural scripts refers to a technique for articulating cultural norms, values, and practices using the natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) of semantic primes as the medium of description (Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2004).

Prototype: it is the idea that to understand a concept we need access to a stored repertoire of prototypes in our memory (Rojo, 2002a, p.35).

Context: From the cognitive point of view, the context is a psychological construct that exists in the speakers' mind (Rojo, 2002b, p.314).

Translator as Cultural mediator: the translator is a bilingual mediating agent between monolingual communication participants in two different language communities (Steiner, 1975, p.45).

1.8. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Given the limited sources available, this research can contribute to the study of cultural scripts in translation and also the application of frame semantics in the field, only an initial survey of the problems has been conducted and it's more likely to raise questions on the process of acculturation in translation process than provide a fixed frame work for its description. It may show the way the cultural variations have been transferred by the translators than to criticize them.

This research deals only with translation problems from English into Persian and of the major relevant problematic forms; this study is limited mainly to cultural scripts in two language systems. The main delimitation of the study is the undeniable fact that the concept of frames and scripts in translation studies is virgin and the study of cultural script translation is still in its infancy. The main reason might be due to the abstractness of cultural frames and the broad scope it covers. The previous studies on translating cultures, mostly have dealt with the translation of culture specific items (CSIs), which are rather concrete. So far, nobody has denied the importance of cultural scripts in translation, and nobody has dealt with it specifically either.

Furthermore, Frame Semantics provides the researcher with a tool that allows him/her to go beyond the pure linguistic study of translations and help him/her to consider culture and cognition as factors which produce a functional translation. During the time-consuming study of the corpus, the overlapping of some subcategories of the model appeared problematic to the researcher.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

2.1. Overview

In this section, the discussion will start with the definition of the word *culture* in general, and *cultural scripts* in particular. Another section of this chapter deals with context and contextualisation and how these are important in conveying and understanding scripts across cultures. The next part deals with cultural aspects of translation studies, and mentioning the main concepts such as translatability, cultural specific items, domestication and foreignization. Then the idea of *Frame Semantics* as an analytical tool for the study of cultural scripts will be introduced.

2.2. Culture, Context and Contextualization

The terms ‘culture’ and ‘context’ are constantly used when discussing translation theory, and yet, despite this, both notions remain quite vague and are used fairly loosely. What is culture, really? And what do we mean by context in translation? More specifically, how do these things impact on the translation process? The researcher looks at both culture and context within the framework of relevance theory. First, the notion of culture is addressed; second, the researcher explores how contexts are selected, and third, how culture necessarily impacts on this selection from the perspectives of both the communicator and the receiver. Furthermore, given that understanding differs across cultures (more specifically, cultural contexts), we will see that context is vital in understanding, conveying and translating culture-oriented scripts.

Let us first look at the notion of culture, for although we use it every day, we do so without considering what it is we are actually referring to. Many people view culture as the combination of elements specific to a particular group, such as music, traditional dress, food, religion, beliefs and ideologies. Others view culture in terms of geography and political and social history (Katan, 1999, p. 11). However, one thing that almost all translators agree on is the relationship between language and culture and, more specifically, how language makes up a fundamental part of any culture, because it is a part of the way that society views and interprets the world in relation to itself (ibid). In spite of all these ideas, scholars still have difficulty in defining culture, and doing so in such a way as to highlight its ever-growing importance in the field of translation.

Snell-Hornby (as cited in Nord, 1997) describes culture as “a totality of knowledge, proficiency and perception” (p. 23), whereas Goodenough (ibid) attempts to clarify this broad definition by stating:

Culture [...] consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves. Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge... culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behaviour or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in their mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them (pp. 23-24).

Both definitions agree that culture is about knowledge and perception. However, Goodenough broadens his definition to include the idea that both knowledge and perception have to take place within a specific setting, a context, if you will (which will be discussed in detail later). Within this particular group (or context), knowledge and perception take on the form of understanding utterances based on either shared or previous knowledge, and the perceptions we form about the world around us as a result. This raises a very important issue: the idea that contexts, or situations, are culturally determined. If cultures are different, contexts must be different as well, and this would alter our knowledge of the world based on our surroundings. This, in turn, will alter our perceptions of the world in relation to that setting, and in relation to ourselves.

Katan (1999) appears to support this view in a sense, for he believes:

Culture [...] is not a visible product, but is internal, collective and is acquired rather than learned. Acquisition is the natural, unconscious learning of language, behavior, values and belief through informal watching and learning. Learning, on the other hand, is formal and is consciously taught. (p. 26)

Katan goes on to explain that people take in elements from their environment, which influences their development within the human system. Ultimately, culture entails a shared knowledge system in which reality is interpreted and experience is organized (ibid). This is consistent with the notion that knowledge is acquired automatically from one's surroundings and

interaction with others, and that perceptions gradually change or are enhanced, which results in further human development and communication.

In all three definitions, we have the suggestion that cultures (and, therefore, contexts) are governed by both external and internal forces that control the way in which people interact with each other and the world, which results in the acquisition of experience and knowledge, and leads to certain assumptions they are induced to make on that basis. All of these aspects fall within the rather broad scope of relevance theory.

We need to be able to access information in order to understand and interpret utterances, and this can only happen if we are able to make the appropriate mental associations with things that we already know, or have experienced. Furthermore, each new event of interpretation adds to this stored knowledge and experience, which modifies the inferences we may make at a later stage.

Tied together, these elements highlight the cognitive environment attached to culture and relevance. Gutt (1991) states that the cognitive environment of a person:

comprises a potentially huge amount of varied information. It includes information that can be perceived in the physical environment, information that can be retrieved from memory – in itself a vast store of information, including information derived from preceding utterances plus any cultural or other knowledge stored there – and furthermore information that can be inferred from those two sources. (p. 26)

In order to understand how we pick the setting most appropriate for this varied information, we need to turn to context. Context is integral in culture and relevance theory because it allows us to pick the setting most suitable to the understanding process.

Sperber and Wilson (1986) describe context as “a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer’s assumptions about the world” (p.15). This shows two things: first, that context relies on a cognitive approach to interpretation, showing its ties to cognitive linguistics; second, that context is determined by a receiver’s background or situation, which takes into account his experience and assumptions (all of which has already been suggested, to a certain degree, though from a cultural perspective). This situation is governed by external elements such as gender,