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**Students' Strategies in Translating**  
**Culture-Specific Idioms from English into Arabic**  
**The Case of Second Year Students at the Department of English,**  
**Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirement for a Master  
Degree in Language Sciences**

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# *Dedication*

*I would like to dedicate my work:*

*To my wonderful parents, thank you for all the unconditional love, care and support that you have always given me, I love you!*

*To my dearest sister and my brothers: 'Abla, Mounir, Reda, Housseem, Sif eldine.'*

*To all my teachers who taught me from the primary school until the university, thanks a lot for your effort.*

*Special thanks to my cousin 'Rima' for her support and help.*

*To all my best friends and colleagues without exception, this work is dedicated with respect and love.*

*Thanks to second year students of English.*

*We are mostly thankful to every person who helped us to fulfill this work.*

*Leila*

# *Dedication*

*This thesis is dedicated to my parents who have raised me to be the person I am today. Thank you for your constant support, continuous encouragement, and never-ending love.*

*To my brother 'Yahia', and my sister 'Rima.'*

*To all my friends and classmates.*

*Asma*

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present study attempts to investigate the strategies used by second year students of English when translating culture specific English idioms into Arabic. These students experience difficulties in translating the meaning of idiomatic expressions; however, the problem is magnified when students are required not only to understand the meanings of these expressions, but also to render their meanings in another language correctly and appropriately. The study aims also at finding out whether students face any difficulties in choosing the appropriate strategies when translating culture-specific English idioms into Arabic and applying those strategies correctly. The randomly chosen sample for this study consists of 75 second year students at the Department of English. The data are collected by means of a questionnaire administered to teachers of translation and a translation task in the form of sentences, containing idiomatic expressions to be translated by the sample of students. The findings demonstrate that the subjects generally did not face difficulties in recognizing and understanding English idiomatic expressions, but they generally did in determining and applying the appropriate strategies when translating these expressions into Arabic. Students' lack of awareness about the suitable strategies and the way to apply them successfully is attributed, in part, to the knowledge gap about idioms in both native language and target language cultures. As for the strategies, word for word translation and the paraphrasing strategies are the most successfully used strategies by students in translating culture bound idioms. On the other hand, translation based on idiom by idiom with similar meaning and similar/ dissimilar form and omission are rarely selected and used appropriately.

## **List of Abbreviations**

**SL:** Source Language

**ST:** Source Text

**TL:** Target Language

**TT:** Target Text

## List of Tables

<b>Table 2.01:</b> Linguistic Structure of English Idioms (McCarthy and O’Dell, 2003, p:6)..	32
<b>Table 2.02:</b> Examples of Total Equivalence of Idioms between English and Arabic ....	42
<b>Table 2.03:</b> Examples of Partial Equivalence of Idioms between English and Arabic ...	43
<b>Table 2.04:</b> Examples of Translating Idioms by Paraphrasing .....	43
<b>Table 2.05:</b> Example of Translating Idioms by Omission .....	44
<b>Table 3.01:</b> Teacher Degree .....	56
<b>Table 3.02:</b> Post-Graduation Specialty .....	56
<b>Table 3.03:</b> Teacher Experience in Translation .....	57
<b>Table 3.04:</b> Teachers’ Experience in Teaching Translation .....	57
<b>Table 3.05:</b> Teachers’ Definition of Translation .....	58
<b>Table 3.06:</b> Frequency of Practising Translation .....	59
<b>Table 3.07:</b> Level of Difficulty of Idioms in Translating .....	60
<b>Table 3.08:</b> The most Difficult Type of Equivalence in Translation .....	60
<b>Table 3.09:</b> Teachers’ Perceptions about the Possibility to Preserve and Convey the Intended Meaning in Translation .....	62
<b>Table 3.10:</b> Teachers’ Perceptions of their Students’ Ability to Translate from English to Arabic .....	63
<b>Table 3.11:</b> Aspects that Make Idioms difficult to Translate .....	64
<b>Table 3.12:</b> Students’ Level in Translating Idioms .....	65
<b>Table 3.13:</b> The Common Errors Made by Students in the Translation of Idiomatic Expressions from English into Arabic .....	65
<b>Table 3.14:</b> Frequency of Students’ Selection and Use of Strategies in Translating the Idiomatic Expressions .....	67

<b>Table 3.15:</b> Remedial Techniques Suggested by Teachers for Translating Culture Specific Idiomatic Expressions .....	69
<b>Table 3.16:</b> The Meaning and Appropriate Translation Strategies and their Application for Idioms .....	74
<b>Table 3.17:</b> Students' Answers in Translating Idiom 1 .....	74
<b>Table 3.18:</b> Students' Answers in Translating Idiom 2 .....	75
<b>Table 3.19:</b> Students' Answers in Translating Idiom 3 .....	76
<b>Table 3.20:</b> Students' Answers in Translating Idiom 4 .....	77
<b>Table 3.21:</b> Students' Answers in Translating Idiom 5 .....	78
<b>Table 3.22:</b> Students' Answers in Translating Idiom 6 .....	79
<b>Table 3.23:</b> Students' Answers in Translating Idiom 7 .....	79
<b>Table 3.24:</b> Students' Answers in Translating Idiom 8 .....	80
<b>Table 3.25:</b> Students' Answers in Translating Idiom 9 .....	81
<b>Table 3.26:</b> Students' Answers in Translating Idiom 10 .....	82
<b>Table 3.27:</b> Students' Answers in Translating Idiom 11 .....	83
<b>Table 3.28:</b> Students' Answers in Translating Idiom 12 .....	84
<b>Table 3.29:</b> Students' Answers in Translating Idiom 13 .....	85
<b>Table 3.30:</b> Frequency of Students' Success in Translating Shared Idioms between English and Arabic .....	87
<b>Table 3.31:</b> Frequency of Students' Success in Translating Culture Bound English Idioms into Arabic .....	88

## CONTENTS

<b>Dedication</b> .....	I
<b>Acknowledgement</b> .....	III
<b>Abstract</b> .....	IV
<b>List of Abbreviations</b> .....	V
<b>List of Tables</b> .....	VI
<b>CONTENTS</b> .....	VIII

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

<b>1.</b> Statement of the Problem .....	1
<b>2.</b> Research Questions .....	2
<b>3.</b> Aims of Study .....	2
<b>4.</b> Hypothesis of the Study .....	3
<b>5.</b> Research Materials .....	3
<b>6.</b> Structure of the Study .....	4

### Chapter One: Equivalence in Translation

<b>Introduction</b> .....	5
<b>1.1.</b> Definition of Translation .....	5
<b>1.2.</b> Translation as Equivalence .....	6
<b>1.3.</b> Approaches to Equivalence .....	7
<b>1.3.1.</b> Jacobson's Approach .....	7
<b>1.3.2.</b> Nida's Approach .....	8
<b>1.3.3.</b> Baker's Approach .....	10
<b>1.4.</b> Context in Translation .....	11

1.4.1.	The Linguistic Context .....	12
1.4.2.	The Situational Context .....	12
1.5.	Meaning in Translation .....	12
1.6.	Culture and Translation .....	14
1.7.	Problems in Translation between Arabic and English .....	16
1.7.1.	Grammatical Problems .....	16
1.7.2.	Stylistic Problems .....	18
1.7.3.	Cultural Problems .....	19
1.7.4.	Lexical Problems .....	20
1.8.	Translation Strategies .....	23
1.8.1.	Ghazala's Strategies .....	23
1.8.1.1.	Literal Translation .....	24
1.8.1.2.	Free Translation .....	24
1.8.2.	Baker's Strategies .....	25
1.8.2.1	Translation by a more General Word .....	26
1.8.2.2.	Translation by a Neutral/ less Expressive Way .....	26
1.8.2.3.	Translation by cultural substitution .....	26
1.8.2.4.	Translation by Using a Loan Word or a Loan Word plus Explanation	26
1.8.2.5.	Translating by Paraphrasing Using a Related Word .....	26
1.8.2.6.	Translating by Paraphrasing Using an Unrelated Word .....	26
1.8.2.7.	Translation by Omission .....	27
1.8.2.8.	Translation by Illustration .....	27
<b>Conclusion</b>	.....	27

Chapter Two: English Culture- Specific Idioms in Translation

<b>Introduction</b> .....	28
2.1. Definition of Idioms .....	28
2.2. Characteristics of Idioms .....	30
2.3. Classification of Idioms .....	33
2.3.1. Encoding Idioms vs Decoding Idioms .....	33
2.3.2. Pure Idioms vs Semi Idioms vs Literal Idioms .....	34
2.3.3. Transparent Idioms vs Opaque Idioms .....	34
2.3.4. Direct Idioms vs Indirect Idioms vs Phrasal Verbs .....	35
2.4. Idiomaticity in English and Arabic .....	37
2.5. Language And Culture-Specific Idioms in English .....	38
2.6. Difficulties in Translating Idiomatic Expressions .....	40
2.7. Strategies and Procedures of Translating Idioms .....	41
2.7.1. Bakers' Strategies .....	42
2.7.2. Newmarks' Strategies .....	44
2.7.3. Gabers' Strategies .....	45
2.7.4. Ghazala Strategies .....	46
2.7.4.1. Evasion of Idiomaticity .....	46
2.7.4.2. Invasion of Idiomaticity .....	51
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	53

Chapter Three: Field Work

<b>Introduction</b> .....	53
3.1. Population .....	53
3.2. Data Collection Procedures .....	54
3.3. Teachers Questionnaire .....	54

3.3.1.	Description and Administration Of Questionnaire .....	54
3.3.2.	Analysis of Data .....	55
3.3.3.	Interpretation and Discussion of Questionnaire Results .....	70
3.4.	Students Test .....	70
3.4.1.	Description and Administration of the Test .....	71
3.4.2.	Analysis of Data .....	71
3.4.3.	Interpretation and Discussion of The Results .....	85
3.5.	Overall Analysis of Results .....	90

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

1.	Putting it altogether .....	96
2.	Pedagogical Recommendations .....	97
3.	Limitations of the Study .....	99
4.	Further Suggestions .....	99

References

Appendices

Résumé

ملخص

# **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

## **1. Statement of the Problem**

The use of different translation strategies is part of the profession of translation. For a translator, knowledge of strategies is not sufficient by itself, and translators work out equivalence problems by skilfully determining and applying the appropriate strategies for given texts and contexts. Among the texts that need such careful and skilful application of translation strategies, English idioms figure out to pose tremendous challenges for translators, and more specifically, learners of English as a foreign language. What makes idioms particularly difficult to translate is the fact that they are, more often than not, culture-bound expressions. The complexity of the task of translating idioms becomes even more apparent if one is carrying it out between two distinctly culture-laden languages like Arabic and English. As far as the linguistic systems are concerned, Arabic and English are extremely different languages belonging to different language families, where the former is Semitic and the latter is an Indo-European. With regard to culture, Arabic vehicles oriental traditions and values whereas English is mostly identified with western norms or occidental values; these cultural aspects are not necessarily compatible.

Based on the above-stated considerations, it can be deduced that idioms, which make part of English vocabulary, are difficult to comprehend for foreign language learners in view of their unpredictable meaning and grammar. Moreover, idioms may be culture-bound, and this may cause even greater problems for students. The latter, in the example of our sample students at the department of English, who have just been introduced to the practice of translation, may also strive to come up with structurally exact matches for idioms at the expense of searching for equivalent idioms or expressions that have the same meaning in Arabic. This suggests that, in order to transfer a source idiom into the target language, a translator needs to have at his/her

disposal a variety of strategies and to select the most appropriate ones for each type of idiom. Hence, the main concern of this dissertation is to investigate the different strategies that English students use when translating English culture-specific idioms into Arabic.

## **2. Research Questions**

The task of translating idioms is manifold; it involves recognizing that expressions are idiomatic, figuring out their meaning, choosing the appropriate translation strategy and applying it successfully, transferring their meaning in the medium of the target language. With regard to the process and strategies employed in translating idioms and the type of idiom involved, this study raises the following questions:

- 1- Are students able to conserve idiomaticity when translating idioms from English to Arabic?
- 2- Are students able to translate English idiomatic expressions that have equivalents in Arabic?
- 3- What translating strategies are chosen by students for rendering culture-bound English idioms into Arabic?
- 4- Which of the appropriate strategies of translating culture-bound idioms from English into Arabic are successfully applied by students?

## **3. Aims of the Study**

This study is carried out at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, and involves the second year students majoring in English, who have been introduced to the practice of translation as early as the beginning of the current academic year. It aims at shedding light on the strategies that students master in translating idiomatic

expressions and the ones they do not, and hence, need to be consolidated by their teachers. Accordingly, the study is descriptive and exploratory in nature in that it aims at investigating the common problems that students encounter when dealing with idioms. In addition, it seeks to find out whether students are empowered with the necessary strategies as well as practice in their successful application in the case of translating English idioms into Arabic.

#### **4. Hypotheses of the Study**

Based on the aforementioned research questions, the hypotheses on which the present study is grounded run as follows:

- Students will be able to comprehend and translate English idioms which have equivalents in Arabic.
- Students' failure to convey idiomaticity when translating culture-bound idioms is the result of the absence of the knowledge about the source and target cultures idioms.
- Students' failure to translate English culture-specific idioms is the result of their unawareness of which translation strategies to deploy.
- Students' failure at translating English culture-specific idioms is the result of their unawareness of how to deploy translation strategies.

#### **5. Research Materials**

To verify the hypotheses, a questionnaire and a test are adopted as instruments for collecting data. The questionnaire is administered to the teachers of Translation at the department of English to investigate the common errors committed by their students when translating idioms, and solutions they suggest to avoid such problems. The test is given to second year students of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia

University, Jijel. They are asked to translate a number of sentences containing idiomatic expressions from English into Arabic in order to check their comprehension and the strategies they use when translating. The use of two different instruments allows covering more aspects of students' translation strategies, comparing the results and offering insights about the research topic.

## **6. Structure of the Study**

The present research consists of three chapters. The first two chapters are theoretical in nature, and the third is practical.

Chapter One, entitled 'Equivalence in Translation', provides a theoretical background about the translation process with a focus on the notions of equivalence and its approaches, and the role of context, meaning, and culture in translation. It highlights, also, the different problems and strategies of translation.

Chapter Two entitled 'English Culture- Specific Idioms in Translation'; deals with idioms; their definitions, their characteristics and their classifications. In addition, it addresses the notions of idiomacity in English and Arabic and language and culture-specific idioms. Finally, it deals with both the difficulties and strategies of translating idiomatic expressions.

Chapter Three, 'Field Work', is devoted to the practical work. It presents, analyses and interprets the results obtained from the questionnaire and the test given to the teachers and the second year students of English, respectively.

# **Chapter One**

## **Equivalence in Translation**

## **Chapter One: Equivalence in Translation**

### **Introduction**

This chapter gives an account of the different definitions of translation provided by different scholars; these definitions are based essentially on the notion of equivalence, which in turn is defined and explored in terms of the various theories and the principles on which they are based. Other concerns relate to the role of context and meaning in translation in addition to the influence of culture on translation. Last, the chapter highlights the general problems encountered when translating and strategies for overcoming those problems.

### **1.1. Definition of Translation**

Various definitions have been supplied to the concept and practice of translation, all of which consider translation, basically, as the transfer of a source language (SL) text into a corresponding target language (TL) text.

Ghazala (2008) defines translation as “any process that results in transferring the meaning from one language into another”. For him the main goal is to deliver meaning of the SL by using the equivalents available in the TL (01). Thus, for Ghazala, the main aim of translation is to transmit the meaning of the SL into the TL. In addition, meaning is not the result of lexemes (words), but is rather a mixture of language components, which are grammar, vocabulary, style, and phonology.

For Catford (1965:20), “translation is seen as the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL). He distinguishes between total translation, which is the replacement of SL grammar and lexis by equivalent TL grammar and lexis, and restricted translation”, which is based on the replacement of SL textual materials at only one level. What is

important for him is to maintain a kind of equivalence between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT).

Moreover, Newmark (1981) in his book “*Approaches to Translation*” defines translation as a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and /or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language (07).

Furthermore, Nida and Taber state that “Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalence of the source language message firstly, in terms of meaning and secondly, in terms of style” (1982:12). Accordingly, the focus is on both content and form of the message to reproduce the same effect of the ST.

All the previous definitions agree that the main concern of a translator is to transmit the meaning and reproduce the style of messages into a different language in attempts to reach equivalence.

## **1.2. Translation as Equivalence**

Most translators agree that translation is based on equivalence between the STs and the TTs. The term equivalence describes the nature and the relationship, which links both SLs and TLs. In this regard, Harvey and Haggins (2002:18-19) state: “equivalence denotes an observed relationship between ST and TT utterances that are seen as directly corresponding to one another.”

Equivalence is considered an issue in translation, and covers linguistic units such as words, phrases, clauses, idioms. Consequently, finding equivalents is one of

the core problems in the translation process as Catford points out, “the central problem of translation-practice is that of finding target text equivalents.”(1965: 21).

### **1.3. Approaches to Equivalence**

A heated debate has emerged among theorists with regard to the nature of the concept of equivalence and its conditions. Different views can be classified under three main approaches with three proponents: a linguistic approach is favoured by Jacobson (1959), a cultural approach is proclaimed by Nida and Taber (1982) and a convenience-based approach is followed by Baker (1992), who uses equivalence to achieve appropriate translation.

#### **1.3.1. Jacobson’s Approach to Equivalence**

Roman Jacobson (1959) introduced the concept of ‘equivalence in difference’ and ensured that it is a major language problem. In his article ‘*On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*’, he distinguished three types of translation; intra-lingual translation (within the same language), inter-lingual translation (between different languages), and inter-semiotic translation (between sign systems). Jacobson (ibid.233) explained that intra-lingual translation does not imply full equivalence between language units, given that it uses synonyms in order to pass the message. For him, there is no full equivalence between code units on the level of inter-lingual translation. This means that an absolute equivalence is hard to be achieved when translating, “Translation involves two equivalent messages into two different codes.” (ibid.) In other words, translation requires achieving equivalence between two messages from different languages. The translator task then becomes to reach equality in messages disregarding the gap which exists between different languages. That is to say, despite the grammatical, lexical and semantic structural differences of ST and TT, translation becomes possible through finding necessary equivalents. In this case, the translator

should strive to find some procedures to lessen the differences that s/he may come across since s/he is supposed to transmit the ST message into an equivalent one in the TT as faithfully as possible. Armstrong (2005) goes in the same direction of Jacobson and admits that "full equivalence is rare", but the translator has to look for the nearest possible equivalent.

### **1.3.2. Nida and Taber's Approach to Equivalence**

Nida's (1964) theory of equivalence is based on two different types of equivalence: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. The former is also referred to as formal correspondence by Nida and Taber (1982).

Formal equivalence, as defined by Nida (1964), refers to the type of translation which focuses mainly on transferring the message taking into consideration both form and content; in other words, it is a kind of translation of poetry to poetry, sentence to sentence, and concept to concept (159). Formal correspondence tries to remain as close as possible to the original text without adding the translator's ideas or thoughts into the text. Its purpose is to be as faithful as possible to the SL in order to allow the reader understand the SL context and know as much as necessary the customs, manner of thought, and means of expression (*ibid.*). According to Nida, the message in the TL should match as closely as possible the different elements in the SL. This means that the message in the target culture must always be compared with the message of the source culture in order to determine standards of accuracy and correctness (*ibid.*).

Nida and Taber (1992: 191-192) claim that formal equivalence or correspondence can lead to serious problems for the target receivers because it distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language and, hence, distorts the

message, so as to cause the receptor to “misunderstand or to labor unduly hard”. In other words, it could result in awkward statements leading to potential misunderstanding of the authors’ intended meaning. They believe that translators who focus more on forms are more likely to misinterpret the author’s intention and to distort the meaning.

Dynamic equivalence, on the other hand, is an approach to translation that is based on what Nida calls ‘the principle of equivalent effect’ where the impact of the TL message on receivers should be the same as that of the SL message (1964:159). Nida & Taber further state that the basic aim of dynamic equivalence is to get “the closest natural equivalence of the SL message” (1969:12). The translator is not focused on matching the message of the receptor language to that of the SL, but he/she is more concerned with creating an effect on the TL readers similar or equivalent to the one generated by the SL text on its readers (ibid.). The translator should, then, try to use a complete natural expression of his/her own language making the message of the text comprehensible to the reader. In other words, the original language message is translated thought for thought rather than word for word as in formal equivalence. This can be done by taking each thought from the original text and rendering it into a sentence in the TL that conveys the same meaning, but does not necessarily use the exact phrasing of the original.

Nida and Taber (1982) favour dynamic equivalence to formal equivalence, since it seeks to maintain the meaning and the clarity of the message in the TT (*in* Leonardi, 2003).

### 1.3.3. Baker's Approach to Equivalence

Mona Baker in her influential book (1992) entitled *'In Other Words'* investigated the notion of equivalence from various angles. She distinguished between four types of equivalence: equivalence at and above word level, grammatical equivalence, textual equivalence, and pragmatic equivalence.

Baker (1992) acknowledges the importance of equivalence at word level and above word level during the translation process. She claims that the word is the basic unit in any language to be taken into account when translating. Thus, the translator should analyse the ST words as single units in terms of seeking an equivalent term in the TT languages. Consequently, the translator should take into consideration parameters such as, number, gender, and tense when translating (11-12).

Grammatical equivalence focuses on the diversity between languages in terms of grammatical categories because grammatical rules vary from one language to another (ibid.84). This may pose some obstacles to translators in terms of finding a direct equivalence in the TL. In addition, Baker stresses the fact that differences in grammatical structures may cause remarkable changes in the way the message is carried out. These changes may induce the translator either to add or to omit information in the TT because of the lack of particular grammatical devices such as number, gender, voice, and person (ibid.). For instance, duality does not exist in English grammar. In this case, the translator is obliged to use the plural form or numbers as in the following example: the word 'امراتان' is translated as 'two women'.

Textual equivalence refers to equivalence between a SL and a TL text considering information and cohesion. Baker (1992) argues that texture is a very important feature in translation since it helps the translator to comprehend and analyze

the ST, and then produce a coherent text for the target culture audience. The target receptor, the purpose of the translation and the text type are the factors, listed by Baker, which guide the translator to achieve textual equivalence.

The last type of equivalence, suggested by Baker (ibid.) is concerned with pragmatic equivalence, referring to: “The study of language in use. It is the study of meaning, not as generated by the linguistic situation but as conveyed and manipulated by participants in a Communicative situation.”( p: 218)Thus, Baker focuses on the implicit meaning of the text being translated. That is, the translator tries to convey what is intended or implied not what is explicitly said, taking into account the context in which the utterance occurs. Thus, the translator’s role is to work out the implied meaning in translation in order to get the ST message across. Mona Baker (ibid) points out that the translator’s task is to recreate the author’s intention of the SL in such a way that the message becomes accessible and comprehensible to the target audience.

#### **1.4. Context in Translation**

One of the most important aspects that the translator must consider in order to determine the meaning of a text is context. Context refers to the total setting in which a text –be it a word, an utterance, a sentence or a whole passage– appears. It includes the historical setting of writing a text, the cultural components that make a text unique, the types of audiences for which the translation is intended and the most efficient and effective ways of producing a satisfactory representation of the SL text (Nida & Taber, 1964:19).

While seeking the context of a text, two kinds of context may influence the meaning of a text: the linguistic context and the situational context.

#### **1.4.1. The Linguistic Context**

The linguistic context refers to the linguistic factors which influence the meaning of a text. It is concerned with the probability of co-occurrence or collocation of one lexical unit with another which forms a part of meaning (Newmark, 1988: 193). The linguistic context plays an important role in deciding on the meaning of words or lexical units; since a word may have more than one meaning, and each of these meanings are appropriately used in certain contexts, translators must pay attention to the ways in which words are used by looking into their context.

#### **1.4.2. The Situational Context**

The situational context refers to the factors and circumstances influencing the meaning and the interpretation of a text, i.e., the practical circumstances of utterances and settings. The situational context may be more difficult to recognize than the linguistic context because the same expression or statement may have quite different meanings when used in different situations. Therefore, translators must understand the meaning of an expression not only in terms of the linguistic context, but also in terms of the situational context in which it is used.

#### **1.5. Meaning in Translation**

Meaning is considered as the backbone of any translation; after all, the whole process of translation is concerned with meaning. Indeed, translation has often been defined with reference to meaning, and a perfect translation is said to have the same meaning as the original. Lowendowski states that translation is: “the transfer of meaning from one set of language signs to another set of signs.”(*in* Shuttleworth, 1977:182). In this sense, the translator’s task is to discover the SL meaning and reproduce the same meaning in the TL. Newmark (1981) bases his definition of translation on meaning, defining it as “rendering the meaning of a text into another

language in the way that the author intended the text.” (04). That is, translation deals with transmitting meaning as clearly and naturally as possible between different languages.

Different linguists have categorized multiple types of meaning. Geoffrey Leech (1981: 9-20) classifies meaning into conceptual and associative meaning.

- **Conceptual meaning:**

It is sometimes called denotative or cognitive meaning. It is the basic propositional meaning, which corresponds to the primary dictionary definition. In other words, conceptual meaning is the core, essential and the literal meaning of the word.

- **Associative meaning:** it consists of six types:

- 1) **Connotative meaning:** the communicative value an expression has by virtue of what it refers to, over and above its purely conceptual content.
- 2) **Social meaning:** that which a piece of language conveys about the social context of its use. The decoding of a text is dependent on our knowledge of stylistics and other variations of language. Social meaning is related to the situation in which an utterance is used.
- 3) **Affective meaning:** or emotive meaning refers to the emotive association or effects of words that are evoked in the reader or the listener. It refers to what is conveyed about the feeling or attitude of the speaker using language. It is often conveyed through conceptual, connotative content of the words used.
- 4) **Reflective meaning:** the meaning which arises when a word has more than one conceptual meaning or multiple conceptual meanings.

- 5) **Collocative meaning:** the meaning which a word acquires in the company of certain words. In other words, words collocate or co-occur with certain words only.
- 6) **Thematic meaning:** refers to what is communicated by the way, in which a speaker/writer organizes the message, in terms of ordering, focus, and emphasis.

According to Charles Morris (1971:78), there are three types of meaning:

- 1) **Referential meaning:** the relationship between signs and entities in the world.
- 2) **Pragmatic meaning:** that which refers to the relationship between signs and their users.
- 3) **Intralingual meaning:** the relationship between different signs.

## 1.6. Culture and Translation

The British anthropologist Taylor (1871:01) defines culture as “the complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” For Newmark (1988:94), it is the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a particular speech community. That is to say, culture refers to the sum of the human beings’ life ways, knowledge, customs, behaviour, beliefs, and feelings, thoughts shared among people in a community and by which people of society make sense of the world. Corbett (2003) pointed out that culture draws the interest of various research disciplines, and offered a definition of culture from the different perspectives of anthropology, ethnography and cultural studies:

“... anthropology investigates in general how membership of a particular social group is related to a particular set of behavior; ethnography seeks, partly, through structured exposure to other cultures, to explore and describe how

the speech systems and behaviors of groups are related to either social structures and beliefs, and cultural studies seek to understand and interpret the way that members of a group represent themselves through their cultural products (whether those products are poems, songs, dances, graffiti, or sport events.”(05)

According to Trosborg (2010:02), culture shows how an individual thinks, acts and feels as a given social group in relation to other individuals of that social group. Thus, a circle of friends, a theatre ensemble or a business organization is defined by its own unique culture and attitude and relationship. In the same vein, Harris and Moran (1987) (as cited in Trosborg, *ibid.*) added that culture explains the pattern of assumptions and behaviour formulated by human systems in response to their environment, be it a nation with its macrostructure, a local community with its needs and customs, a market with its consumers and suppliers, or an industry with its colleagues and competitors. It should be remembered, though, that within a nation or a corporate culture, individual differences will always exist.

The notion of culture is essential when considering the implications for translation. The two notions appear to be inseparable. According to Ghazala (2008: 193), translation is the transference of one culture into another. He also asserts that translation is culture bound. Therefore, when translating texts, people transport not only words from one container to another, but rather one entire culture into another, including the social, political and other conditions that surround the translators in their own environment, that is, their own culture.

Communication between cultures can be achieved through translating the different languages that are involved in exchanges, paying attention to specificities of each culture because “culture is the umbrella under which come many things in a society, including language. So language is an integral part of culture. No language

can exist unless it is rooted in the context of culture” (Ghazala, *ibid.*). A nation has not only its own language, but also its own culture which differs from others. Therefore, when translating, it is important to consider not only the lexical items, but also the cultural environment of that nation.

### **1.7. Problems in Translation between Arabic and English**

A translation problem is any kind of difficulty that prevents the translator from doing his/her job accurately. Ghazala claims that a translation problem is any difficulty which makes the translator stop translating to think about it (2008:17). Given the differences between Arabic and English in terms of the language systems and cultures, several problems confront translators, either novice translators or professional ones. These include grammatical problems, stylistic problems, cultural problems, and lexical problems.

#### **1.7.1. Grammatical Problems**

Since Arabic and English belong to different language families, it stands to reason that there can be no absolute correspondence between their grammar rules, which causes serious problems not only for translators, but for learners too. One of the primary mistakes made by learners when translating is the presupposition that English grammar and Arabic grammar can translate each other in a straightforward way, overlooking the fact that their grammars are extremely different. For instance, tense, gender and word order are among the differences that prove problematic.

Tense can hold a translator back from rendering the message being translated especially if one takes into consideration that most English tenses do not exist in Arabic grammar, like the present perfect which does not have an exact equivalent in Arabic.

Gender is another example of the main grammatical problems. It may cause some difficulties for translators when they translate from a SL in which gender is differently grammaticalized from the TL. For instance, in the case of translating names of professions, when the name is repeated several times in the ST, it is addressed by (he / she) to indicate its reference, it is either masculine or feminine whereas in Arabic language, the masculine is always the dominant gender.

What makes the task of translation even harder is that whereas all English sentences are verbal, in Arabic, they are verbal or nominal (Ghazala, 2008:18). The normal word order of the Arabic sentence is sometimes different from that of the English sentence whose normal order is as follows:

- Subject (S)-verb (V)-object (O)/complement (C). In short, S-V-O/C

In Arabic, however, the normal word order is of two types:

- Nominal word order: Noun-Adjective (Adj) or two Nouns. In short, N-Adj, N-N
- Verbal word order: Verb-Subject-Object/Complement, or V-S-O/C

The English word order (S-V-O/C) is sometimes translated literally into Arabic without considering the normal word order (V-S-O/C), as in the following example (ibid. 49):

- The diplomat left Damascus for London.      الدبلوماسي غادر دمشق إلى لندن

Respecting the Arabic normal word order, this example should be translated as follows:

- The diplomat left Damascus for London.      غادر الدبلوماسي دمشق إلى لندن

### **1.7.2. Stylistic Problems**

Style refers to the form in which a text is modelled. It is one of the most important aspects to be taken into consideration when translating from the SL to the TL since a change in style may cause a change in the whole meaning (Ghazala, 2008:222). Therefore, the translator should be aware of both SL as well as TL styles. Formality, ambiguity, voice, and fronting are the most common stylistic problems.

Foremost among stylistic specificities of languages is formality, which refers to the function of meaning and the tone of seriousness throughout the text. Learners often encounter the problem of formality and informality when doing the task of translation because of the differences between the two languages and the lack of awareness about the formal and informal style of both English and Arabic languages.

Second, ambiguity of language poses a great problem in translation because it prevents the translator from getting the intended meaning. Ambiguity may lead to misinterpretation of the message of the ST and therefore loss of meaning (ibid. 21).

Third, the passive voice is commonly used in different kinds of English texts, especially in the technical and scientific texts, because it preserves the objectivity of the writer. Conversely, though Arabic contains both active and passive voices, it is preferable to use the active voice when writing. Thus, the translation of the passive and active voice may be confusing for translators.

Last but not least, fronting is one of the common problems faced by translators in which a word, a phrase, or a clause is stated at the beginning of a sentence in an unusual way. When there is a change in the normal English order, we say that there is fronting in the sentence (ibid.231). Fronting intends to make the reader get a special point or feel a particular feeling, i.e., it emphasizes a given point of view, a basic

information or idea. In other words, the reader's attention is driven to the crucial importance of the emphasized point. For example, "in my room he slept" instead of "he slept in my room". Normally the main clause should be placed at the beginning of the sentence before the subordinate clause.

### **1.7.3. Cultural Problems**

The act of translating a given text is not merely a linguistic matter, but it requires maintaining the cultural aspects of the text being translated. Ghazala (2008:193) sees translation as the transference of one culture into another. Therefore, the translator's role is to transfer both the linguistic and cultural meanings from the SL into TL.

Culture comprises everything in life, large or small. Taylor (1871:01) says, "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs, and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." In other words, culture consists of all the diverse features which make a given community differ from the other.

Cultural problems arise due to the cultural gap between the SL and TL. What is culturally acceptable in a society can be strange in another. Therefore, the incompatibility between source and target cultures may lead the translator to misinterpret the source meaning. Cultural differences are always one of the main causes of translation problems, particularly if both languages belong to very different backgrounds; if the translator does not have any cultural background of the SL, he will face problems in translating them. The translator may come across words that are culturally bound, words that are deeply rooted in a given culture, and are very difficult for anybody outside it to understand, let alone attempt to achieve their equivalents in

the TL. For the English, the word 'owl' in the English culture is associated with 'wisdom' while its Arabic equivalent 'بومة' in some other cultures, such as ours, the same word has no such negative associations, and for those who prefer to be superstitious, they would associate it with bad luck.

Another cultural gap between the source and target cultures is represented in the case of words in which the translator uses several terms to refer to the same entity. This is best illustrated by the example of the word 'lion'. In the Arabic culture, 'lion' has different names like 'الأسد' ، 'أسامة' ، 'الليث' ، whereas in English there is only one reference. As a result, the translator may struggle to bring to the reader's mind the same image and ideas as those of the SL, and hence may cause confusion and misunderstanding.

#### **1.7.4. Lexical Problems**

Lexical problems occur, according to Ghazala (2008), because of "a word, a phrase or an expression not being understood clearly and directly" (19). Some words are polysemous, they have different meanings. Thus, the translator may face difficulties in choosing the appropriate equivalent for the SL word or item. On the other hand, some items in the source culture are not lexicalized in the target culture, and that may also lead to many silly mistakes. For example, 'Easter' exists only in the English culture and it is not lexicalized in Arabic.

There are many lexical problems that students may face when translating including metaphors, scientific terms, proper nouns, titles, and political establishments (Ghazala, 2008). Three examples of areas that create problems for translators are explored in this, namely, the literal translation of meaning, collocations and idioms.

Most novice translators find it convenient to use literal translation when translating words, phrases, and expressions because it involves supplying word for word translation only. For example:

- Fat salary      راتب سمين (Ghazala, 2008:85).

This literal translation is strange and not understandable. In Arabic, it is common use to describe a person or an animal using the adjective ‘fat’, but not such a thing as ‘salary’. What should be used instead is ‘راتب ضخمة’, which in literal translation would be equivalent with ‘Huge salary’, in English. The issue with students’ translation, as Ghazala (ibid.) points out is that, “... they think that literal translation is applicable to everything in language. This makes them commit many silly mistakes.” It should be kept in mind, then, that this kind of translation is dangerous because it destroys the real meaning.

Second among the lexical problems, highlighted here, are collocations. These are expressions, or words linked together to express a fixed meaning. Baker (1992) explains that collocations are “Lexemes which have the tendency to co-occur regularly in a given language” (47). As for Ghazala (2008), he defines collocations as “two or more words which usually occur together in language”(19). For example, we cannot say a ‘handsome girl, or a pretty guy’. Expressions like these are neither acceptable nor appropriate because the adjective ‘handsome’ is used with males only; whereas ‘pretty’ is used with females only. That is, certain words occur with a specified set of other words, as ‘blind confidence’ ‘ثقة عمياء’, ‘brain drain’ ‘هجرة الأدمغة’.

The problem with English collocations resides in the attempt to find the suitable and equivalent ones in Arabic. In doing so, some translators tend to generalize, by considering that all the SL items and their equivalents in the TL have

identical collocation ranges. This could lead to misunderstand and misinterpret the meaning. For instance, in English, the following collocations are generally rendered in Arabic as follows:

- Commit a crime.                      اقتترف/ارتكب جريمة
- Commit a mistake                      اقتترف/ارتكب خطأ
- Commit a sin.                          اقتترف/ارتكب ذنباً

The translator will think that the verbs ‘to commit’ and ‘ارتكب, اقتترف’ are absolute equivalents, thus would mistranslate the following collocation into the following atypical Arabic combination:

- Commit suicide                          اقتترف/ارتكب انتحاراً

The resultant translation should otherwise be rendered into just one word, the verb ‘انتحر’. Though commit, اقتترف and ارتكب are equivalent in some combinations, in a lot of other contexts, their collocational ranges are not identical (Ghazala, 2008:122).

Idioms are another major cause of lexical problems. Baker (1992:63) defines idioms as “frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation ... often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components.” The meanings of the idioms, as the quote above shows, is often not related to the meaning of the individual words; for example,

- My car is a second hand.                      سيارتي مستعملة
- He is a big shot.                                  هو رجل عظيم الشأن

(Ghazala, 2008:135).

We cannot translate the first of these examples literally, 'second hand' into 'يد ثانية', nor, in the second example, 'big shot' into 'قذفة كبيرة'. So, the translator needs to be careful while translating such idioms because they are too problematic.

## 1.8. Translation Strategies

The term 'strategy' refers to a method or procedure used by a translator to solve a particular problem while translating. Therefore, to overcome the difficulties of translation, strategies have been suggested by Baker and Ghazala to the translator, enabling him/her to adopt the most suitable ones.

### 1.8.1. Ghazala Translation Strategies

Ghazala (2008) advocates the use of two strategies for translation: literal translation and free translation.

#### 1.8.1.1. Literal Translation

What happens in literal translation is that the denotative meaning of words is taken as if straight from the dictionary, that is out of context. It consists of the following sub-types:

- **Word-For-Word Translation (Literal Translation of Words):** in which each English word is translated into an equivalent word in Arabic which is the same as that of English. For example:

Marry wanted to take tea.

شاي تأخذ إن أرادت ماري

I know this information

المعلومة هذه اعرف أنا (Ghazala, 2008:04)

As illustrated by the examples above, in word-for-word translation, word order and differences in grammar and context are ignored. The focus is on finding the exact equivalent word in Arabic for the English word.

- **One to One Literal Translation:** according to Ghazala, this method means to translate each SL word or phrase into an identical word or phrase in the TL, taking into consideration the same number, the grammatical class and the type of language (2008:06), as illustrated in the following examples:

Let us shake hands

دعنا نتصافح بالأيدي

My neighbors are good

جيرانني يكونون جيدين

- **Literal Translation of Meaning (Direct Translation):** for Ghazala, this type of translation focuses on the translation of meaning in context; it focuses on translating meaning as closely, accurately and completely as possible. It takes the TL grammar and word order into consideration, in addition to the morphological and specific uses of language (2008:09). For example, the verb “run” does not always have the meaning of “يجري” in all contexts as in ‘to run short of money’ ما عنده من مال ينفذ

#### 1.8.1.2. Free Translation

Ghazala states that free translation is concerned with translating the message of a text, as opposed to mere focus on its form (2008:11). Free translation is in turn divided into two types: Bound Free and Loose Free.

Bound Free Translation may go beyond the context in the form of exaggeration, expressivity and effective, rhetorical or formal language as exemplified in the following sentence:

You look quite cool

تبدو رابط الجأش

In the example above, the translation has gone beyond the context, but it is derived from the original (2008:12).

Loose Free Translation, on the other hand, deals with the translation of intention, and is based on the translator's conclusion about what the speaker/writer wants to say (2008:13). This strategy is illustrated in the following examples:

I am frightened ابقني معنا

It is half past nine حان الوقت

The speaker in the first example means that s/he cannot stay alone because s/he is afraid of something. Therefore, s/he asks the listener indirectly to stay with him/her. The speaker in the second example implies that it is time for doing something; it could be time for a meeting or a class, it is over or it is time for this thing to be done.

### **1.8.2. Baker's Translation Strategies**

Mona Baker, in her book "*In Other Words*", suggests a list of eight strategies used by professional translators to deal with the translation problems while doing a translation task (1992: 26-42):

#### **a- Translation by a More General Word**

This is one of the most common strategies to deal with many types of non-equivalence. Baker assumes that this strategy works well in most, if not all, languages. The translator, in this strategy, finds a more general word to cover the meaning because in the semantic field, meaning is not language dependent.

#### **b- Translation by More Neutral/ Less Expressive Word**

This method deals with the differences in expressive meaning. For example, if there is no direct equivalent for a particular SL item in the TL, the translator may use near equivalent items which are both less expressive and more formal.

**c- Translation by Cultural Substitution**

This strategy involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target language item which has the same impact on the reader. This strategy makes the translated text more natural and more familiar to the target reader.

**d- Translation Using a Loan Word or a Loan Word plus Explanation**

This strategy deals usually with culture-specific items, modern concepts and buzzwords. When the loan word is repeated several times in the text, it is better to add an explanation at the first time, and in the next, the word can be used by its own.

**e- Translation by Paraphrase Using a Related Word**

This strategy is used when the concept expressed by the source item is lexicalized in the TL, but in a different form, and when the frequency with which a certain form is used in the ST is higher than it would be natural in the TL.

**f- Translation by Paraphrase Using Unrelated Word**

This strategy is used when the concept expressed by the source item is not lexicalized in the TL. It is used also when the meaning of the source item is complex in the TL, the paraphrase should be used instead of using related words; it

may be based on modifying a super-ordinate or simply making clear the meaning of the source item.

**g- Translation by Omission**

This may be a drastic strategy, but it could be useful to omit translating a word or an expression in some context when the meaning conveyed by this word or expression is not necessary to be mentioned in order to understand the translation. This strategy is used to avoid lengthy explanations.

**h- Translation by Illustration**

This strategy is useful when the word that lacks an equivalent in the TL refers to a physical entity that can be illustrated in order to avoid over-explanation and to be concise and to the point.

**Conclusion**

In summary, translation is a necessary means for communication across different cultures and societies. This chapter has shown that there are plenty of strategies that the translator uses during the translation process. The translator must choose the method through which s/he would conduct his/her translation to achieve the most equivalent one. These strategies differ from one situation to another according to the problems and difficulties that s/he may face when translating words or texts. Moreover, this chapter shows the role of context, meaning, and culture in translation.

## **Chapter Two**

# **English Culture-Bound Idioms in Translation**

## **Chapter Two: English Culture-Bound Idioms in Translation**

### **Introduction**

Idioms constitute an important component of English vocabulary, and encompass both expressions that are common with other languages and expressions which are English-specific or unfamiliar to students who belong to another culture or language. This chapter presents the various definitions of idioms, their types, characteristics and classifications. It also deals with some English culture-specific idioms in addition to some of the difficulties and problems they pose for translators, and the different strategies and procedures that can be resorted to in order to overcome them.

### **2.1. Definition of Idioms**

Different approaches were adopted in dictionaries of English, linguistics and applied linguistics literature in defining the term 'idiom' (e.g. MacMillan Student's Dictionary, 2011; Collins English Dictionary, 2006, Ball, 1968; Larson, 1984, Carter, 1987; Baker, 1992; Ghazala, 2008, among others).

In MacMillan Student's Dictionary, an idiom is defined as "a set of words, the special meaning of which can only be understood if learnt together and not separately" (1996:211). In other words, the meaning of the whole idiom is different from the meaning of the individual words it contains. As for the Collins English Dictionary (2006), "an idiom is an expression, such as a simile, in which words do not have their literal meaning but are categorized as multi-word expressions that act in the text as units." For example, the meaning of the idiom 'to have a bee in one's bonnet' is 'to be continually occupied with, or obsessed by one idea or thing'. This meaning has nothing to do with the meanings of the separate words of which the idiom is

composed. In a much similar way, the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1985) defines an idiom as an “expression which functions as a single unit and whose meaning cannot be worked out from its separate parts” (246).

Ball (1968:01) laid the ground for defining idioms by providing a concise, yet exhaustive definition of idioms as “the use of familiar words in unfamiliar sense.” Hence, the meaning of the idiomatic expression is not the sum total of the words taken individually. Larson (1984:20) seems to be rephrasing the previously mentioned definition in stating that an idiom is “a string of words whose meaning is different from the meaning conveyed by the individual words.” One implication of such a definition, as far as translating idioms is concerned, is that idioms cannot be translated literally, because their meaning will not be predicted from the usual meaning of their constituents.

Tackling their structure, Baker (1992) states that idioms are “frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components” (63). Similarly, Carter (1987:65) highlights the rigid structure and unpredictable meaning of idioms in stating that idioms are special combinations with restricted forms and meanings that cannot be deduced from the literal meanings of the words which make them up. Accordingly, an idiom should not be analyzed into its constituents and it always carries a figurative meaning.

In summary to all the afore-mentioned definitions supplied to idioms, Ghazala (2008:128) pens that an idiom is a “fixed phrase whose form is usually unchangeable, and whose meaning is always the same, inflexible, metaphorical and indirect.”

## **2.2. Characteristics of Idioms**

An idiom is a kind of lexical unit in which the whole meaning of the expression is not apparent from the meaning of its components as mentioned in the definition of the idiomatic expressions. Furthermore, a number of linguists point out to some characteristics and properties of English idioms. In the introduction of his dictionary, M. El Batal (2000) says that there is an agreement on the common features shared by the main bulk of idioms, these features are related to figurativeness, compositeness, semantic capacity, institutionalization and the fact that idioms are fixed expressions in form and order.

Figurativeness, as the main feature that characterizes idiomatic expressions, refers to the metaphorical use of words. Therefore, the surface structure has a little role to play in understanding the meaning of the whole expression. For example, “to let the cat out of the bag”, means, “to reveal a secret”, the meanings of the words in isolation are different from the meaning of the whole expression.

Second, compositeness refers to the fact that most idioms are multiword expressions commonly composed of two words or more.

Third, semantic capacity describes the fact that idioms usually carry meanings that cannot be predicted or understood literally. That is, they do not mean what we expect them to mean. For example, the idiom “be in hot water” does not stand for the literal meaning of its words. Therefore, a person knowing only the meaning of the words could not be able to get the real meaning of the expression, which is “be in trouble”

The fourth aspect of idioms refers to their institutionalization, or their being culture bound expressions because they refer to a specific community and represent their culture and their intellectual directions.

Last, idioms are fixed expressions in form and order; they are known as fixed expressions that cannot be changed or varied in the way literal expressions are normally varied in both speech and writing.

Baker (1992:63), for his part, states that the grammatical and syntactic restrictions of idioms should be taken into consideration since they could affect the degree of idiomacity. She notes that the most important features of the English idioms are addition, modification, deletion, substitution, comparative and addition.

- a. **Addition:** idioms as fixed expressions do not accept any addition. For instance, adding the adverb “very” to the adjective “red” in the idiomatic expression “red herring” affects its figurative meaning “very red herring”
- b. **Modification:** any modification or change in the grammatical structure of the idiom will affect its meaning like in the example of “face the music” which should not be used in the passive voice “the music was faced” because it alters its meaning.
- c. **Deletion:** deletion of items from the idiomatic expressions is not allowed since it would alter its idiomatic sense. For instance, deleting the article “the” from the expression “spill the beans” to become “spill beans” would change its meaning.
- d. **Substitution:** replacement of words within an idiom is not allowed even if those words are synonyms as illustrated in the following example: in “the long

and short of it” , the adjective “long” cannot be substituted by the adjective “ tall” despite the fact that they are nearly synonyms.

**e. Comparative:** Adding the comparative form “er” to the adjective “hot” in the expression “be in hot water” is not accepted since it changes the conventional sense of the idiom which has the meaning of “be in trouble”.

In terms of the constituent components of idioms, McCarthy and O’Dell (2003:06) found out that idioms have the linguistic structures, or the combinations of different parts of speech, shown in the following table:

<b>Form</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Verb+ object/ complement (and/or adverbial)</b>	Kill two birds with one stone	Produce two useful results by just doing one action.
<b>Prepositional phrase</b>	In the blink of an eye	In an extremely short time.
<b>Compound</b>	A bone of contention	Something which people argue and disagree over.
<b>Simile (as + adjective + as or like + a noun)</b>	As dry as a bone	Very dry indeed.
<b>Binomial (word + and + word)</b>	Rough and ready	Crude and lacking sophistication.
<b>Trinomial (word + word +and + word)</b>	Cool, calm, and collected	Relaxed, in control, not nervous.
<b>Whole clause or sentence</b>	To cut a long story short	To tell the main points, but not all the fine details.

**Table 2.01: Linguistic Structure of English Idioms (McCarthy and O’Dell, 2003:6)**

### **2.3. Classification of Idioms**

Idioms have been classified from different points of view by different scholars according to whether their meaning is readily understood into encoding and decoding idioms (Makkai, 1972), pure, semi and literal idioms (Fernando, 2009) and from transparent idioms to opaque idioms (Moon, 1996). In addition, Ghazala (2008) classified idioms into direct and indirect idioms and phrasal verbs, based on their degree of comprehensibility and the way they translate into Arabic.

#### **2.3.1. Encoding Idioms vs. Decoding Idioms**

According to Makkai (1972), (*in* Fernando, 1996:03), there are two types of idioms: encoding idioms and idioms of decoding. The former, called also identifiable idioms of encoding are those idiosyncratic (unique/ special) lexical combinations that have transparent meanings. In other words, encoding idioms are idioms whose meanings the hearer could figure out even if s/he did not know them. As for the latter, idioms of decoding, they refer to those non-identifiable and misleading lexical expressions whose interpretation could not be figured out by using only independently learned linguistic conventions. In other words, we cannot figure out their meanings by knowing just the words and the grammar of the language. For example, ‘kick the bucket’, which has the meaning ‘to die’, cannot be deduced from the separate words of the expression.

Makkai (*ibid.*) classifies decoding idioms into lexemic and sememic idioms. Lexemic idioms include: phrasal verbs: e.g., ‘give in’, ‘turn off’, ‘put up’; phrasal compounds idioms: such as, ‘black ice’ (a thin, nearly invisible coating of ice that forms on paved surfaces), ‘black board’; incorporating verbs idioms: e.g., ‘babysit’, ‘man handle’; pseudo idioms, including ‘kith and kin’ (friends and relatives), ‘spick and span’ (extremely clean and neat). Concerning the second type of idioms, sememic

idioms, they are used to convey pragmatic meanings related to a particular culture. They include proverbs: e.g. ‘chew on something over’ (to talk something over, to discuss something), ‘a bird in hand is worth two in the bush’ and familiar quotations: e.g. ‘not a mouse stirring’ (William Shakespear famous quote about mouse).

### **2.3.2. Pure Idioms vs. Semi Idioms vs. Literal Idioms**

Fernando (*in* Strakšiene 2009) classifies idioms into three sub-classes, namely, pure idioms, semi idioms and literal ones.

Pure idioms are conventionalized, non-literal multiword expressions. They are always non-literal; they may be either invariable or may have little variation; for example, the idiom ‘to spill the beans’ has nothing to do with its literal meaning of the words in isolation.

Semi idioms are this kind of idiomatic expressions that can have one or more literal constituents and one with non-literal sub-sense. For instance: “foot the bill” which means “pay”

Literal idioms can be either invariable or allow little variation. Moreover, they can be interpreted based on their parts. For example: “of course”, “any case”, “for certain”. (*ibid.*14)

### **2.3.3. Transparent vs. Opaque Idioms:**

Moon (1996) classifies idioms according to the degree of idiomacity into a set of classes, spanning the continuum from transparent idioms to opaque idioms.

First, transparent idioms have a close meaning to that of the literal one. Hence, they are easy to comprehend and translate because their meaning can be derived from the meaning of their constituent parts, for example:

Back and forth                      ذهابا وإيابا

Fight a losing battle      تحارب في معركة خاسرة

Second, there is the category of semi-transparent idioms, or idioms which usually carry a metaphorical meaning and their constituents have a little role in comprehending the whole meaning of the expression, as illustrated in the following example:

- Break the ice (to relieve the tension)

The third group of idioms is referred to as semi-opaque idioms. They are idioms in which the figurative meaning is not related to the meanings of their constituent words. That is, the expression is separated into two parts; a part of the phrase has a literal sense whereas the other has a figurative meaning. For instance:

- To know the rope (to know how a particular job should be done)

Fourth, and last, the category of opaque idioms is considered to be the most difficult type of idioms since literal meaning of their constituent parts is largely different from the actual sense of the idioms. In other words, the meaning of an opaque idiom cannot be derived from the meaning of its constituent parts because of the presence of items having cultural references. For example:

To spill the beans              تفشي السر

#### **2.3.4. Direct Idioms vs. Indirect Idioms vs Phrasal Verbs**

As pointed out above, the classification of idiomatic expressions made by Ghazala (2008) is based in part on the ability and the manner English idioms are translated into Arabic. Three main groups are distinguished, direct idioms, indirect idioms and phrasal verbs.

The first group of idiomatic expressions, called direct idioms, is generally translated directly and understood indirectly. They have metaphorical meaning, saying something and meaning something else. This class of idioms has its exact equivalent in Arabic; therefore the literal translation is considered right. As illustrated in the following examples:

- 'He killed his neighbor in cold blood' - قتل جاره ببرودة دم
  - 'It was the straw that broke the camel's back' - كانت القشة التي قصمت ظهر البعير
  - 'Passing the exams is not a bed of roses' - النجاح في الامتحان ليس طريقا
- (129) مفروشا بالورود

The second group of idioms is referred to as indirect idioms owing to the fact that they have indirect meaning. That is, these idioms cannot be understood from the literal meaning of the words in isolation. These idioms when translated literally, they mostly provide a wrong, strange and sometimes funny translation. For example:

- 'My car is second hand' - سيارتي مستعملة
  - 'He is a big shot' - إنه رجل عظيم
  - 'He can walk on water' - يستطيع أن يصنع المعجزات
- (131)

Third, phrasal verbs are extremely well known idioms in both the spoken and the written language. For Ghazala, a phrasal verb is a combination of a verb plus an adverb/ preposition, or both an adverb and a preposition (ibid.133). They mostly have idiomatic meanings that are difficult to be understood from their individual parts. Phrasal verbs are considered problematic for students when translating them into Arabic because they can be confused with the prepositional verbs. For example:

- Please, put the book on the table. من فضلك ضع الكتاب على الطاولة

- Please, put your coat on. من فضلك ضع معطفك على

If, in both examples, the instance ‘put something on’ is considered as a prepositional verb, the first example is understood and the second is not since it is ungrammatical and incomplete. Therefore, we conclude that the first example is a prepositional verb whereas the second is a phrasal verb which has a completely different meaning from the first one which is (to dress/يلبس) (134)

#### 2.4. Idiomaticity in English and Arabic

A number of scholars explored the notion of idiomaticity in language; those to be listed here are those who identified the notion in relation to English and/ or Arabic.

Ghazala (2003) describes idiomaticity as the heart of the matter of any idiomatic expression, and defines it as the “most special and essential components, namely, their metaphorical aspect.”(204). According to Palmer (*in* Aldahesh, 2013:25), idiomaticity is “a lexical feature i.e. something to be dealt with in the lexicon or dictionary rather than the grammar.” In turn, Warren (*in* Aldahesh, 2013:25) offers the following two definitions of idiomaticity:

- Native like selection of expression;
- That which one has to know over and above rules and words.

Kaveka and zybert (2004:55) point out that the terms idiomatology, idiomaticity and phraseology are used to refer to one and the same area that is idiomacity.

One can deduce, from the discussion above, that understanding idioms and using them properly entails a degree of proficiency which is hard for the non-native speakers of a given language to acquire. When it comes to English idioms, learning and mastering them are the most difficult task even for advanced learners.

In Arabic, idiomaticity is found in Rhetoric (علم البيان). This latter is defined by Arabic linguists as ‘a science by which the stating of a single meaning in different ways, with a clear indication to it [the meaning] is known’ (Aldahesh, 2013, p: 26).

This science includes four rhetoric styles:

1. Figurative expression المجاز
2. Simile التشبيه
3. Metaphor الاستعارة
4. Antonomasia الكناية

Idiomaticity exists in all these types; it is represented by lack of transparency in the meaning of each sentence if taken literally (ibid.).

To sum up, idiomaticity is seen by scholars as the essence of all idiomatic expressions in both English and Arabic. It is the reason why the meaning of idioms is not deducible from the meaning of their individual components. What adds also to their complexity is that idiomatic expressions are culture-specific, the topics of the next section.

## **2.5. Language and Culture Specific Idioms in English and Arabic**

Idioms, like any other aspects of a given language, are of two types in terms of their meanings; they may have universal meanings which are common to many languages, or specific meanings which are, due to linguistic and/ or cultural restrictions, confined to the speakers of that particular language, and cannot be easily understood by speakers of other languages. Therefore, the intended meaning of an idiom cannot be deduced without knowing the social, political or historical narrative behind it and the moral it may impart (Aldahesh, 2013).

When linguists, lexicographers and pedagogues talk about mastering the use of idiomatic expressions by a language learner as an indicator of language proficiency, they mean knowing the language and culture specificity of those expressions. It is this knowledge which makes learners sound as if they are native or native-like speakers. Therefore, a translator should be aware of the culture of the language s/he is translating from in order to render the meaning of the idiom appropriately to the language s/he is translating into. For instance, “to carry coals to Newcastle” is an English culture-bound idiom which means supplying the city of Newcastle with coals and this city is already known for having plenty of coal (Grauberg *in* Baker, 1992:82). This idiom is similar to an idiom in Arabic, cited in Aldahesh (2013), which is:

- ‘كناقل التمر إلى هجر’ → like someone who carries date to the city of Hijr, a city known to have plenty of dates.

Other examples taken from Mowafi dictionary (1985:156):

- Before you can say Jack Robinson → extremely quickly → في لمح البصر
- Jack is as good as his master → men with power are not necessarily better than those without power → لا أحد أحسن من أحد ، الناس سواسية

Khurma and Hajjai (1989) make the point that the great majority of English idioms are language and culture-specific idioms especially when they are parts of proverbs.

They provide the following examples:

- As drunk as a lord → في سكر شديد
- Play one’s cards right → يؤدي دوره ببراعة
- Make hay while the sun shines → يغتنم الفرصة

To recapitulate, idioms are specific expressions that show a high semantic density and an abstract meaning, which usually has nothing to do with the meanings of the separate words of which the idiom is composed. Only a translator's awareness and knowledge of the English culture and idioms can help in rendering the meaning of the idiom in an effective and sufficient way (Aldahesh, 2013).

## **2.6. Difficulties in Translating Idiomatic expressions**

Idiomatic expressions constitute a problematic area for both foreign learners and novice translators since their meaning, often, cannot be predicted from the separate parts that constitute it. Baker (1992) claims that “the main problems that idiomatic and fixed expressions pose in translation relate to two main areas: the ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly and the difficulties in rendering various aspects of meaning that an idiom or a fixed expression conveys into the target language” (65). Moreover, Baker (ibid.68-71) specifies a set of the main difficulties faced by learners in translating the idioms and fixed expressions which are:

- The lack of an equivalent of an idiom or a fixed expression in the TL. The way languages use idioms to express different meanings and notions vary from one language to another and that causes a great difficulty for learners and novice translators. That is, the same meaning can be expressed with a single word in one language and with the help of a fixed expression in another. Therefore, the expectation to find the exact equivalent idioms easily in the TL is unrealistic. This occurs largely in the case of culture-specific items whether they are single words with attributive meaning or idiomatic expressions. For example, “Merry Christmas” does not have an exact equivalent in Arabic (ibid.68).
- Different use of equivalent idioms across the SL and the TL. A single idiom may be used in various contexts and situations according to the number of

connotations it can express. In other words, where a SL item has got an exact equivalent in the TL, the use and function of the two items is quite different from each other. Baker puts the English idiom “to sing a different tune” that means “to say something that signals a change in opinion” because it contradicts what one has said or done before. (ibid).

- When “an idiom may be used in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time. Unless the target language idiom corresponds to the source language idiom both in form and in meaning, the play on idiom cannot be successfully reproduced in the target language” (Baker, 1992:69). Baker gives the examples: “Give credit to it” and “I run short of money last week” to illustrate.
- Another source of difficulty consist in different SL and TL conventions, regarding the use of idioms in written discourse, in certain contexts, or the frequency of their use are (ibid.70). For instance, while a language may use a high number of honorifics in its pronominal system as rhetorical means, another language may make a vivid distinction between the written and the spoken discourse where the written form is regarded as more formal than the spoken mode.

## **2.7. Strategies and Procedures of Translating Idioms**

Translation, in general, is not an easy task, and translating idioms in particular makes translation an even more difficult task. Many scholars in different parts of the world have elaborated strategies for use in translating idioms. Baker (1992), Newmark (1988), Gaber (2005) and Ghazala (2003), among others, suggested different strategies for translating idiomatic expressions.

### 2.7.1. Baker's Strategies

Baker (1992:72-78) lists six translation strategies which can be used in translating idioms as follows:

#### a. Using an idiom of similar meaning and form (total equivalence).

This strategy involves using an idiom in the TL which conveys roughly the same meaning as that of the SL idiom and, in addition, consists of equivalent lexical items. This kind of matching can only be achieved at certain occasions, when both the SL and the TL belong to the same family and have cultural similarities. However, there are some English idioms which have equivalents in the present-daily Arabic, and they are transparent in their meaning and form. The table below illustrates some instances of this total equivalence.

English Idioms	Arabic Idioms
To play with fire.	يلعب بالنار
To shed crocodile tears.	يذرف دموع التماسيح
Face to face.	وجها لوجه
To fish in troubled waters.	يصطاد في المياه العكرة

**Table 2.02: Examples of Total Equivalence of Idioms between English and Arabic**

#### b. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form (partial equivalence).

In this case, the meaning of the target idiom is the same as that of the original idiom but the lexical items are different. The table below illustrates some instances of partial equivalence.

English Idioms	Arabic Equivalence
When in Rome do as Romans do.	دارهم مادمت في دارهم
Never too old to learn.	اطلب العلم من المهد الى اللحد
Forbidden fruit is the sweetest.	كل ممنوع مرغوب

**Table 2.03: Examples of Partial Equivalence of Idioms between English and Arabic**

### c. Translating by paraphrasing

This strategy involves giving a brief explanation of the meaning behind the idiomatic expression being used in the SL. This is usually used when the translator encounters idiomatic expressions in the SL which have no equivalents in the TL. Examples of paraphrasing idioms in translation include the following, in Table 2.04 below:

English Idioms	Arabic Equivalents
To let the cat out of the bag	يفشي سرا
Have no backbone	ضعيف الإرادة أو الشخصية
To think on one's feet	سريع البديهة

**Table 2.04: Examples of Translating Idioms by Paraphrasing**

By using this strategy we will face the danger of losing the intended effect that the SL wanted to have on its audience. It will also lose the cultural significance. Baker (ibid) defines paraphrasing as, “translating a source language idiom by giving its meaning in the target language by using this strategy the impact of idioms and its cultural significance will be lost”.

#### d. Translation by Omission

This strategy is used to completely omit the idiom from the TT. When the idiom is very difficult even for the translator, he tries to eliminate the whole or part of the idiom. This means that an idiom is entirely deleted in the TL because “it has no close match in the target language, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased or for stylistic reasons” (Baker, 1992:77).

English Idiom	Arabic Equivalent
- Wow it's raining cats and dogs out there	انها تمطر

**Table 2.05: Examples of Translating Idioms by Omission**

#### 2.7.2. Newmark's Strategies

Peter Newmark (1988:82-91) proposes different translation procedures including:

- Transference, the process of transferring a SL word to a TL text. Harvey (2000:05) calls it transcription or borrowing. For example, 'cocktail' is a term that is borrowed into Arabic and is always transliterated as, 'كوكتيل'.
- Naturalization, a technique which consists of adapting the SL word first to the normal pronunciation, then to the normal morphology of the TL. For instance: Biology → بيولوجيا , Biologist (n) → بيولوجي , Biological (adj.) → بيولوجي
- Cultural equivalent, a technique involving the replacement of a cultural word in the source culture with a TL one, as in: 'one needs the patience of a saint to finish this job', translated as 'يحتاج المرء لصبر أيوب لإنهاء هذا العمل'
- Functional equivalent, translating a word in the SL/ ST with a functionally equivalent TL word, i.e. a word which has the same meaning such as translating 'dark horse' as 'شخص غامض'.

- Description equivalent, involving explanation of the meaning of the culture bound term in several words; for example, ‘merry Christmas’ is explained as ‘ليكن احتفالك بعيد ميلاد المسيح سعيدا’
- Through translation or loan/ calque translation, implying literal translation of common collocations, names of organizations and components of compounds. For example, ‘poll tax’ → ‘ضريبة الاقتراع’.
- Shifts or transpositions, referring to techniques which involve a change in the grammar, for instance the change from singular to plural or the change of a SL noun group to a TL noun, etc. For instance, ‘the child kissed his mother or the child gave his mother a kiss’ → ‘قبل الطفل أمه أعطى الطفل أمه قبلة’. In both languages, the two messages are semantically the same. However, the words ‘kissed’ and ‘قبل’ have changed from ‘Verbs’ into ‘Nouns’ as ‘kiss’ and ‘قبلة’.
- Compensation, supposing that the meaning in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part. For example, when translating the word "owl" from English into Arabic, we find that it does not symbolize the same in both cultures. In English, it symbolizes wisdom and good omen; on the contrary, in Arabic it has a very negative connotation, as it represents pessimism and bad omen. Accordingly, a translator can bridge this gap and compensate for this cultural loss via substituting 'owl' by another bird that symbolizes wisdom in Arabic, which is ‘هدد’.
- Paraphrase, the meaning of the culture-bound term is explained as in ‘to let the cat out of the bag’ → ‘يفشي سرا’.

### 2.7.3. Gaber’s Strategies

Gaber (2005) proposes many techniques for translating culturally bound expressions, supplying examples of each technique as follows:

- Cultural equivalence, in which culturally bound words are translated into the TL cultural words, such as translating ‘charity begins at home’ into its Arabic equivalent ‘الأقربون أولى بالمعروف’.
- Functional translation, in which the translator uses the TL word or phrase which has the same function of the ST such as translating ‘hungry bellies have no ears’ into ‘الجوع كافر’.
- Paraphrasing, where the translator explains the meaning of a SL word or phrase such as translating ‘a man cannot do more than he can’ into ‘لا يكلف الله ‘ نفسا إلا وسعها’.
- Glossing, in which extra information is added in a footnote to explain an idea such as translating ‘أغزل من امرئ ألقيس’ into ‘more flirty than Imra al Qais’ and the translator adds a footnote explaining that ‘Imra al Qais’ is an Arabic poet famous for his love poems.
- Borrowing in which the SL word becomes part of the TL such as translating ‘امرئ ألقيس’ in the previous proverbs into ‘Imra al Qais’.

#### **2.7.4. Ghazala’s Strategies**

Ghazala (2003) points out that two major procedures are overwhelmingly dominant in the translation of idioms, where idiomaticity, the gist of any idiomatic phrase, is either evaded or invaded.

##### **2.7.4.1. Evasion of Idiomaticity**

According to Ghazala (2003:209), evasion is the elimination of the idiomaticity of the SL idiom when translating it into the TL with no compensation of any kind. This elimination is justified by several reasons including the translator’s

incompetence, zero language equivalence in TL, avoidance of taboo and preference of insensible sense.

Because not all translators are competent in tackling idioms, some consider them as untranslatable, but which in reality are not. For example, when an incompetent translator is unable to find an equivalent idiom in Arabic for the English idiom 'To leave no stone unturned', and is unsure about the validity of literal translation, he/she might resort to translations like « يفعل كل ما في وسعه » (to do one's best), « يبذل قصارى جهده » (to exert extreme efforts) or « يفعل المستحيل » (to do the impossible); However satisfactory such translations may be as regards sense, they fail to match or reflect the idiomaticity of the original. Therefore, a better idiomatic version is « يطرق كل الأبواب » (meaning: to knock at all doors / to leave no door unknocked). Although the image here is that of doors while in the original it is of stones, equivalent sense, effect and idiomaticity are perfectly achieved. Besides, an SL full idiom is translated into a TL full idiom, which means that a maximum degree of equivalence has been attained, and all stylistic and semantic effects and implications have been retained. To give another example, when a translator fails to find a formal idiomatic equivalence for 'I'll eat my hat' (if you do so and so), he/she might go for a simple version like « سوف أعمل / أعطيك ماتريد لو فعلت كذا وكذا », (I'll do / give you whatever you like ...). However, to retain idiomaticity and reflect effective exaggeration of the SL text, an idiomatic translation like « أقطع ذراعي أو يدي » (lit.: I'll cut my hand/arm ...) in Arabic would be rather advisable. Not only idiomaticity and effect are reflected here, but also the same stylistic implications of hypothesis, over-exaggeration and impossibility are indicated by 'cut my arm' which is as unimaginable as 'eat my hat', and no one is expected to say or take either phrase literally and seriously. Both are used as a strong assertion of the impossibility of

something to be done by somebody. At the same time, they can be sometimes charged with the speaker's implied challenge for the listener to have the will and courage to do something (210).

Sometimes, we cannot always blame the translator for non-idiomatic translation of an SL expression, since there is zero language equivalence in the TL. In this case, he/she has to provide a satisfactory version of sense with idiomaticity dropped unwillingly, in which case a considerable amount of loss will take place with a little chance to compensate for it. Here are some examples of English idioms that have no equivalence in Arabic:

- 'Second hand (car, etc.)'

There is no such idiom in Arabic, not even a metaphorical sense of any kind. Only one non-idiomatic, insensible version of sense is available, namely, «سيارة مستعملة» (used car). Hence, a total loss of idiomaticity has taken place by this translation.

- 'A busman's holiday'

A bus driver works over weekends and national, religious and bank holidays. In other words, he enjoys no holiday at all. This also applies to Arab bus drivers, yet the idiom is not known in Arabic; only its sense can be transmitted as «إجازة عمل» (lit.: job/business holiday), which is paradoxical for no one can be working and on a holiday. Nonetheless, it reflects the intended meaning of the original, and this rhetorical figure of paradox is a compensation of some kind for the absence of idiomaticity in the TL (211).

- 'As snug as a bug in a rug'

Certainly there is no such idiomatic simile in Arabic, for ‘a bug in the rug’ is quite alien to its native speakers as ‘bug’ has negative, unpleasant connotations only. The only alternative then is to give the proper sense of ‘comfortable’ in an as sensible version as possible. For example: *جداً مريحاً* \ *مريحاً على الآخر /تماماً مريحاً* (quite comfortable). These translations have one thing in common, namely, exaggeration about the state of comfort. The third is colloquial, yet, perhaps the best. An improvement on all these versions, and in a desperate attempt to bring about some idiomaticity in the TL to match at least a part of that of the original, is: «كأنه على ريش نعام» (lit.: as if one is on ostrich plumage), which connotes smoothness and perfect comfort. Nonetheless, it is still short of the English idiom, phonologically (absence of rhyme), grammatically (no ‘as... as’ structure and adjectival phrase construction), stylistically (lack of rhythm and crisply short, one-syllable words, which produce a stylistic effect of as light and comfortable movement as that of a tiny, light bug), and connotatively (bugs do not have the same connotation as ostrich feathers) (212).

Avoidance of taboo accounts for another reason why idiomaticity is eschewed. Standard Arabic monolingual and bilingual dictionaries usually have no entries for taboo words for sociocultural and religious reasons. In the same way, some translators evade rendering the idiomaticity of an English idiom for it is taboo (i.e. socially and culturally bad, obscene, anti-religious or even apolitical) either in meaning or implication. Sometimes, this can be a justification for them to concede idiomaticity altogether for the reader’s sake. Here are some examples:

- ‘Hell knows’

This idiom is used to mean in an angry mood that nobody knows what is going to happen next. It is outrageous and blasphemous to Arab readers for it is only God/Allah, not hell, who knows future events. Therefore, only ‘God knows’ is acceptable in the TL in this context, and the translator’s options are narrowed down to one of these synonymous versions only: ‘العلم عند الله أعلم / علمها عند ربي’ (Its knowledge is with my Lord (only) / God knows / knowledge is with God, successively).

- ‘To treat someone like dirt’

This is another example of the taboo idioms that should be evaded when translating into Arabic. Normal language is a better solution for an Arab readership. Hence the following versions ‘بقسوة/باحترار/يهين! يعامل أحدهم معاملة سيئة / يعامل أحدهم / يذل / يتقص من قدر أحدهم’ (to maltreat / humiliate / despise / disparage somebody).

Preference of insensible sense, the last factor described by Ghazala (2003:215-216) as a reason for evading idiomaticity refers to,

The translator’s intentional reluctance to translate it whether available in TL or not, in favor of sense whether sensible or not, for reasons of simplification and easiness of TL translation. His argument could be based on the general readers’ inability to grasp idiomaticity in such a straightforward way, and on the false assumption that idiomaticity is untranslatable. This would inevitably result in awkward, tedious and insensible translations of otherwise overwhelmingly fascinating and richly expressive idiomatic language.

For example, a lifeless, destructive translation of such an expressive English idiom as ‘Still waters run deep’ might be something like: « كن حذرا من الهادئين » (beware of cool people). Alternative well-known and highly agreeable Arabic idiomatic versions, such as the ones listed below, and though rather colloquial, they translate and match the original perfectly and effectively.

- Fear nothing more than stagnant water
- Many cool-looking people can be wicked inside

• لا تخف إلا من المياه الراكدة

• تحت السواهي دواهي

#### 2.7.4.2. Invasion of Idiomaticity

Ghazala (2003:217-223) defines invasion as the “translator’s deliberate use in the TL of an idiom that matches, if not supersedes, the original”. Striving to keep idiomaticity intact, the translator uses this rather creative, and also appropriate, procedure for the translation of idioms. Three types of invasion are distinguished: equivalent idiomaticity, enforced idiomaticity and abortive idiomaticity.

In order to keep idiomaticity in translating an idiom, the translator begins by finding an idiomatic equivalence in the TL. We can find many English idioms that have perfect equivalents in Arabic. For example:

To play with fire (يلعب بالنار): has a total equivalent in Arabic in form, sense, idiomaticity and connotations. It is used to describe someone who takes risks unnecessarily in both languages. Usually, it is used in the form of advice or warning to refrain from taking risks, especially in Arabic: ‘don’t play with fire’ (لا تلعب بالنار).

In the procedure, called enforced idiomaticity, the translator tries to translate idiomatic English into idiomatic Arabic with special reference to those idioms, which have no direct equivalent in Arabic. This can lead to an enforced, artificial idiomaticity in the TL. Ghazala (2003:220) states that:

The terminology used (i.e. enforced and artificial) here may sound negative, but considered from another angle, it is a reference to the translator’s determination and courageous attempt to strike an idiomatic translation of some kind in the TL, to match and compensate for the original’s idiomaticity to some extent at least.

In this sense it is not a negative procedure, but a creative procedure that poses challenge to translators and, at the same time, marks a contribution to the solutions to the problem of translating idiomatic expressions in language, in general. For example:

- ‘To pull one’s socks’

Socks are not pulled in Arabic, only in English. However, spirit and energy can be pulled in Arabic, instead, namely: (يشد الهمة). Better than this is a well-established idiom: (يُشمر عن ساعديه) which is usually identified with another Standard English idiom: ‘roll up one’s sleeves’, but which translates this example equally well.

Enforced idiomaticity is, therefore, a creative procedure of invasion that has to be handled especially carefully by translators. It is by no means a haphazard, whimsical or personal procedure subject to the translator’s fluctuations of opinion. Rather, certain criteria have to be applied by the translator systematically, but with extra care and a good proportion of flexibility (Ghazala, 2003, p: 221).

The abortion procedure is the least creative of all procedures for it is based on copying the English idiom literally in Arabic, regardless of differences of cultural connotations between English and Arabic. Indeed, such a procedure aborts idiomaticity that has to be either a constituent part of the original Arabic lexicon, or else, creative from within Arabic language itself. For example:

- ‘All roads lead to Rome’

When the example above is translated blindly and literally into Arabic as كل الطرق تؤدي إلى روما , it results in a dull, estranged version that many Arab readers find difficult to understand and accept. The reason is quite simple: more popular, standard and hence convincing versions are widely available and plausible, namely: أهل مكة أدرى بشعابها (the natives of Makkah are the best

who know about its defiles). This version is standard, formal, well known and wide spread among Arab readers of all ages.

This translation procedure of invasion is, then, inadvisable for it loses the idiomaticity of an idiom in the TL, which may not accommodate it conveniently as a part of its lexical repertoire, for cultural, semantic and linguistic reasons. However, it will be preferable version of translation when an English idiom has a conventional, already recognized counterpart in Arabic.

## **Conclusion**

In summation, culture specific idioms are important aspects of any language. They are difficult for language learners due to a number of different factors mainly due to the fact that they carry a metaphorical sense that makes the comprehension of an idiom difficult if not possible. Some difficulties are related to the nature of the idiom itself and others are concerned with the cultural differences between languages. This chapter has tackled various definitions of idioms, their types and characteristics also the difficulties and different problems faced by translators while translating idioms. To deal with such obstacles, the translator uses different strategies and procedures that can help him/her during the translation process.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Field Work**

## **Chapter Three: Field Work**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the practical study of the dissertation: the methodology and the findings of the research tool. It attempts to investigate the students' ability to convey idiomaticity in translating idioms from English into Arabic. This means, in other words, that it seeks to investigate the students' awareness of the different strategies used in the translation of idioms, and the appropriate way to apply them. A descriptive and exploratory study in nature, the study is based on the analysis of data yielded by both the teachers questionnaire and the students test.

### **3.1. Population and Sampling**

The population of teachers of this study consists in teachers of translation at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University of Jijel, particularly, those who have experienced teaching translation from English to Arabic. From this population, eight teachers of translation (n=08) have been surveyed. In addition, seventy-five (n=75) of second year students of English at the Department of English at the same university have been randomly selected. The choice of this population is based on the fact that the testees are beginners in the task of translation, since they have been studying translation for about two semesters. The nature of strategies used by these students serve to pinpoint the difficulties they face, which should be considered by their teachers in future teaching.

### **3.2. Data Collection Procedures**

The study is descriptive and exploratory in nature; it makes use of qualitative and quantitative methods of analyzing data. A questionnaire is administered to the

teachers of translation, and in which they were asked to answer some questions about their experience in teaching and practising translation, in addition to answering some questions for the sake of checking their students' ability in recognizing, understanding, and translating culture-bound idiomatic expressions. A test is also conducted with second year students of English in the form of a number of sentences to be translated from English to Arabic for the sake of testing the students' ability to recognize, understand, and translate English idiomatic expressions to Arabic.

The discussion in the next sections is about the teacher questionnaire and the students test. Each starts with a description and administration section followed by analysis and ends with interpretation and discussion of results. Next, a comparative and overall analysis of the results of the two instruments are conducted.

### **3.3. Teacher Questionnaire**

#### **3.3.1. Description and Administration of the Teacher Questionnaire**

The teacher questionnaire is made up of sixteen (16) questions, which are arranged in four sections as follows:

The first section, "General Information", has four questions (Question 1 to Question 4). These questions ask about the teachers' degree, the specialty and the length, in years, of their teaching and practising translation.

The second section, "Teaching and Practising Translation and Idiom Translation", consists of five questions (Question 5 to Question 9). Teachers, in question (5), are asked to tick the most appropriate definition of translation and to specify other definitions of translation, if any. In questions (6) and (7), teachers are asked to mention the frequency of their practice of translation and how difficult they

find the translation of idioms from English to Arabic. In addition, in question (8), teachers are requested to indicate the type(s) of equivalence they usually struggle to achieve and whether it is possible to convey the same meaning when translating idioms into Arabic. Teachers in question (9) are asked to mention which type of meaning should be focused on when translating idioms.

The third section, entitled “Students’ Idiom Translating Strategies”, is made up of six questions (Question 10 to Question 15). In question (10), teachers are asked to tell to what extent their students are able to translate idioms from English into Arabic. In question (11), teachers are requested to indicate what makes English idioms difficult to be translated by their students. In the following two questions (12) and (13), teachers are requested to show how good their students are in translating English culture- specific idioms and what errors they commonly commit when translating them. In question (15), teachers are asked to tell how appropriate the strategies of translating idioms are employed by their students.

Finally, the fourth section, “Further Suggestions”, consists of one question (Question 16) where teachers are requested to supply further techniques and strategies to overcome the students’ errors and difficulties in translating culture-specific idioms.

The questionnaire was handed to the ten identified teachers of translation, but only eight of them accepted to answer the questions. In general, almost the questions are fully answered. The teachers’ answers were presented in tables showing percentages and frequencies.

### **3.3.2. Analysis of Teacher Questionnaire Results**

#### **Section One: General Information**

1. Specify the specialty of each degree you obtained in graduation or post-graduation.

- a. Doctorate in .....
- b. Magister in .....
- c. Master in .....
- d. License in .....

<b>Degree</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a.</b>	02	25
<b>b.</b>	03	37.5
<b>c.</b>	03	37.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.01: Teacher Degree**

The above table shows that 25% of teachers hold a Doctorate degree while 37.5% of them hold a Magister degree. The rest of teachers (37.5%) hold a master degree.

2. Specify the post-graduation specialty you are currently pursuing, if any?

.....

<b>Post-Graduation</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Legal translation	01	12.5
Translation studies	01	12.5
No answer	06	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.02: Post-Graduation Specialty**

All the teachers are specialists in translation. Only two teachers indicated their post-graduation specialty: one is specialized in legal translation, the other in translation studies.

**3. How long have you been practising translation (including your studies, if any)?**

..... years

Experience in years	N	%
5- 10	04	50
11-20	02	25
21-30	02	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.03: Teacher Experience in Translation**

Teachers' years of practising translation vary from one teacher to another; however, all teachers are not new to translation with half the sample having an experience of less than 10 years and the other half having an experience of more than 10 years.

**4. How long have you been teaching translation?**

..... years

Experience in years	N	%
1	02	25
2	01	12.5
3	01	12.5
7	02	25
8	01	12.5
12	01	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.04: Teachers' Experience in Teaching Translation**

As can be seen from the table above, teachers are equally divided between those having a short experience (from one to three years) and those having a relatively long experience (from seven to twelve years).

**Section Two: Teaching and Practising Translation and Idiom Translation**

**5. How would you define translation?**

- a. It is the act of converting a source language text to a target language text in order to convey the intended message in the source language.
- b. It is the act of transferring meaning from one language into another
- c. Others, please specify:

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

Experience in years	N	%
a.	03	37.5
b.	03	37.5
a. + c.	01	12.5
b.+ c.	01	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.05: Teachers’ Definition of Translation**

Teachers are divided into two equal groups vis-à-vis the definition of translation. Half chose to define translation as an act which is based purely on the pragmatic meaning, and the other half focused on the process of transferring meaning from one language into another, including both semantic and pragmatic meanings. 2 teachers provided other definitions: one teacher pointed out that the definition of translation nowadays depends on the context where it takes place and the other

teacher claimed that we define translation depending on the type of texts the translator is dealing with; thus it is a complex endeavour to come up with a definition for translation. The answers revealed that the translator should take into consideration the different aspects of any piece of writing when translating in order to achieve the correspondence between the SLs and the TLs.

**6. How often do you practise translation?**

- a. Frequently
- b. Sometimes
- c. Occasionally

Options	N	%
a.	4	50%
b.	4	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.06: Frequency of Practising Translation**

The results displayed in the table above show that all the teachers do practise translation, but they differ with regard to the frequency of doing it, with half of them practising translation frequently, and the other half doing so less often, or sometimes.

**7. How do you find the translation of idioms from English to Arabic?**

- a. Very easy
- b. Easy
- c. Neutral
- d. Difficult
- e. Very difficult

Options	N	%
b.	01	12.50

c.	01	12.50
d.	02	25
e.	04	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.07: Level of Difficulty of Idioms Translation**

The findings obtained show clearly that a great part of teachers (50%) considered translation of idioms as a very difficult task. Two teachers (25%) claimed that translation process is somehow easy and neutral task. Whereas the remaining, (25%) considered it a difficult task. No one considered that translation is an easy task.

**8. When translating idioms from English to Arabic,**

**8.1. Which type of equivalence, if any, do you usually struggle to achieve?**

- a. Lexical equivalence
- b. Grammatical equivalence
- c. Textual equivalence
- d. Pragmatic equivalence
- e. None of them

**8.2. Please, justify your choice.**

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

Options	N	%
d.	05	62.50
c. + d.	03	37.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.08: The most Difficult Type of Equivalence in Translation**

The answers reveal that (62.50%) among teachers reported that achieving pragmatic equivalence is the translators' main challenge. Three teachers (37.5%) considered both pragmatic and textual equivalence difficult to achieve. Hence, pragmatic equivalence is the type chosen by all teachers to be the most difficult to achieve.

Only three teachers justified their answers by saying that idioms are part of culture and society, that is to say language in context. The translator cannot translate accurately what is intended. One teacher reported that in translation studies, idioms are culturally bound expressions that need to be treated as a pragmatic unit. Hence, equivalence is the appropriate procedure. Another has said that the first goal to attain by the translator is the equivalent meaning intended by the idiom. As for textual equivalence, they argued that textual structure differs widely from one language to another, and idioms have to be translated with their equivalents in the target culture.

**8.3. Do you think that it is possible to preserve and convey the same meaning?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

**8.4. Please, explain why.**

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

Options	N	%
a.	05	62.50
a+b.	03	37.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.09: Teachers' Perception about the Possibility to Preserve and Convey the Intended Meaning in Translation**

The statistics in the table above show clearly that (62.50%) of teachers agreed that it is possible to preserve and convey the same meaning of expressions across languages. The remaining teachers considered that both options are relevant.

Half of the teachers (50%) justified their answers. Teachers argued that in some cases the same idiom exists in both languages and cultures, and if the translator has enough knowledge about idioms it will be easy for him to preserve the meaning in the TL. They claimed that the possibility to preserve the same meaning and convey it depends on the idiom. With some idioms, it is very difficult to maintain the same meaning, especially if it is a culture specific expression, whereas it is easy for some idioms especially if they have an equivalent in the other culture.

**9. Which type of meaning should be focused on when translating idioms?**

- a. Semantic meaning
- b. Pragmatic meaning
- c. Both

The results obtained show that all teachers claimed that a translator should take into consideration both pragmatic and semantic meaning when translating any piece of writing. The translated version will be better understood when the translator interprets the literal and the intended meaning together.

**Section Three: Students' Idiom Translation Strategies**

**10. Are your students able to translate idioms from English to Arabic?**

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral

- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Options	N	%
b.	02	25
c.	01	12.50
d.	05	62.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.10: Teachers’ Perceptions of their Students’ Ability to Translate from English to Arabic**

The above table indicates that (25%) of the subjects agreed that their learners are able to translate from English into Arabic. Only one teacher was neutral suggesting that it is hard to make a judgement. Furthermore, the majority of teachers with a ratio (62.50%) considered that their learners are not able to translate from English into Arabic; they disagreed and claimed that this inability is derived from the lack of proficiency and practice.

**11. What makes English idioms difficult for your students to translate into Arabic?**

- a. Vague use
- b. Lack of equivalence
- c. Culture-laden
- d. Culture-specific
- e. Others, please specify:

.....

.....

.....

Options	N	%
b.	02	25

<b>c.</b>	01	12.50
<b>d.</b>	05	62.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.11: Aspects that Make Idioms Difficult to Translate**

The results prove that two teachers (25%) said that lack of equivalence is the source of idioms difficulties. They argued that translation is a complex process that needs a vast stretch of knowledge. While five teachers (62.50%) claimed that difficulty stems from the fact the idioms are culture specific and one teacher (12.50%) said it is the culture load that makes idioms difficult to translate. The reasons supplied for why idioms are culture specific is that each culture has its own expressions and words, and it is difficult for other people to get the meaning unless s/he has a good knowledge about the others' cultures. The students need to consider the cultural differences of the text being translated. Some considered the reason is the incompetence of the students themselves.

**12. How good are your students at translating English culture specific idioms into Arabic?**

- a. Excellent**
- b. Above the average**
- c. Average**
- d. Below average**
- e. Not good at all**

<b>Options</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>c.</b>	04	50
<b>d.</b>	03	37.50
<b>e.</b>	01	12.50

<b>Total</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100</b>
--------------	-----------	------------

**Table 3.12: Students' Level in Translating Idioms**

The obtained results show that (50%) of teachers answered saying that the students' level in translating English idioms is average, while (37.50%) of them claimed that the level is below the average. The reason behind that may be due to the lack of practice or lack of knowledge about idioms. Only one teacher (12.5%) stated that his students' level is not good at all, they are so weak in translating such specific idioms.

**13. What errors do your students commonly make when translating idiomatic expressions from English into Arabic?**

- a. Grammatical errors
- b. Lexical errors
- c. Pragmatic errors
- d. Stylistic errors
- e. Others, please specify

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

<b>Options</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>c.</b>	02	25
<b>c.+d.</b>	03	37.5
<b>a.+b.+c.+d.</b>	03	37.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.13: The Common Errors Made by Students in the Translating of Idiomatic Expressions from English into Arabic**

The finding obtained in the above table show that all teachers (100%) [c.25% + (c.+d.): 37.50% + ( a.+b.+c.+d.):37.50%=100%] reported that pragmatic errors

commonly occur in the students' translation end products. Students fail to maintain the same meaning in the TL as that of the SL. 75% [d.37.50% + (a.+b.+c.+d.):37.50%=100%] of them considered both stylistic errors as the most common errors students may face because each language has its own style, and learners fail to keep the logical flow of ideas in the TL as that of the SL and to communicate successfully what is uttered. Grammatical and lexical errors received each 37.50% of teachers' opinions, putting them with other types of errors together. Students commonly face all types of errors when translating since they are still novice translators and they need a lot of experience to polish up their translation. The answers reveal that translators should spare more time in training themselves in translation with regard to all language aspects which may help to reduce these errors.

**14. In your opinion, do you think that students should be made aware of both source and target cultures idioms to succeed in translating them?**

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

All the teachers strongly agreed that it is necessary for any translator to take into account the culture in the SLs and TLs. No one can deny the importance of culture in translation since it enables the translator to be familiar with ideas and knowledge of different languages. Hence, culture is among the problematic issues that represents a great challenge for the translator.

**15. When your students translate English culture specific idioms into Arabic, how do they employ the following strategies?**

Options	Usually appropriately selected and successfully used	Usually appropriately selected, but mistaken	Rarely appropriately selected and successfully used	Rarely appropriately selected, but mistaken	Not used
a. Word for					

<b>word translation</b>					
<b>b. Using an idiom of similar meaning and form</b>					
<b>c. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form</b>					
<b>d. Paraphrasing</b>					
<b>e. Omission</b>					
<b>f. Others:</b> ..... .....					

Options	Usually appropriately selected and successfully used		Usually appropriately selected, but mistaken		Rarely appropriately selected and successfully used		Rarely appropriately selected, but mistaken		Not used		No Answer	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>a.</b>	0	0	07	87.50	01	12.50	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>b.</b>	02	25	0	0	04	50	01	12.50	0	0	01	12.50
<b>c.</b>	01	12.5	0	0	03	37.5	04	50	0	0	0	0
<b>d.</b>	06	75	0	0	01	12.5	0	0	01	12.50	0	0
<b>e.</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	05	62.50	02	25	01	12.50

**Table 3.14: Frequency of Students' Selection and Use of Strategies in Translating the Idiomatic Expressions**

Concerning the strategy of word for word translation, 7 teachers (87.50%) reported that it is usually appropriately selected but mistakenly, meaning that students

usually follow this method even if it is not suitable. Only one teacher (12.5%) said that this strategy is rarely appropriately selected and successfully used.

With regard to the strategy using an idiom of similar meaning and form, 25% of teachers claimed that it is usually appropriately selected and successfully used i.e., students succeed in choosing it. 50% of them said that it is rarely appropriately selected and successfully used, while 12.50% of them said that it is rarely appropriately selected, but mistakenly. One teacher has no answer to this strategy.

For the third strategy, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, only one teacher said that it is usually appropriately selected and successfully used, 37.5% of teachers reported that this strategy is rarely appropriately selected and successfully used, while 50% of them provided that it is rarely appropriately selected, but mistaken. Most answers are then negative regarding this strategy.

Regarding the fourth strategy, which is paraphrasing, the majority of teachers (75%) claimed that this technique is usually appropriately selected and successfully used. One teacher (12.50%) said that it is rarely appropriately selected and successfully used, while other teachers (12.50%) reported that this method is not used at all.

As far as the fifth strategy is concerned, that of omission, 5 teachers (62.50%) reported that it is rarely appropriately selected, but mistakenly. While the rest of them (25%) said that it is not used at all. One teacher did not provide an answer.

In summary, the two strategies of word for word translation and paraphrasing are considered to be correctly chosen and applied by students; whereas the rest of strategies, namely using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form and omission are mostly either rarely selected and used appropriately or rarely appropriately selected, but mistakenly.

**Section Four: Further Suggestions**

**16. What strategies or techniques would you suggest to remedy for students' errors and difficulties in translating culture specific idiomatic expressions?**

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

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
a. To lecture the students about the source and the target culture	03	37.50
b. Adaptation of equivalence as the procedure of translation	02	25
c. Practising translation in daily life and classes	02	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>87.50</b>

**Table 3.15: Remedial Techniques Suggested by Teachers for Translating Culture Specific Idiomatic Expressions**

Three teachers (37.50%) believed that teaching students the different cultural aspects in both TLs and SLs would pave the way to remedy these problems since each language is associated with its culture. Students should be exposed to SL culture including religion, habits, and traditions. 25% of teachers suggested the adoption of equivalence as a procedure of translation; they considered it the best approach to handle the issue of translation; since equivalence deals with the semantic and pragmatic context, the translation will be respectful to the original, pragmatically speaking. The remaining 25% of teachers claimed that students should increase their practice in translation classes and in their daily life, for example, watching English movies, listen to music, contact foreign language speakers in order to increase their

knowledge about the source culture. One teacher reported that no strategy is efficient enough if the students lack awareness about the linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

### **3.3.3. Interpretation and Discussion of Teacher Questionnaire Results**

From the questionnaire findings, the quantitative analysis has revealed that students of English encounter considerable amounts of difficulties when translating idiomatic expressions. Differences exist between Arabic and English cultures make translators realize constraints for the use of exact equivalents in the TL, and thus, they rely on other strategies as literal translation, paraphrasing and omission in order to render the meaning without any consideration of the idiomaticity that English idioms contain.

According to their teachers' answers, students' failure in choosing the appropriate strategy and applying it successfully is due to the lack of knowledge about both source and target cultures. In addition, teachers emphasised that students should be aware of both cultures in order to successfully use the appropriate strategies. Teachers' answers about students' strategies revealed that word for word translation and the paraphrasing strategies are the most successfully used strategies by students in translating culture bound idioms. Translating idiom by idiom with similar meaning similar/ dissimilar form and omission are rarely selected and used.

## **3.4. Students Test**

### **3.4.1. Description and Administration of the Test**

The aim of the test is to investigate the students' recognition, understanding, and translation of idioms. The latter is considered both at the levels of choice the right translation strategies and their successful application.

The students test is set in the form of a translation activity consisting of thirteen English sentences, each of which includes an English idiomatic expression to be translated into Arabic. We have tried to select some familiar, easily recognizable and accessible idioms put in their appropriate context to suit the students' levels. The reason is that we wanted to make sure that recognition and understanding of the meaning of idioms is not the central issue accounting for students' difficulties in translation, but that choice and application of strategies are the sources of difficulty and inability of students to render idiomatic expressions. Still, students are not allowed to consult dictionaries because they are tested for recognizing idiomaticity also, which has an impact on the choice of the translation strategy.

Baker's (1992) classifications of strategies adopted in translating idiomatic expressions were taken into consideration when analysing the test's items. To determine the test items, we resorted to McGraw-Hills Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal verbs (2005).

Seventy five (n=75) students were randomly chosen for taking the test. They were requested to translate thirteen sentences from English into Arabic. The work was done individually in class. They were given half an hour to complete the task, which proved enough because most students turned in their papers before the end of the time allotted. Furthermore, neither communication nor dictionaries are allowed during the test. After gathering the students' answers, they were examined and analyzed.

### **3.4.2. Analysis of the Students Test Results**

#### **- Model Answers for Idioms**

<b>Idiom</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Appropriate Strategy</b>	<b>Appropriate Application of Strategy (Arabic Equivalent)</b>
<b>1- Let the cat out of the bag</b>	To reveal a secret or a surprise by accident	Paraphrasing	يفشي السر
<b>2- Live from hand to mouth</b>	To live in poor circumstances	Paraphrasing	نعيش حالة مزريّة، في فقر
<b>3- Beating around the bush</b>	To avoid answering a question, to stall, to waste time	Idiom with similar meaning and different form	يلف و يدور
<b>4- By hook or crook</b>	By any means, legal or illegal	Idiom with similar meaning and different form	طوعا أو كراهية شئت أو أبيت
<b>5- Strike while the iron is hot</b>	When you have an opportunity to do something, do it before you lose your chance	Idiom with the same meaning and form	اضرب الحديد وهو ساخن
<b>6- Do not count your chicken before they hatch</b>	Do not act as though something has turned out favorably for you until it has really turned out that way	-Idiom with similar meaning but different form -Paraphrasing	لا تشتري السمك في البحر لاتسبق الاحداث
<b>7- Take the</b>	Accept difficult as well as	Idiom with the	خذ الامور، الحياة بحلوها

<b>rough with the smooth</b>	easy times	same meaning and different form	ومرها
<b>8- On pins and needles</b>	Anxious, in suspense	Idiom with similar meaning and different form	على أحر من الجمر على نار
<b>9- Birds of feather flock together</b>	Similar people tend to associate with each other	-Idiom with the same meaning and form -Idiom with the same meaning, but different form.	الطيور على أشكالها تقع -قل لي من تصاحب أقل لك من أنت من عاشر قوما أربعون ليلة أصبح منهم
<b>10- My bread and butter</b>	Someone's basic income, someone's livelihood	Idiom with similar meaning and different form	لقمة عيشي
<b>11- Pass the buck</b>	To pass the blame to someone else	Idiom with similar meaning and different form	يلقي اللوم
<b>12- Bury the hatchet</b>	To make peace	Idiom with similar meaning and different form	اذبنا الجليد بدأنا صفحة بيضاء دفنا الماضي أعدنا المياه الى مجاريها
<b>13- Couch potato</b>	A lazy individual, addicted to television watching	Paraphrasing	مدمن تلفاز كسول جدا

**Table 3.16: The Meaning Appropriate Translation Strategies and their Application for Idioms.**

1. We intended it to be a surprise party for Donna, but some girls she works with let the cat out of the bag, so now she knows.

Strategy	N	%
Paraphrasing	65	86,67
Omission	03	04
Literal	03	04
None	03	04
Untranslated	01	01.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.17: Students' Answers in Idiom 1**

The analysis of the sentence indicates that 65 of the subjects translated the idiom by supplying the paraphrasing strategy with the highest percentage of occurrences (86, 67%). They succeeded in guessing the metaphorical meaning of the idiom, and they have used the appropriate strategy to translate the English idiom into Arabic in the absence of direct equivalent in Arabic. For instance, أفصح. فضح الأمر, أفشى السر, أخبر, أفسد الخطة. Three among the students (04%) used the omission strategy while it is inappropriate for this sentence. Only three (04%) of the participants followed the literal translation strategy and translated the idiom word by word as ترك الفط خارج الحقيبة. The remaining (4%) of the students did not use any strategy; their translation was out of the context, they gave unrelated translation as, تجاوزن الحدود, لمحن, جعلن الامر خارج السيطرة, while only one student (01.33%) did not translate the sentence at all.

2. **My father earned very little and there were four kids, so we lived from hand to mouth.**

Strategy	N	%
Paraphrasing	47	62.67
Omission	11	14.67
Literal	10	13.33
None	03	04
Untranslated	04	05.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.18: Students' Answers in Idiom 2**

As it can be noticed in the table above, 62.67% of the participants used paraphrasing which is considered the appropriate method since it maintains the target meaning as, 'نعيش حالة مزرية، في فقر'. 14. 67% of the participants provided no translation for the English idiom within the sentence, maybe because they did not recognize its meaning, so, they preferred to omit it at all and followed the omission strategy. Only 10 students with a ratio (13, 33%) translated the idiom literally into Arabic as 'نعيش من اليد إلى الفم'. That is, they just translated the component words from English into Arabic. About 04% of the students did not use any strategy, they were out of the context or provided unrelated translation as, 'نعيش بالإشارات والحركات، نعيش' امن، لقمة الصدقة. Four students (05. 33%) did not translate the sentence at all.

3. **When I asked Anne whether she knew who had taken the files from my desk, she started beating around the bush and refused to give me a direct answer.**

Strategy	N	%
----------	---	---

<b>Idiom By Idiom With The Same Meaning And Different Form</b>	26	34.67
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	31	41.33
<b>Omission</b>	08	10.67
<b>Literal</b>	02	02.66
<b>None</b>	08	10.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.19: Students' Answers in Idiom 3**

Out of the total number 75 students, 34.67% of the students' translation strategies are appropriate; they translated the English idiom into its equivalent in Arabic with the same meaning but in another form as 'تلف وتدور'. The translation end products were identical to the model one. This implies that students were able to have some insights into what the idiom may communicate. The same percentage of students (41.33%) used paraphrasing as, 'تدور هنا وهناك, تراوغ, تتلاعب بالكلام, تتهرب'. Only two students (02.66%) transmitted the sentence literally as 'يضرب حول جذع', and (10.67%) of them, followed the omission technique; whereas, the same ratio (10, 67%) of the participants provided no strategy at all and provided strange answers as, 'بدأت بالصراخ, تهمس بين شففتيها'.

**4. The government has no respect for democratic values and wants to push through its agenda by hook or crook.**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Idiom with similar meaning but dissimilar form</b>	11	14.66
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	25	33.33
<b>Omission</b>	31	41.33

<b>Unrelated</b>	05	06.66
<b>Untranslated</b>	03	04
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.18: Students' Answers in Idiom 4**

The results obtained above reveal that (14.67%) of students used an adequate strategy to translate the idiom. They supplied an idiom with a similar meaning with a different form strategy as 'طوعا أو كراهية'. (33.33%) of the informants were in favour of using the paraphrasing method as the suitable strategy for translating this idiom as, 'رغم أنف الجميع, رغم كل شيء, بأي وسيلة كانت',. They understood the meaning and then expressed it in their own words. The majority of students (41.33%) did not translate the idiom at all, followed the omission strategy. This may be due to their inability to identify the intended meaning. (06.66%) of learners gave unrelated translation, which reveals that they did not understand the idiom, without following any strategy as, 'من خلال الزمن, عن طريق الاحتيال' والخطف, عن طريق الرشوة والبيروقراطية; whereas (04%) of them did not translate it.

**5. A: My boss just congratulated me on my report; should I ask him for a pay rise now?**

**B: yes, go on. Strike while the iron is hot.**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Idiom with similar meaning and form</b>	35	46.67
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	25	33.33
<b>Omission</b>	10	13.33
<b>Untranslated</b>	5	06.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.19: Students' Answers in Idiom 5**

As can be observed in the table above, approximately half of the respondents (46. 67%) used the appropriate translation strategy. The students may be familiar with such idiom since we have the same in our culture. Using an idiom with similar meaning and form is the suitable strategy as, 'دق/ اضرب الحديد وهوساخن . 25 among the participants (33. 33%) paraphrased the idiom in order to render the meaning in the SL as, 'اغتنم الفرصة, اذهب فوراً قبل فوات الاوان'. Concerning the omission strategy, (13.33%) of participants supplied it; these students are quite unfamiliar with the idiomatic expression and how it should be translated. Therefore, they preferred to omit it at all. While (06. 67%) of the students provided no translation for the sentence at all; this stems from the fact that they were unaware of any strategy used to translate this idiom.

**6. You might not win the prize and you have already spent the money. Do not count your chickens before they hatch.**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Idiom with similar meaning and different form</b>	05	06. 66
<b>Literal</b>	20	26. 67
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	29	38. 67
<b>Omission</b>	08	10.67
<b>Untranslated</b>	13	09.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.20: Students' Answers in Idiom 6**

Table 3.20 indicates that only 06.66% of the respondents provided the right strategy, an idiom with the same meaning and different form, when translating this

idiom as 'لا تتشتري السمك في البحر'. 26.67% of them supply the literal translation, as 'لا تعد', whereas 38.67% of the participants translated it using an adequate strategy which is the paraphrasing technique as 'لا تستعجل، لا تسرع، لا تسبق الاحداث', which reveals the meaning of the idiom, but does not reveal its idomaticity. However, eight of the students with a ratio (10.67%) chose the omission strategy. They deleted the idiom and gave no translation for it. The remaining 17.33% of students chose to leave the sentence without any translation.

**7. Do not give up on your business just because you lost money this month. You have to take the rough with the smooth.**

Strategy	N	%
<b>Idiom with similar meaning and different form</b>	07	09.33
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	25	33.33
<b>Literal</b>	06	08
<b>Omission</b>	11	14.67
<b>None</b>	20	26.67
<b>Untranslated</b>	06	08
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.21: Students' Answers in Idiom 7**

Table 3.21 shows that only seven students supplied the appropriate strategy. They translated the English idiom by another Arabic idiom that has a similar meaning and a different form as, 'خذ الحياة بطلوها ومرها'. While 33.33% used paraphrasing to transmit the meaning, they paraphrased as, 'خذ الامور بروية، وسلاسة، عليك بالصبر، الحياة ربح'. 6 students with (08%) translated it literally as, 'خذ الصلب باللين'; they just translated its parts word by word. Therefore, they misinterpreted the figurative

meaning of the English idiom. 14.67% of them followed the omission strategy, they deleted the idiom from the sentence. 26.67% of students were out of context and followed no strategy when translating such idiom as, 'تعلم من فشلك، كن واثقا من قدراتك'. 06 students with a ratio (08%) did not translate it at all.

**8. I have been on pins and needles until we heard that your plane had landed safely.**

Strategy	N	%
<b>Idiom with similar meaning and different form</b>	19	25.33
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	36	48
<b>Omission</b>	08	10.67
<b>None</b>	11	14.67
<b>Untranslated</b>	01	01.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.22: Students' Answers in Idiom 8**

A close look at the students' results in the table above reveals that 25.33% of students used the appropriate strategy for translating this idiom. They translated it by using an Arabic idiom that has the same meaning as the English one but has a different form as 'على أحر من الجمر'. Approximately half of students were in favour of using the paraphrasing strategy as a useful method to translate as, 'كنت على أعصابي، لم كنت على أعصابي، لم كنت قلقا جدا'. This strategy seems to be acceptable since the meaning is the same. Whereas 08 students preferred to omit the idiom with a percentage of 10.67% could not infer what the idiom means or maybe they were unfamiliar with such expression. The last 11 students did not use any strategy. Their answers were out of

context, they might lack the strategy to be followed as, سنسعد بخدمتك, سنكون في خدمتك, كنت في أمر' الواقع. Only one participant did not translate the whole sentence (01. 33%).

### 9. George: why do you think Donald is dishonest?

**Ned: all his friends are dishonest. Birds of a feather flock together.**

Strategy	N	%
<b>Idiom with similar meaning and form</b>	24	32
<b>Idiom with similar meaning and different form</b>	12	16
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	24	32
<b>Omission</b>	11	14.67
<b>None</b>	02	02.66
<b>Untranslated</b>	02	02.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.23: Students' Answers in Idiom 9**

The table above shows that 32% of the respondents translated this expression by supplying the appropriate strategy, which is using an idiom with the same meaning and form such as, 'على أشكالها تقع الطيور'. Actually, the students should be familiar with such expression because Arabic culture has a similar idiom; 16% of them provided a similar idiom in meaning and different in form as a technique to translate such idiom as, 'قل لي من تصاحب أقل لك من أنت'. 32% of the participants used the paraphrasing strategy as a technique to translate the meaning in their own words as, 'السينون يشبهون بعض', 'الصفات تنطبق عليهم جميعا، كل شخص معروف بمن يرافقه'. Furthermore, 14. 67% were in favour of omitting the idiomatic expression altogether. They failed to grasp its meaning from the context in the sentence, while 02. 66% gave unrelated translation without using

any strategy. They have gone out of context as, 'الكل سواسية', 02. 66% of the students did not provide a translation for the sentence completely.

**10. I cannot miss another day of work. That is my bread and butter.**

Strategy	N	P
<b>Idiom with the same meaning and different form</b>	18	24%
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	36	48%
<b>Literal</b>	10	9.33%
<b>Omission</b>	07	13.13%
<b>None</b>	04	05.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.24: Students' Answers in Idiom 10**

In translating this sentence, the table indicates that 24% of the respondents provided correct translation by using its equivalent in Arabic such as, 'قوت يومي، لقمة عيشي'. Therefore, they translated it using the strategy of an idiom with similar meaning and different form. Whereas 48% of them provided acceptable answers by using the paraphrasing technique such as, 'مصدر رزقي، مدخولي'. However, 09.33% of the respondents provided a literal translation as, 'خبزتي وزبدتي'. They were influenced by their mother tongue, and then render it literally in dialectal Arabic language. Seven students (13.13%) preferred to omit the idiom and leave it without translation, and 05.33% of them gave unrelated answers without using any strategy as, 'المكوث في المنزل خيرا، تنفسي ومشربي'.

**11. Do not try to pass the buck! It is not my fault, it is yours, and everybody knows it.**

Strategy	N	N
<b>Idiom with similar meaning and different form</b>	11	14.67
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	55	74.33
<b>Omission</b>	05	06.66
<b>Unrelated</b>	07	09.33
<b>Untranslated</b>	08	10.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.25: Students' Answers in Idiom 11**

The table shows that as a strategy, idiom with similar meaning and different form has been used by only 14.67% of the students, they succeeded in choosing the appropriate strategy as 'يلقي اللوم'. 55 students used paraphrasing strategy. They provided a more adequate and acceptable translation as, 'يلصق التهمة, يكذب, يتهمني'. They explored the intended meaning, and then rewrote it in their own words. 06.66% of the participants provided no translation of the idiomatic expression. They supplied the omission strategy; they ignored how to translate certain culture specific idiom. 09.33% of them gave out-of-context translation without using any strategy as, 'لا تتجاوز حدودك', and 08 students (10.66%) provided no translation for the whole sentence.

**12. A: you did not talk to Tom for yours.**

**B: Tom and I buried the hatchet and we are good friends now.**

Strategy	N	%
<b>Idiom with similar meaning and different form</b>	17	22.67
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	39	52
<b>Literal</b>	02	02.66

<b>Omission</b>	12	16
<b>Untranslated</b>	05	06.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.26: Students' Answers in Idiom 12**

While 22.67% of the respondents provided correct translation by giving its equivalent idiom with similar meaning and different form in Arabic such as, *دفنا الاحقاد*, *اذنبا* 'الجليد, بدأنا صفحة بيضاء'. The majority of students, constituting 52%, were in favour of using the paraphrasing techniques as a way to render the meaning of the English idiom in Arabic such as, 'تصالحنا, تجاوزنا, تسامحنا, تخطينا المشكل'. However, only two students (02.66%) provided a literal strategy. Using literal translation in translating idioms is not a successful strategy, a word for word translation of an idiom is said to ruin the beauty of the expression and results in non-sense, and is therefore rarely successful. 16% chose to omit the idiom, whereas 06.67% of the students supplied no translation at all for the whole sentence.

**13. My brother has become a couch potato since he lost his job. Now all he does is sit in front of the television all day eating pizza.**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	53	70.67
<b>Literally</b>	05	06.66
<b>Omission</b>	06	08
<b>Unrelated</b>	05	06.66
<b>Untranslated</b>	06	08
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.27: Students' Answers in Idiom 13**

Based on data collected, most students adopted the paraphrasing technique (70.66%) to solve the problem of non-equivalence in the ST. Students understood the English idiom in the sentence and transmitted its meaning appropriately into Arabic as *أريكة بطاطا*. Then, literally, translation was followed as *كسولا جدا, مدمن تلفاز, كسولا جدا*. However, 06.66% of them produced a meaningless idiom in Arabic, while translation by omission has been used by 08% of the participants. Moreover, 06.66% of them followed no particular strategy because of non-comprehension; their production into Arabic is meaningless as *أصبح لاشيء, مقشر بطاطا, معلم بطاطا, بطاطا مبشورة*. This implies the students' weaknesses to understand the English idiom in this sentence. The remaining 6 students (08%) did not translate the sentence at all.

### **3.4.3. Interpretation and Discussion of Students Test Results**

After investigating the strategies used while translating idioms, it is clear that students used the following strategies: paraphrasing, idiom with similar meaning and/ different form, literal, omission.

- **Paraphrasing**

Paraphrasing emerges as the most prominent strategy within students' responses. By using this kind of strategy, a translator transfers the meaning of an idiom using a single word or a group of words, which roughly corresponds to the meaning of idiom, but it is not an idiom itself. However, the use of this strategy involves certain disadvantages such as losing quality and stylistic flavour. Newmark (1988:109) says that while using this strategy not only components of sense will be missing or added, but also the emotive or pragmatic impact will be reduced or lost.

- **Idiom by idiom with similar meaning and form**

This strategy is commonly used in the students' products. Although the form is different, it gives the TL meaning that shares the same meaning in SL culture. Arabic culture has equivalents for English idioms but in different forms.

- **Omission**

The participants adopted the technique of omission, leaving out the idiom and keeping no trace of it in the TL. Students followed it due to their inability to identify the meaning of the idiom or the meaning itself cannot be paraphrased.

- **Literal translation**

Some students resorted to the method of literal translation because they lack knowledge in the TL culture. They are not aware of translation strategies and techniques that can help them in using the best strategy. This strategy relies on the SL where the translator transfers all the words into the TL without taking in account the contextual and cultural aspects. This leads to unintelligibility and to a meaningless translation that sounds silly or strange.

- **Idiom by idiom with similar meaning and form**

There are SL idioms, which have total equivalents in the TL culture in the form as well as meaning. Some students have the required knowledge of the equivalent idioms in the TL, and thus were able to translate the idioms.

- **No or unidentified strategies**

A big number of students gave nonsense translations for the idioms. They followed none of the strategies mentioned before, and provided unrelated answers. In addition, some of them preferred to leave the sentence without any translation.

- Comparison between shared and culture bound idioms translation strategies:
  - Shared idioms between Arabic and English cultures

Idiom	Recognition		Appropriate choice of strategy		Appropriate application of strategy	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Strike while the iron is hot	60	80	35	46.67	35	46.67
Birds of a feather flock together	60	80	34	45.33	34	45.33
<b>Average</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>34.50</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>34.50</b>	<b>46</b>

**Table 3.28: Frequency of Students' Success in Translating Shared Idioms between English and Arabic**

The table above reveals that the majority of students (80%) succeeded in recognizing the intended meaning of the two idioms. Only 46% of students chose and applied the appropriate strategies in translating them.

- Culture bound English idiomatic expressions

Idiom	Recognition of Meaning		Appropriate Choice of Strategy		Appropriate Application of Strategy	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Let the cat out of the bag	65	86.67	65	86.67	25	33.33
Live from hand to mouth	49	65.33	02	02.66	02	02.66
Beating around the bush	57	76	26	34.67	26	34.67
By hook or crook	36	48	11	14.67	11	14.67

<b>Do not count your chickens before they hatch</b>	34	45.33	34	45.33	34	45.33
<b>Take the rough with the smooth</b>	32	42.67	07	09.33	07	09.33
<b>On pins and needles</b>	55	73.33	19	25.33	19	25.33
<b>My bread and butter</b>	54	72	18	24	18	24
<b>Pass the back</b>	66	88	11	14.67	11	14.67
<b>Bury the hatched</b>	56	74.67	17	22.67	17	22.67
<b>Couch potato</b>	53	70.33	53	70.33	53	70.33
<b>Average</b>	<b>50.64</b>	<b>67.52</b>	<b>23.91</b>	<b>31.88</b>	<b>20.27</b>	<b>27.02</b>

**Table 3.29: Frequency of Students' Success in Translating Culture Bound**

### **English Idioms into Arabic**

The results of the above table above reveal that the majority of students were able to recognize the meaning of the idioms (60.52%). The percentage of students decreases to 31.88% when it comes to choosing the appropriate strategy, and decreases a little bit more with regard to appropriate application of the right strategy (27.02%).

The results show that students were able to recognize the meaning and choose the appropriate strategy with the appropriate application when dealing with idiomatic expressions shared between Arabic and English. This result may be justified by the fact that the target expressions are very common so that most of the participants are well acquainted with its cultural associated meaning. In other words, they are familiar with such idioms. As the idiom 'birds of feather flock together' has its equivalent in Arabic as 'الطيور على أشكالها تقع'. Thus, students could convey and maintain the idiomaticity in the target text as in the source text. However, while dealing with culture-bound idioms, students were often able to recognize the meaning, but they found difficulties in choosing and applying the appropriate strategy. The majority of

students did not manage to find a suitable equivalent to most idioms, although half of them managed to paraphrase their meaning accurately and succinctly. This difficulty is caused by lack of linguistic knowledge of the mother tongue and target language cultures, as well as their unawareness of the appropriate strategy that must be used and how to apply it successfully. For example, students recognized the meaning of the idiom 'bury the hatchet' and provided different answers as *أذينا الجليد, تصالحنَا* by a percentage of (74.67%), but they were unaware of which strategy to choose and deploy appropriately; they depended mostly on paraphrasing. Only 22.67% of students provided the acceptable strategy which is idiom with similar meaning and different form such as *أذينا الجليد, دفنا الأحقاد*. Thus, they could not convey the idiomaticity of the ST into the TT.

The test analysis revealed that a great part of students encountered different challenges when they attempted to find accurate translation strategies for the examples given. Moreover, the students' production reflected their lack of background knowledge and their unawareness of both source and target cultures which affected negatively their outcomes of translation strategies. The students' inability to translate is also contributed to, in some cases; by not understanding the meaning of the messages that contain culture-specific idiom in particular (20% did not understand shared idioms vs. 32.48% did not understand culture-specific idioms). The findings also show that the most difficulty for students is in the linguistic ability that enables a translator to find a suitable equivalent; many students do not possess or could not recall Arabic idioms that have similar meanings to their English counterparts. Moreover, where students have been unable to choose and apply the appropriate strategy, it was mostly in the case culture-specific idioms. Last, students relied mostly on paraphrasing when rendering English idioms into Arabic which

reveals their lack of awareness about the strategies that can be used in translating idioms. This entails a substantial loss of the cultural dimension of the idiom, its impact on the receiver and its appealing brevity.

In summary, the analysis has shown that students' translation of idioms involved five basic translation strategies: paraphrasing, idiom by idiom with similar meaning and similar form, idiom by idiom with similar meaning and dissimilar form, literal and omission strategy where the first two strategies are the most appropriately chosen and applied.

### **3.5. Overall Analysis of Results**

As mentioned in the general introduction, the aim of the current study is to investigate the common difficulties that students encounter when dealing with idioms. In addition, it seeks to find out whether students are empowered with the necessary strategies as well as practice in their successful application in the case of translating idioms from English to Arabic. These main objectives were achieved by analysing the data collected using the instruments designed for the purpose of the study. The analysis focused on:

- Students' ability to conserve idiomaticity when translating idioms from English to Arabic.
- Students' ability to translate English idiomatic expressions that have equivalents in Arabic.
- Students appropriate choose of the appropriate strategies when translating culture-bound idioms from English into Arabic.
- Students' successful application of the appropriate strategies in translating culture-bound idioms from English into Arabic.

The results obtained from both the questionnaire and the test answered the research questions as follows:

**a) The ability of students to conserve idiomaticity when translating idioms from English to Arabic**

It was found that the subjects of the present study generally did not face difficulties in the comprehension of English idioms. Questionnaire results show that the level of students in translating is acceptable as most teachers (62.50%) said that their students are able to translate idioms from English to Arabic, and that was also the case found from analysing students' overall performance in the test. Their ability in recognizing the meaning may also be due to the context in which the idiom occurs; we provided the context for the students to make the understanding of idioms easy for them to rule out, as much as possible, the interpretation of inability to translate as being due to non-understanding of the idioms. Yet, students failed to maintain and convey idiomaticity in the TT. Students mostly relied on the paraphrasing strategy when translating; they just conveyed the meaning without any consideration to the idioms uniqueness and its cultural dimension. By using this strategy, the inherent aspects of idioms are lost in the TT.

**b) The students' ability to translate English idioms that have equivalents in Arabic.**

Students were able to translate appropriately idioms that have total equivalents in Arabic, i.e. idiom by idiom with similar form and meaning. The reason behind that is their familiarity with such expressions. Whereas in dealing with culture specific idioms, the students' ability was average. They relied on paraphrasing instead of

idiom by idiom with similar meaning and different form since the Arabic language has the same idioms with different form.

**c) The students' awareness of determining and applying the appropriate strategy when translating.**

Both of the teacher questionnaire and the students test show that students were not aware of which appropriate strategy to select and how to employ it because they are unaware of the strategies available to them. They should be aware of both the source and target cultures since idioms are mostly culture specific, as approximately all the teachers claim that culture specificity is what makes idioms difficult to translate for their students. They preferred to use paraphrasing in all the situations though it is better to use idiom by idiom with similar meaning and different form.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to investigate the strategies determined and applied by students in translating English culture-bound idioms. In this perspective, two instruments were analysed and compared. The analysis of both instruments used as research instruments showed that students have employed limited or inappropriate translation strategies. They found difficulties in determining and applying the appropriate strategy when translating such expressions and that is due to their unawareness of the necessity of including culture in their translation. Moreover, the study found that students showed a high awareness of translation strategies when dealing with shared idioms between Arabic and English cultures. The actual problem in translating idioms lies in the fact that their idiomatic quality cannot always be transmitted to the TL text.

# **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

## **1. Putting it altogether**

Through this research, we tried to be exhaustive in covering translation aspects. The notion of equivalence has been discussed at length since it is considered to be at the heart of any translation process. We tried also to talk about translation, its relation to culture, problems it poses, and the suggested strategies for overcoming difficulties. Moreover, we attempted to shed light on the most important aspects which are related to the scope of idiomaticity as well as show the complexity of idioms in particular. Idioms as such are rigid and fixed expressions that are difficult to be understood. This difficulty is related to the fact that the idiomatic expressions are more related to the culture of language than to the linguistic system; they have a surface as well as a deep meaning. Part of the theoretical review addressed the idioms in relation to the area of translation; we talked about idiomaticity in both Arabic and English cultures, idioms and culture, problems, and the strategies suggested by scholars.

Following the obtained results, one can claim that the second year students at the department of English used different strategies when translating idiomatic expressions without consciously knowing if the strategy is appropriate or not. That is, they could only guess.

This research, to great extent, was helpful in giving an idea about our students' level of translation, which can be considered acceptable. They succeeded in recognizing the meanings of the idiomatic expressions thanks to the context, which considered as a facilitating factor for students. However, students failed in choosing and selecting the appropriate strategies when conveying the meaning. They stuck to the paraphrasing strategy. As a result, the unique nature of the idiom i.e., its cultural significance and brevity is lost in the TT. Students' unawareness of which strategy to

be selected and how it must be employed is the result of their gap in knowledge concerning the linguistic systems of both Arabic and English. Yet, this does not mean that no one succeeded in determining and applying translation strategies appropriately since the results showed that students' translations of shared idioms usually end up with satisfactory results simply because they are familiar with and have a good knowledge about both cultures. This proves that those who failed to select and apply the appropriate strategy can overcome their failure with much more practice.

In response to the research questions and the hypotheses of this research, one can say that the translator should be aware of the culture of both source and target languages because deep knowledge, experience, and awareness of both cultures play an essential role in recognizing the suitable equivalent of a particular idiom and choosing the suitable strategy.

## **2. Pedagogical Recommendations**

Second year students approximately have no problem in recognizing and conveying the meaning of idioms from English to Arabic when supplied with explanatory context. Yet, they come across some difficulties in choosing and applying the appropriate strategies of translation especially in translating culture specific idioms. Based on the findings, some recommendations in the form of guidelines are provided for the sake of raising the students' awareness about the different techniques and procedures used in translating idiomatic expressions:

- A. Students should be knowledgeable about the differences between the two languages and cultures (English and Arabic) that enable them to become familiar with the idiomatic expressions.

- B. Great attention should be given to the significant influence of culture on language.
- C. Students should be aware of a number of translation strategies and techniques as well as the context in order to achieve a correct translation.
- D. Throughout the process of translating idiomatic expressions, student should first recognize or determine the idiom, interpret it correctly before deciding how to put it into the TL.
- E. Students should strive to keep the idiomaticity of the expressions even when the meaning is perfectly conveyed.
- F. Students should be made aware that word for word translation is not always a good strategy for good translation.
- G. Students should be made aware that the paraphrasing strategy could not maintain the ST idiomaticity.
- H. Students should be made aware of some culture specific items of language such as, metaphors, proverbs, and idioms and to learn their translation, at least in their mother tongue and in the foreign language: to be a good translator implies certain knowledge and familiarity with the differences of cultures, customs and styles of living and speaking in both source and target cultures.
- I. Students should be encouraged to read different magazines, journals, newspapers, and other types of texts to get more in contact with the target culture.
- J. Teachers should teach idiom in their context of occurrence.
- K. Teachers should draw the students' attention to the fact that idioms are not only multiword items, but they are more related to the culture.

L. Students should use specialized dictionaries when translating idiomatic expressions like Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms.

M. More time should be devoted to the translation module and more practice is needed in the task of translating idiomatic and culture- specific expressions.

### **3. Limitations of the Study**

The limitations were encountered in the course of this study can be summarised in relation to the number of teachers involved, which does not allow to have multiple and varied perspectives about the issue, and the fact that respondents to the test did not always show their real attitudes and perspectives since some of them did not translate a group of sentences. In addition, some teachers were too busy, and barely found the time to justify their answers.

### **4. Suggestions for Further Research**

It is hoped that this study will encourage more research in the field of idioms comprehension and translation. Students as well as teachers of translation should be provided with more insights to contribute to the development of present teaching methods and eventually to our students' abilities and skills. The researchers suggest the following areas for further research:

- Investigate the difficulties in translating Arabic idioms into English.
- Investigate other samples of students from different levels at the department of English or in other universities. The results of these studies could then be compared.
- Investigating idioms belonging to a certain field or subject area.

- Investigate whether some types of idioms are easier for English students to understand and translate than others, or just investigate difficulties or strategies when translating one type of idioms.
- Investigate students' strategies by testing idioms in context and out of context sentences.

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# **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

### Teacher Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

The present questionnaire aims at gathering data concerning **Students' Strategies in Translating Culture-Specific English idioms into Arabic**. We shall be grateful if you would spare some time to fill in this form with information about your experience in the field of translation.

#### Section One: General Information

**14. Specify the specialty of each degree you obtained in graduation or post-graduation.**

e. Doctorate in

.....

f. Magister in

.....

g. Master in

.....

h. License in

.....

**15. Specify the post-graduation specialty you are currently pursuing, if any?**

.....

**16. How long have you been practising translation (including your studies, if any)?**

..... years

**17. How long have you been teaching translation?**

..... years

#### Section Two: Teaching and Practising Translation and Idiom Translation

**18. How would you define translation?**

d. It is the act of converting a source language text to a target language text in order to convey the intended message in the source language.

e. It is the act of transferring meaning from one language into another

f. Others, please specify:

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

**19. How often do you practise translation?**

- g. Frequently
- h. Sometimes
- i. Occasionally

**20. How do you find the translation of idioms from English to Arabic?**

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neutral
- Difficult
- Very difficult

**21. When translating idioms from English to Arabic,**

**8.1. Which type of equivalence, if any, do you usually struggle to achieve?**

- Lexical equivalence
- Grammatical equivalence
- Textual equivalence
- Pragmatic equivalence
- None of the above

**8.2. Please, justify your choice**

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

**8.3. Do you think that it is possible to preserve and convey the same meaning?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**8.4. Please, explain why?**

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

**22. Which type of meaning should be focused on when translating idioms?**

- Semantic meaning
- Pragmatic meaning
- Both

**Section Three: Students' Idiom Translation Strategies**

**23. Generally speaking, are your students able to translate idioms from English to Arabic?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**24. What makes English idioms difficult for your students to translate into Arabic?**

- Vague use
- Lack of equivalence
- Culture-laden
- Culture-specific
- Others, please

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

**25. How good are your students at translating English culture-specific idioms into Arabic?**

- Excellent
- Above average
- Average

- Below average
- Not good at all

**26. What errors do your students commonly make when translating idiomatic expressions from English to Arabic?**

- Grammatical errors
- Lexical errors
- Pragmatic errors
- Stylistic errors
- Others please,

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

**27. In your opinion, do you think that students should be made aware of both source and target cultures idioms to succeed in translating them?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**28. When your students translate English culture-specific idioms into Arabic, how do they employ the following strategies?**

	Usually appropriately selected and successfully used	Usually appropriately selected, but mistaken	Rarely appropriately selected and successfully used	Rarely appropriately selected, but mistaken	Not used
a) Word for word translation					
b) Using an idiom of similar meaning and form					
c) Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form					
d) Paraphrasing					
e) Omission					
f) Others, please specify:					

..... ..... .....					
-------------------------	--	--	--	--	--

**Section Four: Further Suggestions**

**29. What strategies or techniques would you suggest to remedy for students' errors and difficulties in translating culture-specific idiomatic expressions?**

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

**Thank you for your collaboration**

## Appendix B

### Translation Task

*Read the following texts carefully, and then translate them into Arabic.*

1. We intended it to be a surprise party for Donna, but some girls she works with let the cat out of the bag, so now she knows.

.....  
.....

2. My father earned very little and there were four kids, so we lived from hand to mouth.

.....  
.....

3. When I asked Anne whether she knew who had taken the files from my desk, she started beating around the bush and refused to give me a direct answer.

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

4. The government has no respect for democratic values and wants to push through its agenda by hook or crook.

.....  
.....

5. A: My boss just congratulated me on my report; should I ask him for a pay rise now?

B: yes, go on. Strike while the iron is hot.

.....  
.....

6. You might not win the prize and you have already spent the money. Do not count your chickens before they hatch!

.....

7. Do not give up on your business just because you lost money this month. You have to take the rough with the smooth.

.....  
.....

8. I have been on pins and needles until we heard that your plane had landed safely.

.....  
.....

9. George: why do you think Donald is dishonest?

Ned: all his friends are dishonest. Birds of a feather flock together.

.....  
.....

10. I cannot miss another day of work. That is my bread and butter.

.....  
.....

11. Don't try to pass the buck! It is not my fault, it is yours, and everybody knows it.

.....  
.....

12. A: you did not talk to Tom for years.

B: Tom and I buried the hatchet and we are good friend now.

.....  
.....

13. My brother has become a couch potato since he lost his job. Now all he does is sit in front of the television all day eating pizza.

.....  
.....

## ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد الإستراتيجيات المعتمدة من طرف طلاب السنة الثانية لغة انجليزية عند ترجمة التعابير الاصطلاحية الانجليزية الى اللغة العربية، فهم يواجهون صعوبات في فهم التعابير الاصطلاحية ومع ذلك فإن المشكل يتضخم حين يكون المطلوب نقل معاني التعابير الاصطلاحية إلى لغة أخرى بطريقة صحيحة ومناسبة وليس فقط مجرد فهمها. وتهدف الدراسة أيضا إلى اكتشاف ما إذا كان الطلبة يواجهون أية صعوبات في اختيار الإستراتيجيات المناسبة وتطبيقها بطريقة صحيحة عند ترجمة التعابير الاصطلاحية. وقد أختير 75 طالب من السنة الثانية انجليزية بجامعة الصديق بن يحي، جيل كعينة عشوائية لهذه الدراسة. وتم استعمال استبيان لأساتذة الترجمة بالإضافة الى اختبار لترجمة مجموعة من الجمل التي تحتوي على تعابير اصطلاحية لترجمتها. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن الطلبة بصفة عامة لا يواجهون صعوبات في إدراك وفهم التعابير الاصطلاحية الإنجليزية، بل المشكل يكمن في اختيار وتطبيق الاستراتيجيات المناسبة عند ترجمة هذه التعابير الى اللغة العربية. وتعتبر قلة معرفة الطلبة بالتعابير الاصطلاحية في كل من اللغة الأصلية واللغة الأجنبية عاملا مساهما في قلة معرفتهم بالاستراتيجية المناسبة للترجمة والطريقة الناجحة لتطبيقها. أما فيما يخص الإستراتيجيات المستعملة أثناء الترجمة فتعتبر إعادة الصياغة والترجمة الحرفية من أكثر الاستراتيجيات المستعملة من طرف الطلبة. ومن جهة أخرى، فإن الطلبة نادرا ما يختارون استراتيجيات المصطلح بمصطلح اخر بنفس المعنى و نفس الشكل أو شكل مختلف واستراتيجية الحذف للترجمة بطريقة صحيحة.

## **Résumé**

La présente étude tente d'étudier les stratégies utilisées par les élèves de deuxième année de l'anglais lors de la traduction des idiomes anglais liés à la culture arabe. Ces étudiants éprouvent des difficultés à comprendre le sens des expressions idiomatiques; Cependant, le problème est amplifié lorsque les étudiants sont obligés non seulement de comprendre les significations de ces expressions, mais aussi de rendre leur sens dans une autre langue correctement et de manière appropriée. L'étude vise également à déterminer si les étudiants ont des difficultés à choisir les stratégies appropriées lors de la traduction d'idiomes d'anglais propres à la culture arabe et en appliquant correctement ces stratégies. L'échantillon aléatoire choisi pour cette étude se compose de 75 étudiants de deuxième année au Département d'anglais, Université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel. Les données sont recueillies au moyen d'un questionnaire administré aux enseignants de traduction et d'une tâche de traduction sous forme de phrases contenant des expressions idiomatiques à traduire par l'échantillon d'élèves. Les résultats démontrent que les sujets n'ont généralement pas eu de difficultés à reconnaître et à comprendre les expressions idiomatiques anglaises, mais ils ont généralement montré des lacunes lorsqu'ils avaient à choisir et appliquer les stratégies appropriées pour traduire de ces expressions en arabe. Le manque de sensibilisation des élèves aux stratégies appropriées et à la manière de les appliquer avec succès est attribué, en partie, à l'écart de connaissances sur les idiomes dans la langue maternelle et la langue cible. Pour ce qui est des stratégies, la traduction de mot à mot et les stratégies de reformulation sont les plus utilisées par les étudiants pour traduire les idiomes uniques à la langue anglaise. D'autre part, la traduction basée sur l'idiome par un d'idiome une signification ou forme similaire et celle de l'omission sont rarement sélectionnées et utilisées de manière appropriée.