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Problem, Differences and Misunderstanding in translating proverbs from English to Arabic

A Dissertation Proposal submitted to the Department of English in Fulfillment of the Requirement of the BA in Translation Studies

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Dedication

To Our Parents
Acknowledgement

Foremost, praise is due to Almighty ALLAH for giving our strength and ability to complete this study.

we would like to express my sincere gratitude to our supervisor Dr. Abdurrahman AhmedHamza for the continuous support of our research, for his patience, motivation, enthusiasm and immense knowledge. His guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing this research. We would like also to thank him very much for his support and understanding over these past four years.

we grateful to our parents whom we " lower to them the wing of submission and humility through the mercy". To our father who supports us morally and physically and to our mother who always stands next to us with her love and loyalty.
ABSTRACT

It is widely agreed that translation has made a real change in different parts of the world. Bringing some other different cultural concepts and behaviors to a different culture has always been interesting and informative, but a complicated. The increasing interest of translation and translation studies has brought different issues to investigation, cultural or non-cultural. Scholars have changed the concentration to include cultural issues to the pure scientific issues they use to focus on. For example, this includes linguistic and sociolinguistic issues in their cross-cultural analysis to be translated and then identifying reason for misunderstanding in intercultural conversations. The purpose of this study is to clarify the concept of translation and its role of conveying one concept of culture to another culture. It stress the importance of the translation and the translator’s role in knowledge of different cultures in order to perform a distinguished performance in transfer of ideas, in particular proverbs. The concentration is on translating proverbs that exist in every language to express particular messages. However, when a proverb is translated, certain issues emerge due to its particular cultural massages. However, when a proverb is translated, certain issues emerge due to its particular cultural differences which are differently said among language. Such issues can be resolved by proper selection of translation methods of translation.

KEYWORDS: Translation, Culture Theories of translation, Arabic into English, Proverbs Translation
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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Communication between cultures can be achieved through translation. People are introduced to different languages and ways of through. It is important to understand the relation between language and culture in order to train translators. How do you translate proverbs correctly? "What truly distinguishes translation is that it takes place in the context of the relations between two cultures, two worlds of thought and perception" Delisle (1988) argues that translation is important as source of diffusion of knowledge of every kind. He stresses that by understanding developments of every aspect of culture in other civilizations, people can also enrich their understanding of their own culture. However, culture includes thoughts, communication, language and customs. The greatest the differences between the SL and TL.

The greatest the difficulties in translation and less differences between them. The less the difficulties in translation. In this research, translating proverbs has been chosen to identify the importance of cultural translation, through which communication and cultural exchanges. Hence, we find that the relationship between translation and culture is highly related, and very important to be considered.

Translators face diversity between cultures when translating proverbs from English to Arabic. Mainly, the study is based on the influence of the translator's culture on translating English proverbs into Arabic. Proverbs can be Defined as a "short sentence" usually known by great number of people in the society, stating something commonly experienced or given advice. Translating a proverb requires a cultural background that helps the translator obtain the precise meaning of the proverb and then finds an equivalent one in the TL. A translator should think of a TL proverb having the same function and responding to the TL.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of this research are to help translators to identify culture problems that they encounter when translating English proverbs to Arabic. It helps them to find the extent to which culture effects the translators while translating proverbs from English into Arabic.

1.3 Research Problem

The research problem that this study concentrates to is solve that in translating proverbs, translators encounter some obstacles due to linguistic, stylistic and cultural differences between Arabic and English. There are situations of misunderstanding of cultural differences ignored from translators. This ignorance may lead to conflict or
misinterpreting the intended meaning. Knowing and considering cultural differences in translation lead translates to convey meanings of proverbs accurately, and ignoring such differences would usually lead to conveying wrong meanings and may lead to misunderstanding.

1.4 Research Question

The main research question of this research is "Do translators consider cultural differences when translating proverbs from Arabic to English? In order to fully answer this question, we also need to discuss other sub research questions such as "Are translators aware of the cultural differences between the two languages? And do they know the misunderstanding cultural differences cause if not considered?"

1.5 Research assumption

We assume that translators are influenced by their culture when translating proverbs from their native language to English. They are influenced by their culture and do not consider the target language's culture when translating. We argue that if translators and interpreters are well train on considering cultural differences when translating cultural proverb across the two cultures, they would be able to translate proverbs more accurately. Factors such as religion, story types, traditions, etc. are always important factors to consider when translating cultural issues across different cultures.

1.6 Outline of the study

This study consists of Five chapters, chapter one present the problem of the study, the aims, research questions, research hypothesis, and significance of the study. Chapter two consists of the literature review, present Does the culture of the translator affect the translation of proverb and how to translate proverb with regard to the difference of culture and what strategies are used in translation culture. And discussion difference views about proverb, also explanation some strategies. Chapter three discussion methodology, the methods used in the study, and the data collection. Chapter four discussion how we will analysis data and findings. Chapter five conclusion.
Chapter Two
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we study the relationship between translation and culture. This has been reinforced and sustained by the spread of English and the expansion of media. Hermans (1999) believes that translation should be recognized as a cultural practice. According to Al-Qurashi (2004) translation has been of great importance to all nations as it plays an essential role in transferring knowledge from one culture to another. In practice, translating the cultural aspects of any source language is not easy. Nida (1964:130) believes that “the differences between cultures may cause many serious problems for the translator than do differences in language structure. He argues

translation problems may happen even when the source language (SL) and target language (TL) have some similar linguistic and cultural features. Translation problems may vary depending on both the cultural and linguistic gap between the two concerned languages”. (1964:136)

Accordingly, equal importance to both linguistic and cultural differences between the SL and the TL must be taken in consideration. Similarly, Dweik (2000) claims that the differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator and cause trouble in communication between speakers than do differences in language structure. Dweik (2000) believes that "cultural interference could weaken communication and distort the message and it also creates misunderstanding" (2000.233). Thus, the goal has been always to examine translating proverbs. We begin by discussing definition, culture, and discuss its functions and how they are considered in translation, and we end up with examining translation method.

2.2 Defining Translations

Translation is a process and a product. According to Cat ford (1995), translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL). This definition shows that translation is a process in the sense that is an activity. Cat ford (1965, 1) can be defines translation as "a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another". Thus, translation is considered an operation performed languages. Cat ford builds his definition on the concept equivalence, describing translation as the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language. He considers the central problem of translation to be finding target language equivalents. Cat ford
distinguishes between full and partial translation, depending on the extent to which the source language text is submitted to the translation process. Translation is undoubtedly not just a replacement of words or expressions from one language (SL) to another (TL) but rather a communication of the meaning of a source-language text (ST) by means of an equivalent target-language text (TT).

2.3 The Concept of Culture

Cultural issues that may affect translation have been discussed by many researchers such as Baker (1992) and Newmark (1988). In relation to Arabic and English, they describe them as ecological culture. They argue that English and Arabic have different terms to classify different cultural aspects. Taylor (1971) defines culture as "complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of a society." (1971:25. This is also discussed by Newark (1988). He defines it as "the way of life and its language as its means of expression.

The first definition, according to Taylor, is a complex, encompassing the knowledge and beliefs acquired by the individual from the society. Therefore, its understanding may create misunderstanding from one language to another. Each country has customs and traditions. We agree with the definition because it is a comprehensive concept of culture. The second definitions, according to Newark, also encompass a comprehensive sense. It does not explain the differences in general, but provides an idea about the concepts that may lead to misunderstanding if not considered by interpreters or translators.

2.4 Proverb Translation

The translation of proverbs is considered a challenging task to translators as it requires linguistic and cultural knowledge. Ewelu (2010) expresses that "translation can be defined as a decoding from one language and encoding into another"(2010:279). This view explains that the complexity of translation usually goes through various stages. However, this definition perceives translation from a linguistic point of view. In contrast, House (2009, p.11) explains that, “Translating is not only a linguistic act; it is also a cultural one”. House (2009) stresses the importance of culture in translation since proverbs contain not only linguistic but also culture features. Thus, translators should consider issues relate to cultural issues that require decoding and encoding of what is said not only from a linguistic point, but cultural as well.

According to Barajas (2010), the shapes of proverbs are important for grasping the social construction of their meaning because they are not made of one word and they have specific forms that distinguish them from any segment of the language. Therefore, translators should be aware of shapes of proverbs when translating proverbs into their closest equivalence in the target language TL because there are proverbs which contain some cultural aspects in the source language SL that can't be found in the target culture.
Nida (1964), proposes that translating proverbs requires a linguistic knowledge in the types of equivalence i.e. the formal equivalence in which the translator focuses on the form and the content between the SL and the TL and the dynamic equivalence in which the translator gives an equivalent effect in the TL as it is in source language. It also needs cultural knowledge of the similarities and differences between cultures i.e. beliefs, ways of life, arts, traditions, conventions, values and food.

2.5 Proverbs and culture

Culture and language are interrelated and this interrelatedness influences proverb usage, meaning, and interpretation. Culture can be defined as "the way of life for an entire society" (Jary and Jary 1991, p.101). However, this definition is considered simple as it does not include the relation between language and culture. Nevertheless, Leigh and Stan bridge (1991, p. 2) provided a more sophisticated view as they state that culture is: "A mixture which incorporates behavior (thoughts, actions and language), knowledge, belief, art morals, law, custom, and other qualities acquired by man as a social being. Language, therefore, expresses the patterns and structures of culture. This view includes the interaction between culture and various other aspects such as language.

Undoubtedly, Culture plays a critical role in determining the meaning and usage of proverbs. For instance, Firth (1926, p.134) highlights the impact of culture on proverbial meaning as he states that " The meaning of a proverb is made clear only when side by side with the translation is given a full account of the accompanying social situation..." Moreover, Kroebber (1948, p.253) defines culture as the combination of " … customs, speech, knowledge, beliefs, arts and technologies, ideas, and rules…" It is important to note that Kroebber (1948) includes all cultural aspects which are critically different from a culture to another. Therefore, translators are out to carefully deal with cultural elements that they encounter in proverbs.

2.6 Cultural Differences in Translating from English to Arabic

Posted on November 30, 2010 by Scott j "in previous articles, we have already talked about how cultural gaps impact translation. (Article :how to correctly interpret the Japanese )When culture are very different ,they produce what we might call " cultural translation " i.e. when in the source text contains an element that is culturally unfamiliar or extremely opposed to the target culture. The is why we explained that the task is not simply "translation "but rather "interpretation "

For example ,in a translation from English into Arabic we find the word "owl". While we can All recognize what kind of bird it is ,it does not symbolizes wisdom :on the contrary, in both cultures. In has a very negative connotation, as it represent pessismism. In such a case ,the translator should transcend the literal and find a way to express the symbolism in the text,

2.8 Relationship between Culture and translation
Translation started so that there is no communication gap between Nation-states and that there can be trade and cultural exchange. The idea was to promote understanding among these Nation-states. Translation as defined by Eugene Nida, an American translation theorist says; translation consists in reproducing the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. When we talk of keeping the meaning intact and the style at place we imply that it should help a reader is able to connect to the text and understand the references in his own native language. Translation is highly influenced by cultural differences and the accuracy in any translated text is highly proportional to the knowledge the translator has of another culture. This implies that translation not only tests a translator’s linguistic ability, but also how much he/she knows of the target languages’ cultural background.

2.9 Theory of Translation and Culture

Nida(1975) said that no translation that attempts to bridge a wide cultural gap can hope to eliminate all traces of the AWEJ Special issue on Translation No. (2) 2013 The Cultural Problems in Translating Guessabi Arab World English Journal www.awej.org ISSN: 2229-9327 231 foreign setting. Thus, the translator could not always domesticate the Target text but sometimes he will foreignism certain terms or words. Domestication means changing the SL values and making them readable for the TL audience. However, Foreignisation is keeping the values of the SL and exposing audience to them.

Thus, translation is not only translating the words, the meaning, the rules grammar and the arrangement of words, but it is also translating the behavior of the society and cultural customs. Language is a product of the thought and behavior of a society. According to that the translator should understand the original culture and interpret it through the receiver language. No culture no language and no meaning. Nida differs from the theory of Newark and Vermeer's. "language is part of a culture" (1989:222). According to New mark, Vermeer's stance would imply the impossibility to translate whereas for the latter, translating the source language (SL) into a suitable form of TL is part of the translator's role in translate cultural communication.

2.10 Cultural Translation Strategies:

When discussing the problems of translation and differences between cultures, scholars may refer to different issues cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure. Such claim is discussed by Nida (2003: 130 ). He assists that translators should be exposed to different types of translation as not all issues translated word by word or literally. Moreover, several theorists, such as Santoyo (1975) amongst others support the theory of untranslatability when translators face texts with terms which are so culture-bound and culture-specific as to defy translation Fernandez Guerra (2007: 41). He explains that when the cultural differences exist between the two languages, it is extremely difficult to achieve a successful transfer, if not impossible ( whatever the competence of the translator in the two languages involved.

However, there are different types of translation. They include legal translation, medical translation, literary translation, technical translation, word-for-word translation, and other types. In this section, I will concentrate on cultural
translation in relation to certain areas and topics that usually cause problems when translating or interpreting because of cultural differences across the two cultures of a specific type of interaction. This also includes referring to certain techniques of cultural translation that help in solving the problem of this research. The following explains the main theories and methods that may be considered when translation proverbs.

The first is the cultural equivalence method. It's the most widely used method of finding the direct cultural equivalent in the target language to the source language. In English, the cultural "expression once bitten twice shy" has a direct cultural exchange in the Arabic language, which is the he believer does not bite a stone twice. This translation explains that one may not fill in the same fault twice. لا يلدغ أمرئ من جحر مرتين.

The second is the Cultural Correspondence method. In this style, the source Cultural language term has the same correspondent term in the target language. In Arabic, which corresponds the English proverb. أصطاد عصفورين بحجر واحد. That means the translation of this expression is "To hit two birds with stone". It refers to the cultural exchange in the Arabic language, "two birds are hit by one stone".

The third method is the Accepted Standard Translation: Some of the English terms become familiar and have a cultural equivalent translation in Arabic. For example, "the end justifies the meaning" This means; doing anything whatsoever that is required to get the result you want, regardless of the methods used. It does not matter whether these methods are legal or illegal,. "software" "computer" "سوفت وير" "كيومبيوتر" etc. These terms are newly used in the Arabic language as they are imported from the source language, but they become standard every day. Target Language expressions become contemporary Arabic Language expressions.

The fourth method is the Naturalization: In relation to the reminded cultural expressions between English and Arabic, their origins, rhetoric, and have printed on it. It becomes familiar and known, for example, the word democracy (الديمقراطية) the word of the Colombian games (الألعاب الأولمبية) and the word Hercules (هيرقل). It can be normalization in all language in English for example, the word Intifada (الانفاضة) becomes familiar after its normalization in English and similarly the word, " Hajj, Zakat" after normalization was one of the most widely used methods of cultural translation.

Finally, the General Sense: It is one of the methods that is used for cultural translation, it 'completely ignores the cultural side of the source language. The word "Congress" for instance might mean the "American General Conference", but the opposite and familiar in the Arab culture is the "US Congress". It is the act of translation and replacing the social-cultural reality in the original text with what is equivalent to it. The culture of the language translated to it in the original text is completely out of the language translated into it. The term is not a construction or vocabulary, for example, the word "ألئج صدري" "أثلج صدري" "أتلهج صدري" in Arabic, according to the culture of the Arabic we say "إن هذا الخبر أثلج صدري" and translated into English in exchange for other cultural is "This news warms my heart" climate.
Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study deals with the differences and problems of culture facing students and translators in translating proverbs from English to Arabic. This chapter discuss the research methodology used in the study it includes research methods, Data collection, Testing, data review and analysis.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

The data was collected from the test. The answers were analyzed and classified. Moreover, percentages and frequencies of the responses were figured out. The qualitative data were analyzed, narrated and described. In order to support our argument and to find out answer to the main research question, and the sub question. We have collected our data according to specific selected participant, these participant are three group students.

3.3 Sample of the study

A sample of 9 English language students (males and females) divided into Three groups. Each group consist of three English Language students who studied culture translation subject. The translation specialization according to one of the subjects studied in the culture translation class. It consists of three groups, in each group three male and female students who were given text for more information and access to delete the research. Aphorisms taking into account the culture of the other country or text written and what type of strategy used during proverbs translation with the book of the translator Mounir Baalbek.

3.4 Translation Test

We designed a test in order to discover the gaps in the culture translation and the cultural obstacles the Arab students face while translating English proverbs into Arabic. The test consists of (six) English proverbs, from English to Arabic, taken the culture in to consideration while translating. In case the student do not know how to translate any of the proverbs correctly, They go translate them either literally or by using phrases.
Chapter Four

Data Analysis

In this chapter, we divide our discussion into three stages. In the first stage, we provide the proverb in English with the accent translation of it in Arabic culture. In the second stage, we provide the translations of the participants. In the last stage, we analyze their translation in relation to what they are thought to be the appropriate translation. The proverbs are classified into three groups. Each group include three proverbs.

Group one

Proverb 1

This proverb is "The master's eye makes the horse fat" used in the customs and tradition in the sense of every person or child in the eye of his mother the most beautiful child regardless of form. The first and second item translate it by using cultural equivalence, It will be "كل قرد بعين أمه غزال"this is accurate translation, but in the third item translate by literal translation "يجعل الحصان سمين"Not accurate way to translate because this proverb has equivalent in Arabic and English cultural.

Examiners I and II model ideals using cultural equivalence because they understand its cultural meaning in the target language. The third examiner relied on the interpreter to translate literally, because he had no knowledge of the culture of the other language. Translator should be familiar with SL culture and TL culture.

Proverb 2

This proverb is "you cannot teach old dogs new tricks" it means that science is not limited to large and not small, but science is a little better now memory is strong and the mind is new and free of defects. The first item translate this proverb to Arabic by culture equivalence it will be "العلم في الصغر كالنقش على الحجر" and this is a correct meaning, but the second and third item translate by paraphrase "العلم في البر صعب جدا أولئك الذين تعلم بسهولة في الكبر" this way is acceptable, because it is nearly to the basic meaning

Group Two
Proverb 1

"A Small fish is better than an empty dish" This proverb translate by culture equivalent in the first item "لا استحي من إعطاء القليل فأن الحرمان أقل منه" in second item translate by using paraphrase it is acceptable translate "قليل بكفلك خيرا من كثير يطغيك" but, the third item translate by literal translation it is means word by word "سمك صغير أفضل من إناء خاوي" It is a wrong way translate to Arabic.

The first student in the second group used the strategy of cultural equivalence because it has a background on the knowledge of the other language culture and the second and third students used a wrong strategy in their translation of what is appropriate to their knowledge of the other cultures taking into account and understanding other cultures to learn the correct translation.

Proverb 2

This proverb "March winds and April shower" it is used to comfort a person in his or her. The first and second item translate it at the same way by cultural equivalent to Arabic it will be "إلى بعد العسر يسرا" but the third item use the literal translation which is "رياح شباط و أمطار نسيان تنبت ربيع أيار" It doesn't has any relevant of the cultural in Arabic and English.

All the students translated a false translation, because they used the literal translation and found it difficult to translate the proverb, because the words do not definitively indicate the cultural meaning of Arabic language and so they fell into the line of cultural equivalence. Translator should translate proverbs according to their meaning, not only to translate word by word in order to avoid meaningless of expressions.

Group Three

Proverb 1

"The end justifies the means" The two items translate the same way by cultural equivalent when translate it to Arabic "الغاية تبرر الوسيلة" but the third item translate by using literal translation which is "النهاية لا تعني لا شيء" it is a wrong translate.

The first and second translators used the strategy of cultural equivalence in translation with a precise cultural meaning in both languages and are widely used in the two cultures. The third student used the translator in his translation of the word for word.

Translators who wish to be professional should be aware of the translation strategies and technique. And should practice translation by using these strategies.
Proverb 2

This proverb is "every cook praises his own broth" translate in first student by Arabic culture equivalence. Its accurate translation because it has meaning in both culture "كل فتاة بابيها معجبة". In second and third student translate by paraphrase such as "every girl loves her father"." Each girl a admires her father".

Findings

First of all, 40% of the examiners failed to translate a proverb "you cannot teach big dogs new tricks" for instance in an accurate way an tried to paraphrase it "لن تتعلم بسهولة في الكبر". I think, the fail due to either lack of awareness of the TL culture or absence of culture equivalent in the SL.

Secondly, as for the proverb "A small fish is better than an empty dish" 30% of the students failed to translate the proverb accurately, because they do not know about the culture of SL, so they had to paraphrase it "قليل يكفيك خير من كثير يطفلك".

More findings are that proverb with culture gaps between SL and TL pose serious problems which consequently have their dramatic influence on all over the world. As result of intercultural translation, the nature and the types of the existing problems related to the culture gaps between the SL and TL should be clearly identified. This enables the translator to better understand the areas of challenge and attempt the most suitable translation strategies.

Since translators are basically culture–dependent, it is found that culture bound word, idioms and proverb and collocation are usually the main source of cultural gaps. Therefore, a translator should not only be a bilingual but also a bicultural. The linguistic method of communication and the culture gap problems related to it should be particularly analyzed, with reference to examples from both the English and Arabic language.

The results of this study reveal the fact that in order to overcome such as cultural gaps inLinguistic communication, translator, of SL culture, namely, religious, historical, traditional and even geographical to find the nearest equivalents to them in the TL Arabic culture. Since, according to writer(1969:478),there is no completely exact translation; compensation is the translation strategy which may the be the proper one in translating.
Chapter Five

Conclusion

Translation generally is a task of convey one thing said in one language to be known to people from a different language. When the situation is related to culture, the concern might be differently treated. A translated proverb has never been a group of words and/or sentences conveyed from one language to another. Translators usually work hard to combine many different issues to help them to convey intended meaning in different ways. Therefore, considering issue such as religion, culture, context in relation to the intended meaning when translation proverbs from English to Arabic is a crucial issue. It is very important when a proverb relates to marriage in England, for example, to consider and cultural difference when translating into Arabic, because marriages in the two cultures are different. And the two languages have always been very important in order to convey the appropriate proverbial message between the two cultures such as Arabic and English.

Rather than translating a proverb in separate sentences or words, or translating ii, translators need to think of what is intended by a proverb and the appropriate way of conveying it to a different language and culture. Proverbs always carry cultural aspects, especially when cultures are different such as Arab culture and English culture. The two languages' cultural features, while conveying from one language to another, should be highly considered by translators. Translator should be familiar with language1 and language2's cultures, knowing the purpose of interaction and interactants in relation to what is translated should always be the main concern of translators. They should keep in mind that there are differences between cultures and also what might be acceptable and meaningful in one culture might not be so in the other when translating proverbs.
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Appendices

Appendix I

Personal details

1- What is your gender? Male               female
2- What is your age?....................
3- How many years study English?....................

Appendix II

The Test:
Translate the following proverbs into Arabic:

*Condition: 1- Using the culture equivalent if you do not know how translate by equivalence Write what the type of strategy used. 2-

1- The Master's eye makes the horse fat.

...........................................................................................................................................................................

2-- You cannot teach old dogs new tricks.
...........................................................................................................................................................................
Appendix II

Personal details

1- What is your gender? Male  female
2- What is your age? .................
3- How many years study English? ......................

Appendix III
The Test:
Translate the following proverbs into Arabic:

*Condition: 1- Using the culture equivalent if you do not know how translate by equivalence Write what the type of strategy used.

1- A small fish is better than an empty dish..

........................................................................................................................................................................

2- March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers.

........................................................................................................................................................................
Appendix III

Personal details

1- What is your gender? Male female
2- What is your age? .................
3- How many years study English? .................

Appendix III
The Test:
Translate the following proverbs into Arabic:

*Condition: 1- Using the culture equivalent if you do not know how translate by equivalence Write what the type of strategy used.

1- The end justifies the mean.

.................................................................................................................................

2- Every cook praises his own broth.

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