AL-FARABI KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Department of International Relations

Chair of Diplomatic Translation

**Translation business in the field of international and legal relations**

**“Linguistic and cultural aspects of translation”**

2024-2025 academic year, fall semester

Lecture 9

Module 2 Contemporary issues of translation studies

Lecture 9 **Cultural translation**

**Translation is often understood as essentially a linguistic activity. However, culture also plays an important part in all kinds of translation, so much so that today we often speak of ‘cultural translation’ as a whole area of research and of translators as ‘cultural mediators’.**

Read the article below, follow the links and complete the activity to see how cultural assumptions may affect even the simplest translation process.

One of the most common assumptions – or myths – about translation is that it is ‘just’ about language: all you need is to substitute one word, or one linguistic code, for another, and your translation will be done, ready for use. Things are not so easy.

We have already heard translators speaking about the complexity and even the emotional involvement which is part of their job, and we have seen how translation may involve imitating sound, choosing between regional variants within the same language, or transporting a text across centuries as well as languages.

A further, crucial factor in translation is culture: the meanings carried by verbal language (and also by visual language, or by gestures, for that matter) are coloured by cultural assumptions, social habits, expectations. This means that even very simple statements, which seem perfectly easy to translate, can turn out to be much trickier than we think.

Imagine for instance this situation:

Two friends meet by chance while in the centre of town. They have not seen each other for a while. After greeting each other and briefly catching up, one says to the other: ‘Let’s go and get a cup of coffee?’ What will happen next? How long will the two friends spend together? And what, exactly, will they do?

Reference:

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5. Byram M. Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2021 -137 p .