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> **The Influence of Culture on Arabic/English/Arabic**
>
> **Translation of Idioms and Proverbs**
>
> **Case Study: Third Year Students**

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master Degree

in Applied Language Studies

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Abstract

This research attempts to investigate the problems of translating culturally loaded idioms and proverbs. Cultural differences constitute areas of potential difficulties in Arabic/English/Arabic translation of such fixed expressions. These hindrances arise when one form of behaviour in one culture is virtually non-existent in another, or when the same cultural concept is conceived and interpreted differently by both cultures. This research also considers the degree to which idioms and proverbs' connotations maybe preserved in Arabic/English/Arabic translation, trying to make the students aware of the influence of culture on these fixed expressions and helping them to enhance their performance in the field of intercultural translation. The results obtained encourage translators (translation trainees) to use the cognitive interpretive approach which favors interpretation on the basis of the source culture norms when translating idioms and proverbs. The main aim is to produce versions that express the same significance of the source ones and that sound more or less natural in the target language.

List of Abbreviations

LMD: Licence Master Doctorat

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General Introduction

Statement of the Problem

In fact, translation trainees always come across some perplexing problems and difficulties while carrying out their task due to the incompatibility between the source and the target languages. In this respect, idioms and proverbs represent a real challenge to translation trainees. What is generally noticed in the English Department of Mentouri University in Constantine is that third year LMD[1] students' translations of idioms and proverbs show significant misunderstandings and sometimes total misinterpretations of the cultural messages because of the incorrect usage of words and the inappropriate use of cultural substitutions. In view of that, one may say that the students have weak translation performances with respect to idioms and proverbs.

Consequently, it is frequently observed that there is something to be lost in the target versions; a point that is not transmitted to the target culture, a cultural gap that cannot be bridged by students. Therefore, this research sheds light on the cultural aspects of language as a source of difficulty, in order to raise the awareness of students towards the crucial role of a sufficient knowledge of the cultural patterns of the languages involved in translation (i.e. The source and the target languages) in the success of translating idioms and proverbs, aiming to achieve a native like control of language, whatever the location of this language is in the translation process.

Aims of the Study

The main objective of this research is to enlighten the students and increase their degree of awareness of many concepts that belong to English culture, since it is alien, to their own. More precisely, it intends to highlight the main reasons which hinder the process of translating idioms and proverbs by students. It also tries to suggest some techniques to

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[1] LMD stands for Licence (equivalent to a Bachelor's degree), Master's and doctorate degrees.

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overcome such a difficulty and to produce versions that have the meanings of the source ones and are expressed in the natural from of the receptor language.

Hypothesis

As a major step in the present research, one main research hypothesis is put forward. It turns around the general idea that, the more Arab students of English are aware of and satisfactorily equipped with the English cultural background and pertinent translation techniques, the better and more appropriate their Arabic/English/Arabic translation of idioms and proverbs would be.

Research Questions

The present piece of research aims at addressing the following questions:

1. Why do students' translations of idioms and proverbs express nothing of native speakers' meaning?

2. Why aren't students able even to produce versions that are approximately similar in meaning to the source ones?

3. What are the causes of these deviations?

4. To what strategies do students resort when translating idioms and proverbs?

5. What can be done to enhance the students' ability to understand idioms and proverbs accurately and translate them appropriately?

Methodology

Means of Research

In this work, one research tool will be employed to test the suggested hypothesis: A sample of English and Arabic idioms and proverbs for 3rd years LMD students of English to translate. It will help the researcher to highlight the main difficulties that affect the students' outcomes and hinder their translation process. It will be also good for checking their degree of awareness towards the influence of culture on the translation of idioms and proverbs.

The Choice of the Method

The descriptive approach will be used in the present research. The descriptive approach is a way of exploring and describing real – life situations by providing the information of the elements as they occur. This method will help the researcher to identify problems in the current practice with a view to improve the students' outcomes. The respondents' responses will first be illustrated in the form of percentages and then will be analyzed and commented on by the researcher.

Population and Sampling

A random sample of twenty five third year LMD students at the English Department in Mentouri university of Constantine will be chosen. The main reason for this choice is due to the fact that these students have completed two years of translation training, and hence they already have some basic knowledge with respect to translation. Therefore, they are supposed to be the most suitable population to check their degree of awareness towards culture as a main factor in the success of idioms and proverbs translation.

Structure of the Study

This piece of research is divided into two main sections. A theoretical chapter which includes two parts about the review of related literature and an empirical section which includes one chapter.

The first chapter deals with a synthesised theoretical background. Its first part incorporates an overview of translation and culture. It also expounds on their tight relationship. Its second part tries to give a clear picture of the significant influence of culture on the lexical choices of idioms and proverbs' components and its impact on the translation of such fixed expressions (i.e. the translation of idioms and proverbs).

Chapter two deals with data analysis. It contains a detailed analysis of the students' translations). This section also discusses the problems encountered by third year students when translating idioms and proverbs, at the cultural level of linguistic description. Finally, it

attempts to give some suggestions to overcome the cultural hindrances faced by 3rd year LMD

at the English department when translating the items in the test.

Chapter One

Part One

Translation: An Overview

Introduction

This chapter attempts to provide some definitions with respect to translation and culture and to look at their tight relationship. It also tries to introduce idioms and proverbs as cultural elements of language which represent a real challenge for translators in the field of intercultural translation. An attempt will be made to show how these fixed expressions are deeply immersed and tightly related to their native culture (s).

1.1.   Definition of Translation

Translation, whereby man has overcome the language barrier, is not as clear a concept as it seems to be for a layman for instance. The concept is so wide and can be understood in many different ways. For example, translation maybe thought of as a process or a product, it may be categorised into its subtypes such as: automatic translation, technical translation, subtitling …etc, or it maybe even viewed as a learning strategy, since it is a main branch of applied linguistics that is taught at universities as a module in the field of foreign languages for the purpose of improving the students' proficiencies in a foreign language. The term also sometimes overlaps with interpreting. Whereupon, knowing what translation is, is so complicated and more ambiguous than anyone (non-expert) can think, and its definition represents a real challenge for theorists. However, typically, translation just refers to the transfer of written texts. In this respect, many formal definitions have been offered by theorists mostly dealing from 1960 or earlier each of which is concerned with a particular underlying model. The linguistic aspects of translation have been encapsulated in a large number of definitions, among which the following are the most common.

Translation, according to Munday (2001), is the rendering of an original written text (the source text) in the source language into a written text (the target text) in the target

language. Translation, according to Catford (1964) is the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language. Vermeer (1982) looks at translation as "information about the source text in another language" (cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997: 182). However, as Sager (1994) points out, older definitions of this type centre around the importance of maintaining some kind of linguistic equivalence between the source and the target language. Thus Sager Jacobson's definition of translation is innovative; Jacobson sees translation in semiotic terms as "the interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language" (1994, 121). This definition implies that the translation process is a substitution of messages in one language for entire messages in another language. Similarly, Lawendowski (1978) defines translation as "The transfer of meaning from set of language signs to another set of language signs" (cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997: 182). Accordingly, translation is a two- stage process of decoding and re-encoding linguistic messages.

In the light of the previous definitions, one can notice that translation is based on reproducing new linguistic material (the target text) on the basis of an original linguistic version (the source text) without any external considerations. However, one of the most recent innovations in the field of translation is the significance of 'culture' as a factor that plays a crucial role in the process of translation. Toury's (1985:20) target text oriented definition is a good one to support the previous point. It states that a translation is "taken to be any target – language utterance which is presented or regarded as such within the target culture, on whatever grounds". This approach emphasizes on the paramount importance of the way a target text functions in a specific cultural context. These definitions have shown that translation seems complex and controversial but nonetheless necessary. A typological classification is, therefore, necessary and this is the concern of the following part.

1.2.Types of Translation

As shown above, translation is commonly thought of as a practical activity that aims at rendering texts from one language to another, and is generally viewed as the process of establishing equivalence between the source and the target texts. In this respect, a number of scholars have attempted to explore some of the theoritical aspects of the notion of translation and to make a distinction between its different types.

Following this line of thought, shleiermacher (1838) distinguishes between two types of translation which he calls free and literal translation (cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997:97). The free / literal dichotomy is probably the most frequently encountred in traditional accounts of translation.

On the one hand, literal translation is a concept which has for many centuries been at the heart of the most translation controversies, where it has been either completely defended, or severely attacked and criticized in favour of it rival, free translation . For all that , there is a certain variation in the way this term is applied. It is sometimes understood as including the related notion word for word translation (Shuttlwoth and Cowie, 1997).

A literal translation maybe defined as a translation "made on a lower level than sufficient to convey the content unchanged while observing target language norms" (Barkhudarov, 1969 cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997:95). Catford (1965) states that literal translation takes word for word translation as its starting point, respecting structural and grammatical parallels, and thus the final product may also display group-group or clause-clause equivalence. Therefore, the translator does as if the target reader reads the source text in terms of form. This approach equates translation with the replacement of the linguistic units of the source text with equivalent target units without any consideration of such factors as context and cultural connotation .

As a translation strategy (Hocket, 1945:313) claims that "a literal translation cleary has its uses; a fairy literal approach is, for example generally appropriate for translating many

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types of technical texts, while in a different context the technique can also provide language learners with useful insights into target language structues". In literary translation, too, the approach has its fervent defenders. However, amongst modern literary translators there are few who would consider literal translation to be a suitable vehicle for their work. The founders of this approach make of form their main concern so that the translation remains as close to source text as possible. Concerning Biblical translation and other sacred text, "Only literal translation can be considered faithful" (Nida and Taber, 1983:203) . Although literal translation has its utility, in Casagrande's opinion, it may lead to a kind of false translation which "can be misleading" (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997:185).

In addition, literal translation's near-impossibility of reproducing target texts' meanings which are implicity present in the source texts maybe added as a shortcoming. Furthermore, it may lead to a complete distortion of the message of the original (Chukovsky, 1984). This notion (literal translation) has been forlmlized by Nida (1964) as formal equivalence which refers to a target text item which represents the closest decontextualized counterpart to a word or a phrase in the source language, while Vinay and Derbelnet (1995) categorize it as a type of direct translation listing it as one of the seven translation procedures (cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997).

On the other hand, free translation is a type of translation which gives more importance to meaning rather than form, and aims at producing a naturally reading target text. It is also known as sense for sense translation (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997). It maybe defined as a translation"made on a level higher than is necessary to convey the content unchanged while observing target language norms" (Barkhudarov, 1969 cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997:62). Hence it is a translation above word or sentence level. It pays close attention to the need to make explicit for target readers information which, for example, was generally available to the source audience and thus only implicitly contained in the source text (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997).

This approach is similar to that of dynamic equivalence which refers to the quality that characterizes a translation in which " the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the response of receptor is essentially like that of the originaly receptors" (Nida and Taber, 1982:200). The approach advocated by Nida (1982) is based on the importance of preserving the effect of the original. Therfore, the translator does as if s/he originally produced the text in the target language whereby the degree of emotiveness of the target receptors is similar to that of the source readership. Furthermore, Nida (1964:159) sees that a free translation's main concern is "relating the receptor to modes of behaviour relevant within the context of his own culture". Accordingly, the role of the translator is by no means understimated for s/he is the one who will decipher the source text codes and make the cultural hidden meaning visible to the target readers in a way that is totally acceptable and natural for them This maybe achieved by offering the most appropriate cultural substitutions for obscure source text items.

After having attempted to offer some definitions to literal and free translation, one may say that the two approches may be viewed in a positive way. The question which is worth asking here is not which translation is the most accurate or ' the only correct ' as referred to by George Mounin, but rather which one is the most appropriate. In this sense, appropriateness maybe governed by a set of factors such as the type of the text being translted, the purpose of the translation, the target audience and the circumstances of the translators. Hence translation should be a result of a thorough study of all these pertinent factors. Therefore, the shape of the target text should above all be determined by the function it intends to fulfil in the target context (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997). On the basis of the aforementioned idea, translators should direct their translation with respect to the purpose for which the target text is intended regardless whether or not the strategies they use are considered standard to precede in a particular translation context. In short, when producing a target text *Circumstances alter cases*. Accordingly, "a target text is seen as an information

offer which the translator must interpret by selecting those features which most closely correspond to the requirements of the target situation"(Shuttleworth, 1997: 156). Hence the needs of recipient imply which strategy is the most appropriate to adopt in a given situation (Vermeer, 1985 cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997).

Actually, translation with full equivalence is hardly achievable. This can be justified by the fact that despite considerable efforts made by theorists and many attempts across the centuries "there can never be no proof rules for doing a ranslation or precise ways of measuring its succes. In every translation something must be lost" (Cook, 2003:56). One cannot attain simultaneously the equal sound, the same sequence of words, and the natural form of the phrase and convey the intended message. It is a work on the boundaries of possibility. One cannot always make, in Hymes words, the translation at once accurate feasible and appropriate (Cook, 2003). A chief reason for this is stated by Nida as follows: "Since no two languages are identical, either in the meaning given to corresponding symbols or in ways in which symbols are arranged in phrases or sentences, it stands to reason that there can be no absolute correspondence between languages. Hence there can be no fully exact translations" (1964:156).

When it comes to assessment, translation inevitably attracts criticism, and the evaluations will vary according to the needs of recipient (s) which are the pillars of assessment. The more the translation conforms to the needs of the recipient, the more it would be thought of as good and plausible. For instance, a rough and ready translation that is not carefully made but good enough for a particular situation and suits the needs of a particular kind of readership may be assessed as good and successful. Or a very nice adaptation which conserves the meaning but expresses it in the natural form of language in a magnificent way may be judged (deemed) as non-faithful by some and creative by others.

Some of the difficulties that hinder the translation process in a significant way maybe accounted for by factors like culture and its impact on translation to which the following part

is devoted. The next subtitle attempts to offer some definitions (information) with respect to culture since it is a main variable in the present research theme.

1.3. Definition of Culture

Actually, looking at culture as a notion raises some fundamental issues related to definition. The problem here is posed by the fact that there is no general consensus among scholars about one definition of culture. Kroeber and kluckhohn (1963) state that some sociologists and anthropologists deem the term so vague and refrain from using it in scientific discourse. Although, the term culture is widely used in other types of discourse, but usually without defining it probably as a result of its complex nature that led to the conflict of definition between different theorists. Because one cannot achieve the synthesis of the large number of definitions available; the following is a humble attempt to give at least a clear image of what is going on in this realm.

As a matter of fact, pioneering anthropologists looked for a term that covers the sum of human customs and they agreed upon the term "culture". They all agree that culture is the totality of experience which is socially transmitted, or the sum of behaviours acquired through social learning (Poirier, 1968). Till now things seem to be good, but the problem of defining culture lies in deciding which aspects of social experience and which aspects of human behaviour are worth including in a clear cut definition of culture (Atamna, 2008). The following are a few of the most quoted definitions which seem to be essential to deal within the present research. Herskovits (1949) defines culture as that part of the environment that is made by man (cited in Poirier, 1968). He believes that man is the creator of culture and history (Poirier, 1968). Newmark (1988) defines culture as the way of life and its manifestations peculiar to a society. Bloch (1991) defines culture as what needs to be known to operate efficiently in a specific environment. Rohner (1984) is more specific than Newmark and Bloch and describes culture in a non-behaviourist way as a system of signs that shape one's perception. He stresses the way people conceive their behaviour and claims that:

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1- Culture is systematic

2- Culture is a way of representing one's world through thinking.

Consequently, the cultural environment is the dominant force in shaping one's behaviour (Shaules, 2001). Furthermore, Lado (1975:111) sees culture as "a system of patterned behaviour". To Bennett (1968) culture is the reflection of the total behaviour of a society. Working along similar lines, Linton (1940) agrees with Lado and considers culture as the sum of knowledge, attitudes and habitual models, people of a particular society generally have (cited in Poirier, 1968).

Furthermore, Sapir (1949:79) notes that "culture is technically used by the ethnologists and culture historians to embody any socially inherited element in the life of man, material and spiritual". Accordingly, culture refers to all the phenomena manifested by people such as behaviours, clothes, buildings, traditions, beliefs …etc, and that are not genetically inherited but handed down within a particular society. Culture then, is a cumulative experience which includes knowledge, morals, beliefs, art, low, traditions and any habits acquired by a group of people in a society (Tylor, 1871 cited in Megherbi, 1986).

Having attempted to define culture, what one can then say is that the previous definitions are all just distinct ways of considering the same thing. For instance, if one compares culture to a cube, the aforementioned definitions would represent nothing but its different square sides painted with various colours.

Hofstede (1980) states that human nature consists of the basic parts of mental programming such as the ability to feel anger, love, joy, sadness, observation of the environment and the ability to communicate those observations to others. The way one expresses these abilities is governed by one's culture. Language is a means of communication that is influenced by cultural factors (Ito and Nakakoji, 1960). Language is the mirror that reflects the customs, interests, values and other cultural aspect of a community. The vocabulary of a language for example shows clearly the different aspects of culture members

of a group share in a particular setting either social, environmental, religious,…etc. Thus, culture needs to be described and expressed through language. As far as the present thesis is concerned, the relationship between language and culture needs closer examination

1.4. Language and Culture

As mentioned above language and culture are perceived as two closely related entities. In this respect, F.de Saussure and A. Meillet have always considered language as a social fact and a main part of culture. Therefore, one of the defining characteristics of culture is its language or languages. Poirier (1968) states that language is the privileged architecture through which thought informs in a particular way certain manners of human experience. He also states that the language a group of people penetrates as a linguistic community was developed in the womb of their society. For Robins (1959:60), "A language primarily operates in the matrix of the society of the speech community".

On the basis of what has been said, language is a product of culture which reflects its symbolic systems, and hence people rely on language to express what concerns their society. Language then, is not distinct from other systems that are constituents of culture. It is considered as part of a whole, and is significantly tied to this whole, in a sense it manifests, by nature and by a set of symbolic systems (meanings), the characteristic features of a culture (Poirier, 1968) (translated author).

Concerning translation, there are still voices that argue that translation is primarily a language matter not a cultural one and that it is a pure linguistic activity. In response to such voices Sapir (1949: 72) claims that "language is a guide to social facts " and that human beings are slaves of the language that has become the medium of expression for their society (Bassnett, 2002). Sapir (1949) states that "experience is largely determined by the language habits of a community and each separate structure represents a separate reality".

Accordingly, culture is a factor to be reckoned with in the process of translation. Of course, translators have to focus on language since translation is, after all, about transferring a

text from one language to another but it aims, above all, at communicating cultural messages. Hence, separating language from culture is like the old debate about which one comes first, the chicken or the egg. Bassnett illustrates this point " No language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture, and no culture can exist which does not have at its centre, the structure of natural language" (2002:22). This is a reminder of Plato's analogy of the body and spirit in which culture is the spirit within the body of language, and it is their union that makes the "continuation of life energy" (Bassnett, 2002:22). One can live neither with a cold dead body only nor with an invisible warm spirit. Translation is about language, but translation is also about culture for both are inseparable.

As a system of interrelated beliefs, values and cognitive environment which govern the shared basis of behaviour, culture happens to be the greatest barrier to translation success inasmuch as the lack of common socio-cultural patterns of a language leads to gibberish and thereby causes communication to fail. This confirms the famous claim of Edward T. Hall and Mildred Reed Hall which runs as follows:" The single greatest barrier to translation success is the one erected by culture".

As both language and culture are manifestations of a specific mentality, each culture acts as a frame within which external signs of reality are interpreted. Consequently, translation is an essential means of which people can get access to cultures of other nations. Translation therefore deals with the rendering of concepts which belong to one culture and are communicated by its language system into another one. In this process, "translators are faced with an alien culture that requires that its message be conveyed in anything but an alien way" (Komissarov, 1985:128). That culture expresses its idiosyncrasies in a way that is "culture-bound"; cultural words, proverbs and idiomatic expressions, whose origin and use are intrinsically and uniquely bound to the concerned culture (Komissarov, 1985).

According to Komissarov (1985) cultural factors in translation are so clear to be included within the linguistic theory of translation which must encompass the cultural aspect.

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This is the level of underlying core values, habitual patterns of thought, and certain assumptions about human nature and society which the translator as 'culture mediator' should be prepared to encounter. Therefore, the present research intends to focus on increasing cultural awareness which leads to appropriate meaning inference and successful re-encoding, ultimately resulting in trust.

Part Two: Translation of Idioms and Proverbs

1.5. Idioms and Proverbs

Idioms and proverbs are expressions which are built up in the course of linguistic history and culture. This subsection attempts to throw some light on these issues that are deemed to be the spice of language.

1.5.1. Idioms

An idiom is a group of words which, as a whole, has a different meaning from that of the individual items out of which it is composed. That is, the meaning of an idiomatic expression is not the sum total of its constituent parts taken together. A good example is the English expression "kick the bucket". A person knowing only the meaning of the words "kick" and bucket" would be unable to deduce the real meaning of the whole expression, namely to die. Although it can refer literally to the act of striking a specific bucket, native speakers rarely use this idiom that way. Accordingly, an idiom is learnt and used as a single unit of language. It should not be analyzed into its constituent elements. Idioms are sometimes referred as "fixed expressions" because in many cases users should not make linguistic changes such as adding or dropping words, replacing a word with another, or changing the order of words (Cowie and Makin, 1975). The following are examples from Arabic and English:

English Idioms	Arab Idioms
1- To chase rainbows	1 ـ غاية المرام
2- skeleton in the cupboard	2 ـ قلبا و قالبا
3- To cook the books	3 ــ يحالفه الحظ
4- Above / beyond the salt	4- يكرم مثواه
5- In the back of beyond	5 ــ رؤوس الفتنة
6 To get off one's back	6- قلب شفتيه
7- thin / thick skinned	7 ــ رؤوس الفتنة
8- Make a monkey out of somebody	8 ــ ندى الكف
9- Donkey's years	9 ــ قدح زناد فكره
10- Hit the bottle	10 ــ يلم شعت كذا

1.5.2. Proverbs

On the other hand, a proverb (from Latin *proverbium*) is a simple and concrete saying popularly known and repeated which expresses a truth based on common sense or the practical experience of humanity. Proverbs are used for a variety of purposes by speakers. Sometimes they are used as a way of saying something gently or in a veiled way. Other times, they are used to carry more weight in a discussion; a weak person is able to enlist the tradition of the ancestors to support his position (Witting, 1993). Proverbs can also be used simply to make a conversation/discussion livelier. In many parts of the world, the use of proverbs is associated with good orators.

A proverb that describes a basic rule of conduct may also be known as a maxim and if it is distinguished by particularly good wording, it may be known as an aphorism (Larousse, 1997) (translated author). Proverbs are often borrowed from similar languages and cultures and sometimes come down to the present through more than one language. Almost every

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culture has proverbs of its own. Most proverbs are based on metaphors. Another typical feature of proverbs is that they characteristically short (average: seven words) and their authors are generally unknown (otherwise they would be quotations). Proverbs are found in many parts of the world, but some areas seem to have richer stores of proverbs than others. English and Arab cultures are very rich with such fixed expressions. The following are some examples from each.

English Proverbs	**Arab Proverbs**
1- All is fair in love and war.	1- المكثار كحاطب الليل .
2- When the cat is away, the mice will play.	2 – يد الله مع الجماعة.
3- Every seed knows its time.	3- أخفق حالب التيس .
4- Good wine needs no bush.	4- من صرع الحق صرعه.
5- Forbidden fruit is the sweetest.	5 – ليست النائحة الثكلى مثل المستأجرة.
6-He who boasts of his own knowledge. proclaims his ignorance.	6 – آفة المروءة خلف الوعد.
7- Full of courtesy, full of craft.	7 – كل نفس بما كسبت رهينة.

1.6. Translation of Idioms and Proverbs

When it comes to the translation of idioms and proverbs which, of course, are deeply rooted in the structure of language and are deeply immersed in the culture of particular people, they are part of the cultural elements of language that cause a serious difficulty in translation.

The translation of idioms and proverbs has been even treated as part of the more general problem of 'untranslatability' (Mendelblit, 1955). This trend builds on the fact that idioms and proverbs in general are associated with indirectness, which in turn contributes to the difficulty of translation. In this respect, Al Ali (2004) states that idioms and proverbs

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maybe defined as certain fixed expressions which stretch their semantic values beyond their implicit areas of meaning. Hence they don't lead directly to the intended meaning. Sometimes, even native speakers are not always able to comprehend the figurative meaning of such expressions in their own language (Al Ali, 2004).

However, some theorists find translating idioms and proverbs no problem and believe firmly in the word-for-word method (Kloepfer and Reiss seem to be representatives for this view). In this regard, it seems a bit conceited to maintain that translating a phenomenon held to be so exceptional represents no challenge at all, and can be done by a simple word-for-word rendition. Nevertheless, the view that idioms and proverbs are untranslatable also seems a bit too extremist. It seems apparent that the solution must lie somewhere in between the two opposed views and the cognitive interpretive approach seems to be helpful (Dagust, 1976).

Idioms and proverbs can be said to be similar as they both involve the figurative use of language and are tightly related to human cognition. In most cases, idioms and proverbs constitute an area of great unpredictability for the translator. It is an area of language which McEldwny (1982:15) calls "an abstract and more sophisticated area language".

Regardless of their popularity and mechanism of operation, idioms and proverbs are linguistic devices which exist in all human languages. They are a type of expressions which exhibit some kind of semantic and logical violation of the referential components of their lexical constituents. Thus they are studied as instances of figurative (as opposite to literal) language where words gain extra features over their referential meanings. Therefore, the meaning of any of these constituents cannot be predicted from their referential meanings.

Unfortunately translators have to suffer twice when they approach the proverbial and idiomatic expressions. First, they have to work out their figurative meaning intra-lingally (i.e. in the language in which these expressions are recorded) since they are picturesque representations of the real world that are mapped by the source language codes. Second, they have to find equivalent meaning and similar function to these expressions in the target

language for they have to be emotively coloured by the native form of their language (they refers to target versions). Overcoming such a difficulty requires considerable efforts on the part of translators, for s/he is the ones who decode the source language messages and analyse their meanings, and they are the ones who re-encode them into presumably equivalent target language messages. Therefore , translators are supposed to be well aware of the techniques of translation so that s/he can ensure proper transmission of idiomatic expressions and proverbs to the target language readership with reference to the cultural context in a particular setting (Baker, 1992). Translators involved have better to be well aware of English culture so that they can render successfully the English expressions into Arabic and vice versa

1.7. Cultural Conceptualization of Idioms and Proverbs

Idioms and proverbs are influenced by culture in an important way which makes the task of translators more difficult, especially when the languages involved in translation are remote culturally like Arabic and English.

This subsection tackles the issue of how idioms and proverbs are cultural elements. It also illustrates how idiomatic and proverbial choices available to a user are filtered by the value and belief systems prevailing in the cultural community of the source language (expressions).

In fact, the Arabic cultural background is quite different from the English one. The former is based on Islamic religion and Arab desert "Bedouin" environment, whereas the latter is based on Greek and Roman heritage, Christianity and its cold weather. These cultural difference between the two languages resulted in major differences between expressions like idioms and proverbs in both languages (Nadjib, 2001).

With respect to the aforementioned idea, Lakoff and Johnson (1980:12) state that "a culture may be thought of as providing among other things, a pool of available idioms and proverbs (…) for making sense of reality"; "to live by idioms and proverbs (…) is to have your reality structured by those expressions and to base your perceptions and actions upon

that structuring of reality" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:12). This is related to the fact that people of a given culture use language to reflect their attitudes towards the world in general and the life of the community where they live in particular. Hence the translator has to bear in mind the fact that s/he has to take into account culture, beliefs and values especially between culturally distinct languages such as Arabic and English. In other words, since the world's complexities are viewed and classified differently by various cultures; translations from one language to another often entail serious hindrances. This difficulty would increase a lot when translating between distant cultures where all traditions, customs, life conditions, symbols and methods of experience representations are different.

In the light of what has been mentioned above, the use of symbols is significantly and strongly tied to the connotative and denotative meaning of idioms and proverbs. Dagut (1976:32) claims that "the inherent difficulty of translating idioms and proverbs is the diversity of culture conceptualization of even identical objects or words in both communities whose languages are involved in translation".

In this regard, the animal field provides numerous examples of conflict. Suppose one comes across the English term *owl* in any idiomatic or proverbial expression which is to be translated into Arabic or the opposite. The term *owl* refers to a bird. The difficulty here lies in the fact that, in English, it stands for or carries a positive connotation (wisdom and grace) but in Arabic an "owl" is an omen of doom and gloom. It is their main symbol of pessimism and has other negative associations. The Arabic **e**xpression لا يبكي الطلو في الليل بوما تكن لا, when approached literally into English, it would be nonsensical since the owl for them is sacred. It is the symbol of wisdom; it always plays the role of a teacher or a judge in cartoons, while the Arabic expression means "Don't be pessimist as an owl". However, when the English refers to someone as owlish, this means that s/he is looking as an owl, especially because s/he is wearing round glasses, and therefore seeming serious and intelligent. The Arabs have plenty of expressions which show that this bird brings bad luck and calamity such as:

لو كان في اليوم خير ما فات الصياد and others.

A dog is a contemptible animal and a derogatory term in Arabic, and though it is not altogether devoid of an abusive sense in English as in 'dirty god', it is still regarded as a symbol of faithfulness and man's best friend. The expression *every dog has its day* may have in Arabic the opposite meaning of the English version which means 'everyone has a chance, good luck or success at some point in their life'. 'not have a dog's chance' might be a favourable expression in Arabic. Absolutely, no one of the Arabs wishes to have a dog's luck. However, this is the wish of all the English since someone who has not a dog's chance, has no chance at all.

Parts of the human body may be another area of the use of symbols which might be helpful in the present research. For instance, the Arabic expression في كبد السماء means literally *in the liver of the sky*. It is interesting that in Arabic, the word liver symbolizes strong feelings, especially of endearment. It is common to talk of one's child as كبدي literally: *my liver*. This contrasts sharply with English where the term liver is associated with bile and bitterness and where someone who is liverish is peevish and gloomy (Menacer, 1998). The transfer of such fixed expressions is beyond any literal attempt and the use of a bilingual dictionary might not be helpful at all because a direct rendition which is not based on analysis and interpretation with reference to the cultural context appears unnatural and may lead to distortion of the message.

Furthermore, values and beliefs are aspects of culture that play a significant role in the translation of idioms and proverbs. The way different peoples perceive some concepts depends on the form of things they have in mind, on their models of perceiving and interpreting them which are shaped by their native culture. The complexity of translation here lies in the fact that some idiomatic and proverbial expressions may contain terms which are acceptable for one group, but considered totally strange and mysterious to another.

For instance, in the Muslim Arab society, it is acceptable for a man to marry up to four

wives if he treats them equally and fairly, whereas, in the Christian English world polygamy is prohibited. Even concepts which seem to be identical and acceptable for both cultures maybe striking in this respect. Neighbourhood for instance, is approximately sacred for the Arabs. This can be justified by the large number of proverbial expressions which illustrates that point such as:

ما زال جبريل يوصيني بالجار حتى ظننت أنه سيورثه

ما عز من أذل جيرانه

الجار قبل الدار

and others. Whereas the English value neighbourhood in a different way, and this kind of expressions maybe considered exaggerated and odd. The following dialogue may illustrate that point: (Storti, 1994 cited in Atamna, 2008:40)

Helga: I'm glad you could come by.

Tony: Thanks, nice place you've got.

Helga: Let's sit here on the balcony. Can I get you something?

Tony: I'll take some juice if you've got it. Say, who' that guy in the blue Volkswagen?

Helga: Sorry. I don't know his name.

Tony: I thought you said he was your neighbour.

Helga: He is.

The English and the Arabs also vary in their perception of control over the environment. The English feel they can control the environment and are in charge of their own destiny. Alternatively, at the opposite of the spectrum, the Arabs with their faith in Allah and *spirit of tawkil* i.e. *reliance on God* feel that destiny has control over them. The English in their language tend to bear responsibility for everything that happens in and around them. Such English phrases as *Don't just stand there, do something, Where there is a will there is a way* … etc. are examples of a control orientation. Whereas in Arabic there is resignation to God and God is used as a "shield" protector and controller of everything. The following are

examples to illustrate:

<div dir="rtl">

قدر الله و ما شاء فعل

لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله

توكلنا على الله

حسبنا الهي و نعم الوكيل

قل لن يصيبنا إلا ما كتب الله لنا

</div>

Another important cultural aspect which influences idioms and proverbs and hinders the process of their translation is the environment. In this respect, Chitoran (1973) claims that the differences in the environment and climate among various communities may be extremely significant in the way of mapping reality. For instance, the Arabic proverbial expression خبر يثلج الصدر is rendered literally as *News that freezes the chest.* In fact, it is happy news for the Arabs which is not the case for the English. The equivalent English ecological expression is *It warms my heart to ...* The English expressions which are associated with climatic conditions and have positive meaning are usually associated with warmth rather than cold such as: *He was given a warm welcome* and *warm colours* (that are colours creating comfortable feeling or atmosphere), while cold is always associated with negative connotations such as:

1- To have / to give cold feet = to be / to make afraid

2- Throw cold water on something = to be discouraging and not enthusiastic about something

3- Cold hearted = not showing love or sympathy for other people

4- To give somebody the cold shoulder = to treat somebody in an unfriendly way

The environment where one lives has its main influence on such expressions since it is made up of things and one is constantly confronted with them and obliged to communicate about them. Arabic for instance has a variety of names for dates, horses, winds …etc. English, on the other hand, has a variety of linguistic signs associated with the sea as English–speaking people are continuously exposed to their environment. The Arabs have a lot of proverbial and

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idiomatic expression that are associated with their geographical places and Bedouin environment such as:

عرج الجمل من شفته كل الطرق تؤدي إلى الطاحون , في أحضان الصحراء ,أسمع جعجعة و لا أرى طحنا

أهل مكة أدرى بشعابها , جاؤوا على بكرة أبيهم, and others.

The same thing in English, there are expressions associated with pertinent geographical places such as: *Don't carry coals to Newcastle, In Rome do as the Romans do…*etc. All these expression when processed literally into English or Arabic maybe less transparent, and if they conveyed the meaning clearly, it would be less emotive to the target readership. For instance, في أحضان الصحراء means literally *in the bosom of desert*, whereas English might say *in the heart of desert*. This Arabic idiom embodies a sense of embrace and welcome within the desert rather than the sense of hostility and hardship often associated with desert by those unfamiliar with such region.

Apart from what is seen, language can lack the concept itself. In every language there are culture-bound terms and expressions which represent specific not general features peculiar to the culture of this language. The Arabs do not understand what baby/bridal shower, garage sale, Amish country, harvest festival or thanks giving mean because they lack the concepts in their environmental experience. On the other hand, العدة , التبرج, قطيعة الأرحام, السحور,الخلوة ,العقيقة are incomprehensible concepts for the English because they do not exist in their own culture and are considered totally strange.

Concerning culture bound expressions; the following example might be helpful: خمسة في عين الحسود literally five in the eye of the envious. Five for the Arabs represents the five fingers of the hand; each finger symbolizes one of the verses 'ayat'of 'Surat Al Falak' (from the Holy Koran), combining a manual rite which is deemed to keep evil and envy away, whereas the English use the expression *to touch the wood* when they mention some way in which they were lucky in the past, to avoid bad luck and the others' envy. The English believe that the act of touching the wood keeps bad lack and envy away. Such expressions and others

associated with culture bound terms are generally left out in translation because of their alien nature or replaced by other items that have approximately the same significance in the target culture if available (Menacere, 1992). Another problematic cultural difference which affects idioms and proverbs is the description of certain rituals and traditions. For instance, rainmaking rituals for the Arabs which are deeply rooted in religion and involve a special prayer known as صلاة الاستسقاء and is commonly held after long periods of drought. Such a phenomenon is unlikely to happen in the English environment. The hindrance in translating this kind of words and expressions is due to lexical gaps resulting from the cultural differences between the two languages. Winter (1964) argues for that stating that such expressions whose form and meaning are interwoven are approximately impossible to translate. This could arise from untranslatability of their context, that is, life patterns expressed in the source language version could be completely alien to the target readers.

Another category of idiomatic and proverbial expressions which represent a real difficulty for translators is expressions that are associated with heroes and/or specific incidents either real or mythical. These expressions have a particular origin in their original culture and a specific situation where to mention. The connotations of such expressions are wrapped up with the folklore of their native culture. Hence their meaning is opaque and deeply immersed in the history and stories of a particular people. There are plenty of examples to illustrate. For example, the English refer to someone who is young and attractive as *Adonis*. This expression stems from the name of the handsome young man in Ancient Greek myths, who was loved by both Aphrodite and Persephone. He was killed by a wild boar but Zeus ordered him that he should spend the winter months in the underworld with Persephone and the summer months with Aphrodite. The Arabs refer to someone who is handsome as *angel*. This expression stems its origin from the story of Josef son of Jacob peace of Allah be upon them which is mentioned in the holy Koran. When a group of ladies saw Josef peace of Allah be upon him who was exceedingly beautiful, they said that he was

not a human being but an angel. The following are expressions from Arabic and English:

جزاء سنمار ,يداك اوكتا و فوك نفخ ,اكذب من مسيلمة , أشأم من البسوس , اطمع من أشعب.

To have a ship on one's shoulders, Saved by the bell, Raining cats and dogs (mythical) …etc. The difficulty in translating such expressions lies in the ignorance of the historical background of the target language. The translator who attempts to translate this type of expressions needs to be quipped with at least some cultural clues to infer their meaning and/or to translate them appropriately.

Furthermore, religious affiliations affect the lexical choice of some idioms and proverbs' constituent parts in a fundamental way, especially in Arabic which has plenty of proverbial and idiomatic expressions that are associated with God and religion. (Reference to God and religion is much more common in Arabic than English). As is shown in the following examples, English examples and their Arabic counterpart expressions are related to the same conceptual domain. The religion or the ethical system in the target language has led to major differences in lexical choices of their constituent parts. Hence literal translation failed in achieving equivalence.

To kick the bucket is an English idiom which refers literally to the act of striking a specific bucket. This interpretation reflects a completely wrong connotation of the idiom. Its meaning is to die. The Arabic equivalent is استأثر الله به. *Every cloud has a silver lining* is an English proverbial expression whose Arabic equivalent is إن مع العسر يسرا which is more explicit than the source version and means *verily, with every difficulty there is a relief*. The last example is the English expression *Many hands make a light work*. Its Arabic equivalent is يد الله مع الجماعة, literally, *hand of Allah is with the group*.

In the three above examples, the only reasonable justification for this variation in the use of idiomatic and proverbial expressions is the fact that the users of each language map the particular conceptual domain of their own world differently. That is to say, the Arabic translation is quite consonant with those of Islamic beliefs because the equivalent Arabic

translation either associated with God as in the first example, or a verse from the Holy Koran as it is the case in the second example, which is the sixth verse of Surat Al Inshirah, or a one of the sayings referred to Prophet Muhammad peace of Allah be upon him as in the third example.

To conclude, it is absolutely clear that the way languages convey meaning through idioms and proverbs is tightly related to their cultures. Therefore, idioms and proverbs are conceptual phenomena that are mentally mapped according to the native culture norms and are expressed in the source language signs.

Thus one cannot ignore the crucial role of culture in the process of conceptualization and symbolization of such fixed expressions which figure human philosophical insights, logic, wisdom and instructions in ways which reinforce the conventional images and attitudes of their own culture. Accordingly, the cultural aspects of language play a significant role in translating idioms and proverbs. In this respect, (Daugust, 1976:28) states that "attempts of mere rendering or mere linguistic meaning transference of idiomatic and proverbial expressions from one language to another are deemed to result a bad product". In the same line but more precisely, Marzocchi (1999: 3) claims that

"Idioms and proverbs represent denominations of objects, concepts, typical phenomena of a given geographical place, of material life or of social-historical peculiarities of some people (…), that for this reason carry a national, local or historical color; these expressions do not have exact matches in other languages and a linguistic rendition is by no means helpful"

Conclusion

In summary, translation, whereby man gets access to other cultures, is not impossible since this human activity has been practiced between different languages of the world since ancient times. By contrast, it is not a smooth and straightforward activity that can be easily carried out, especially with the type of expressions dealt with in the present research. Translators have always come across some perplexing cultural problems and difficulties when dealing with these obscure areas of language. Therefore, translators are the center around whom the whole process revolves. Their knowledge, experience and ideology play a major role in carrying out this task which demands talents, capacities on their part and awareness of both cultures. This is believed to be an essential prerequisite for conquering the cultural hindrances and achieving successful renditions of idioms and proverbs.

<center>**Chapter Two**</center>

<center>**Exploration of the Respondents' Translation**</center>

Introduction

This chapter aims at investigating the nature and the scope of the problems that third year LMD students in the English Department at University of Constantine encountered in translating English idioms and proverbs into Arabic and vice versa. An attempt will be made to describe and analyze the strategies involved in the Arabic/English/Arabic translation of idioms and proverbs.

2.1. Methodology

2.1.1. Data Elicitation Technique

Data were elicited through a translation task especially designed for the purpose of this study. The translation task comprises 20 Arab English idioms and proverbs ten each. The expressions were chosen according to some of the subdivisions of the theoretical part. Time constraints and the limited number of pages didn't allow the number of idioms and proverbs to cover all the subdivisions (types of idiomatic and proverbial expressions mentioned in the 1st chapter of the present thesis).

The task items were selected from different sources. Fifty items were collected and given to two teachers involved in teaching linguistics and translation in the department. The two teachers were requested to select the most suitable 20 proverbial and idiomatic expressions to be used in the present research. Upon completion of the test, the researcher had some informal discussions with the respondents. A number of issues with respect to the task items and the process of translation were raised.

2.1.2. Analysis Procedure

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. The respondents' translations (errors) were analyzed qualitatively, whereas the frequencies of each strategy the informants resorted to were calculated quantitatively. The respondent's responses were

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evaluated on the basis of a model answer suggested by two veteran translation teachers at the English Department at Mentouri University in Constantine.

2.1.3. Participants

The respondents were 25 students reading for a BA degree in English at Mentouri University in Constantine. At the time the students were requested to translate the assigned expressions (May 2010), they had already completed two years of translation training, both practical and theoretical. The respondents were given enough time to complete the task. They were allowed to freely use all types of reference books during the test.

Actually, the students were in a quandary about how to handle the translation of such fixed expressions. When asked, during the informal interviews, about the nature of the expressions they were dealing with, some of the students thought that all the English items were proverbs and the others were not able to guess, and everyone   recognized that the test was not a task they might sail through. One of the students (the teacher told me about him in his own words "He is brilliant and cultivated; he always gets the best marks 17, 18) told me that even if they (the speaker and his classmates) racked their minds they could not guess the meaning of the majority of English expressions, and if they were lucky in inferring the connotations of all the Arab ones, they could not produce versions in the natural form of English. He added that they neither had the entire cultural clues with respect to the task items nor were they equipped with all techniques that might be helpful in achieving a successful rendition of such fixed expressions.

2.1.4. Data Analysis and Results

At the very outset, two teachers who have a long experience in teaching translation prepared a model answer for all the items in the translation task. All possible translations were identified and agreed upon by the two teachers before the responses of the respondents were evaluated. Five of the students' papers were not taken into consideration because the respondents handed them in without answering most of the items, or because it was noticed

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that they did not take the whole task seriously.

Prior to the analysis of the respondents' translations, these were categorized according to the subdivisions of proverbs and idiomatic expressions made in the theoretical chapter.

2.1.4.1. Animals Bound Idioms and Proverbs

The first group includes idioms and proverbs associated with animals. This kind of expressions poses major difficulties for translators.

2.1.4.1.1. The Swan Song

The English idiom *The swan song* was translated literally by 65% of the students as:

<div dir="rtl">

غناء الإوزة

أغنية البجعة

أغنية التم

</div>

and misinterpreted by 25% as:

<div dir="rtl">

العزف على الوتر الحساس

غناؤه سيء كالبجعة

</div>

15% of the respondents did not make any attempt either to translate literally or to interpret. The literal translations are nonsensical and express nothing specific in Arabic. The students even confused the swan with the goose and the pelican. This maybe due to the fact that they are not exposed to such a bird that lives in cold regions in their environment. The students' attempts to interpret were misleading and describe nothing of the actual meaning of the idiom.

The idiomatic expression refers to a final gesture or performance given before dying. This idiom derived from a Roman legend (folktale) which states that though its being mute the rest of its life, the swan sings once beautifully and mournfully, its own funeral song, just before it dies. The legend is said to be false as scientific observation has shown that a dying swan does not sing. Nevertheless, mythical imagery proved to be more attractive and more

influential on language than scientific reality. By extension *swan song* has become an idiom referring to a final theatrical or dramatic appearance, or any final work or accomplishment. It generally carries the connotation that the performer is aware that this is the last performance of his or her lifetime and is expending everything in one magnificent final effort. The idiom has no functional equivalent in Arabic and every writer uses his/her own words to express the intended meaning of the idiom. The translation suggested in the model answer is:

<div dir="rtl">

و قد أبدع في آخر عمل له

</div>

The respondents failed completely in inferring the connotation of this pure cultural element (expression) because they neither share the experience (in their culture) with the original people nor are they aware of the English socio-cultural patterns (mythology and folklore that govern the connotation of the expression and the symbol of the animal in this example) of the English language that allows them to decipher the cultural message.

2.1.4.1.2. أحكى من قرد

The Arab proverb أحكى من قرد was rendered literally by 70% of students (14/20) as *More talkative than a monkey, He narrates more than a monkey* and 25% of the students (5/20) left out the expression without translation. Only one student 5% could provide a successful interpretation *To talk too much*. The word *Monkey* has bad connotations in Arabic but usually not of much talking, since it does not speak in the human literal sense of the word. The proverb here is a pejorative comparison of a talkative man to a culturally ugly animal like a monkey. The proverb is critical for a person who keeps on talking and gossiping all the time for whatever reasons, on whatever occasion and on whatever topic. Certainly too much talking is bad and socially unfavorable for the vast majority of people everywhere.

The literal translations do not convey the intended meaning of the proverb in an intelligible way to an English reader. The equivalent English proverb is *as talkative as a talking machine* which is half standard, namely, *a talking machine* is a popular English simile, whereas *as talkative* is not. Yet it is suggested to create a similar effect in English, because

this is crucial in the appreciation and comprehension and, therefore, the translation of many such expressions (Newmark's communicative translation, 1988 and Nida's dynamic equivalence, 1964). The target language has an equivalent for the Arab proverb, but it does not exactly the same kind and degree of effect on the target language readership. People respond differently to a machine and a monkey. Nevertheless, this does not prevent them from getting the message.

2.1.4.1.3 استورق الجمل

The Arab proverb استورق الجمل was rendered literally by 60% of the respondents (12/20) as *The camel has become a she-camel*, and was erroneously interpreted by 15% of the students (3/20) as *The man has become elegant / handsome* or *When men treat like women and behave like them*. The rest of the students 25% (5/20) didn't translate the expression at all. The respondents' interpretations are misleading and do not express the implicit meaning of the proverbial expression as well as the literal renditions did. Its English equivalent is *Listen/Look who is talking!* And/or *The nobleman is henpecked*.

The Arab expression is purely cultural and all-in-all metaphorical. It has nothing to do with camel except for its symbolic literal sense of a camel behaving as humbly as a she-camel which is culturally known to be subservient and obedient. This sense is applied to people, as the second version of the translation confirms.

The whole Arab expression استورق الجمل أسد علي و في الحروب نعامة emphasizes the aforementioned idea. It is the first meaning of a man considered to be fragile, confused, clumsy and foolish. He is bitterly criticized and ridiculed by the expression استورق الجمل which is usually followed by a simile.

To make the connotation of the proverb clearer, a similar, more popular comment in such a context is the colloquial expression حكى بدري which is translated literally as *Badri has just spoken* and which has the same functional equivalent as استورق الجمل which is *Listen/Look who is talking*! *Badri* is a proper name, a common name, just like John and Jack in English;

the reason for the original choice may never be known. The expression has exactly the same metaphorical connotation of the previous formal one.

To sharpen the sense of irony, it is sometimes completed as و انشرح صدري literally *So that I've had a sigh relief* which rhymes with *Badri*, and implies a harsh sarcastic implication which quite the opposite of its surface meaning (i.e., feel quite relieved). Such expressions are critical of foolish, disliked, thick-witted, and opinionated people. These two pure cultural expressions are from the most difficult ones to translate into English. Yet, the catch phrase *Look who is talking!* is perfectly expressive of the message and its connotations of irony and disrespect.

All the animal bound idioms dealt with in this sub-section and the others in general are semantically opaque and their actual meaning can't be deduced till having cultural clues (the connotation of the animal within a particular cultural context). Hence achieving a successful translation of such fixed expressions requires a large relevant cultural background accompanied by a metaphorical and analogical interpretive process with reference to the source culture and extra effort on the part of the translator to compensate the target versions and tailor them according to the cultural expectations of the target readership.

2.1.4.2. Ecologically Bound Idioms and Proverbs

The second group includes ecologically bound proverbial and idiomatic expressions which represent a real area of difficulty for translators.

2.1.4.2.1. Tread on Thin Ice

The English idiom *Tread on thin ice* was translated literally by 70% of the respondents (14/20) into يخطو على جليد رقيق , يمشي على جليد رفيع, يتزلج على جليد هش and was misinterpreted by one respondent 5% as يتبختر في مشيته. Only one participant 5% interpreted the idiomatic expression successfully as يمشي على حافة الهاوية which more or less expresses the idiom's appropriate meaning. 20% of the students didn't translate the expression at all.

As can be observed, the respondents' renderings were either erroneous or insufficient so that they express nothing specific to an Arab reader. The majority of the students approached the ecological figurative expression's translation literally and hence produced erroneous renditions instead of the acceptable Arab equivalent في وضع محفوف بالمخاطر . This idiom refers to someone who is in a critical situation; *thin ice* here has the connotation of a possibly dangerous position. The English have a variety of such expressions that are associated with *ice* since they are usually exposed to this ecological phenomenon in their environment. The student who failed to interpret the idiom was unable to deduce its connotation because of his/her unawareness of the influence of the difference of ecological conditions of the English and the Arabs on their languages, especially on expressions of the kind s/he dealt with.

2.1.4.2.2. Keep Your Penny for a Rainy Day

Keep your penny for a rainy day; this famous proverbial expression was translated by 55% of the respondents (11/20) literally as وفر درهمك ليوم ماطر , احتفظ بنقودك ليوم ممطر and was successfully interpreted by 35% of the students (7/20) as ادخر مالك لوقت الحاجة احتفظ بمالك لوقت الشدة. Only 10% of the whole percentage provided the acceptable functional equivalent which is احفظ قرشك الأبيض ليومك الأسود

Actually, this proverb is an advice to people to save money for a time when they really need it. Similar English proverbs are *Waste not, want not* and *A penny saved is a penny gained*. Probably *A rainy day* has the connotation of "a time of misfortune and trouble". This

may not be the case in Arabic and though the Arabs don't use this expression as an idiom, it still carries positive connotations and represents a favorable expression for them. *A rainy day* can never mean a day of misfortune for the Arabs; it is rather a day of good luck and welfare, especially because of their dry climate. After long periods of drought, the Arabs as stated in the theoretical chapter make a special prayer and/or practice the tradition of slaughtering sheep and/or cows and distribute their meet to the poor to make Allah satisfied about them, and hence Allah makes rain fall.

One of the most important hindrances translators generally face is manifested in culture-specific expressions which are only found in particular cultures. Translators must be aware of the difficulties involved in rendering the cultural contexts of societies with completely different tastes and conventions such as Arab and English ones. When translating, one must bear in mind that they should convey the connotative meaning and not merely the denotative one. Thus, translators should be familiar with and sensitive to both cultures.

With regard to culture, translators must consider the climatic conditions because English belongs to an area of cold and wet climate whereas Arabic belongs to an area of hot and dry climate. Thus according to Ilyas (1989), some Arabic expressions are associated with cold weather to express favourable positive connotations of joy and delight for the Arabs and this is quite the opposite as mentioned before (above). In addition, the climatic conditions of the Arab regions are very much reflected in Arabic vocabulary and are highly associated with Arabic fixed expressions (Holmes, 1988 cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997). For instance, there are many expressions in Arabic that are associated with hot weather and do not have direct English equivalents. Conversely, English is rich with expressions associated with cold and rainy weather as stated in the theoretical chapter and that are hard to be fully translated into Arabic.

An English/Arabic/English translator who attempts to translate such fixed expressions may come across some problematic ecologically based idioms and proverbial expressions.

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Some of them acquire different connotations in both languages. What may be a connotatively favorable expression in Arabic could have a pejorative sense in English and vice versa.

2.1.4.3. Heroes Bound Idioms and Proverbs

The third category deals with idiomatic and proverbial expressions that are associated with heroes and famous personalities. This kind of expressions represents a real challenge for translators.

2.1.4.3.1. Achilles Heel

The English idiom *Achilles heel* was translated literally by 35% of the informants (7/20) into كعب أشيل and was given an acceptable equivalent by 15% of them (3/20) as نقطة ضعف and 50% of the respondents left out the expression without translation. The literal translation is unacceptable and insufficient in terms of meaning for the Arabs. It doesn't give a clear image of the idiom's intended meaning.

This idiom refers to a weak point or fault in somebody's character that can be seized by other people. It is named after the great hero Achilles. When he was a small child, his mother held him below the surface of the river Styx to protect him against any injury. She held him by his heel, which therefore was not touched by the water. Achilles died after being wounded by an arrow in the heel. The Arabs generally do not possess many of such Greek legends which are not a part of their cultural heritage in their cultural reservoir, therefore the majority of the students failed in guessing the meaning of the idiom which is tightly related to the legend.

2.1.4.3.2. Hobson's Choice

The English idiom *Hobson's choice* was rendered literally by 35% of the respondents (7/20) اختيار / اختيار هوبسون and 65% didn't answer at all. The literal rendition expresses nothing of the idiom's real meaning, and the use of the proper name هوبسون is by no means helpful for an Arab reader in inferring the connotation of the expression. In fact, this idiom doesn't have a corresponding Arab functional equivalent and is usually expressed by a single

word as إجبار or إرغام.

This idiom refers to a situation in which it seems that one can choose between different things or actions, but there is really only one thing that one can take or does so there is no real choice at all. There is a story that *Hobson's choice* came from a Mr. Hobson, a stable owner who lived in seventeenth century England. He hired horses and gave his customers no choice as to which horse they could take. An Arab student who does not know the origin of the idiom (story) can not guess its intended meaning or translate it appropriately as it happened with the respondents. Learning the idioms meaning directly may confuse the translators and misleads them.

2.1.4.3.3. Even Homer Sometimes Nods

The English proverbial expression *Even Homer sometimes nods* was given an approximately acceptable literal translation by 20% of the participants (4/20) as حتى هومر يرتكب and 15% of the respondents produced unacceptable literal translations as أخطاء, حتى هوميروس يخطىء أحيانا . The rest, 65% of the students (13/20) didn't حتى هوميروس\هومر يحني رأسه attempt to translate the proverb at all. The unacceptable literal translations are insufficient in terms of meaning and do not mean a lot to the Arab readership. The acceptable literal translations are not pure linguistic (literal) for the students interpreted the word *nods* literally يرتكب أخطاء or يخطئ as ينحني but the translation is still not transparent and needs additional Information. An explanatory footnote that brings some clarity to the proper name *Homer* and its significance may solve the problem.

This proverb means that even the best of people are liable to make mistakes. Homer was the greatest of Greek poets. Similar English proverbs are *No man is infallible* and *To err is human*. The Arabs generally use the following expressions in the same context of the English proverb جل من لا يخطئ and العصمة لا تكون إلا لنبي. Reference to God and religion is quite apparent in the last two Arab proverbs.

2.1.4.3.4. أجود من حاتم

The Arab proverb أجود من حاتم was approached literally by 65% of the participants (13/20) as *more generous than Hatim* or *No one is more generous than Hatim*. Only one respondent 15% offered a successful interpretation to the proverbial expression as *very generous*. The rest of the participants didn't translate the expression. The literal translations maybe deemed acceptable if they are accompanied by explanatory footnotes which at least make explicit the proper name's connotation for the target audience as it is for the source readership.

The Arabs use this proverb to refer to someone who is extremely and rarely generous. The proverbial expression stems from *Hatim Al Ta'ee,* a very generous man who lived in the pre-Islam era. This proper name is a symbol of generosity for the Arabs. The English refer to someone as *philanthropist* to express the connotation of the Arab proverb.

Proverbial and idiomatic expressions that are associated with proper names which bear specific connotations in a specific culture (s) are difficult to translate and really demand attention and a relevant cultural background (with respect to the proper names' significance) when rendered into a foreign language. Harvey and Higgins (1986) state that in the translation of such fixed expressions, the original versions should be replaced by target versions that have similar connotations to the ones implied by the proper names

2.1.4.4. Specific Incidents and Stories Based Idioms and Proverbs

This category deals with proverbial and idiomatic expressions whose origin and meaning are tightly interwoven and deeply related. These expressions pose serious hindrances for translators.

2.1.4.4.1. To Bury the Hatchet

The English idiom *To bury the hatchet* was translated literally by 40% (8/20) of the participants as يدفن\ يواري الفأس الصغير, يدفن بلطة صغيرة, whereas 15% (3/20) of the respondents provided equivalent versions to the source one ما فات قد مات and 20% (4/20) of the informants interpreted the idiom successfully as اطو صفحة الماضي, انس الماضي و تطلع إلى الأمام ;نسيان ما فات. The rest of the students didn't make any attempt to translate the expression. The respondents' literal renditions have nothing to do with the actual meaning of the idiom and represent nothing specific to the Arabs.

In the past, Americans and English used to burry weapons to show that fighting has ended. Today the idiom means to make up with a friend after a fight or argument. The translation suggested in the model answer is ما فات قد مات; it has approximately the same function of the English one. The idiom maybe paraphrased into Arabic as ينسى الخلافات السابقة. A similar English idiom is *Let the bygones be bygones.*

2.1.4.4.2. The Pot Calling the Kettle Black

The English idiom *The pot is calling the kettle black* was rendered literally by35% of the participants (7/20) into تنادي القدر الغلاية السوداء or ينعت القدر ركوة الغلي بالسوداء. The idiomatic expression was translated successfully by finding the functional Arab equivalent الجمل الذي يسخر من حدبة صاحبه by 10% of the respondents (2/20). Only one student interpreted the idiom successfully as شخص يسخر من شخص آخر و نسي نفسه.The Literal renditions are clearly insufficient in terms of meaning to the Arabs. The rest, 50%, left out the expression without translation.

In seventeenth century England, both pots and kettles turned black because they were used over open fire. Today this idiom is used to say that one should not criticize somebody for a fault that they themselves have.

2.1.4.4.3. وافق شن طبقة

The Arab proverb وافق شن طبقة was rendered literally by 50% of the informants as *Shan agreed upon Tabaka.* The rest of participants were unable to translate the proverb though it is

one of the most famous Arab ones and they interpreted it easily. But the participants failed in finding an equivalent English expression. Furthermore, they didn't even attempt to produce acceptable interpretations for the English audience. In other words, the respondents were not able to produce versions that have the same meaning of the original one and that suit the cultural expectations of the English readership. The respondents who approached the translation of the proverb literally could not convey the meaning of the source version in an acceptable comprehensible form for the English readership.

This proverbial expression is a reference to a story from the Arab folklore. The summary of the tale is that one of the wise Arab people who was called *Shan* didn't accept to get married to any woman but *Tabaka* who could exceedingly decipher his purely metaphorical rhetorical utterances (puns). The expression today refers to couples who suit each other or people who are in agreement about something and share the same opinions or feelings. The form of the idiom is deeply immersed in the Arab folklore and a literal translation as shown above is by no means efficient in conveying the proverb's actual meaning. The suggested translation in the model answer is *to find one's soul-mate*.

It is apparent that 70% of the respondents' attempts to maintain these purely cultural proverbial and idiomatic expressions that belong to the national heritage of particular societies (English and Arab) have communicatively failed. This confirms the high percentage of respondents who claimed during the interviews that their insufficient knowledge of the English socio-cultural patterns deprived them of understanding the task items and translating them appropriately..

2.1.4.5. Islamic Concepts Based Proverbial Expressions

This subdivision includes proverbial expressions that are associated with religious concepts which bear specific connotations in only particular cultures. This category of proverbs represents a real challenge for translators.

2.1.4.5.1. نعم صومعة بيّته

The Arab proverb نعم صومعة بيّته *was* left out without any attempt of translation or to interpretation by 85% of the participants (17/20). This may be due to the respondents' unfamiliar use of figurative language which prevents them from inferring the connotation of the metaphor. The other 15 % (3/20) tried to interpret the expression as *His roof's house is good / the best* or *The roof of his house is the most beautiful*. Unfortunately the three interpretations were erroneous and didn't succeed in accurately expressing the proverb's intended meaning.

In fact, the proverbial expression is a saying referred to one of Prophet Muhammad's peace of Allah be upon him sage grandsons. The proverb is full of wisdom which is tightly related to Islamic religion and its ethical system. It implies an advice for men to stay at home to take care of their family members and house affairs, since they are the heads of their families and the first responsible of their houses. This is better than or akin to spending hours in mosques worshiping and praying for Allah though prayer is something sacred. The word صومعة here is a reference to mosque.

The English equivalent suggested in the model answer is *An English man's house is his castle*. According to each group (English and Arab) different beliefs and the significance of *a man's house* in each culture, the suggested English proverb may serve as an expressive pertinent equivalent to the Arab one. The English proverb means that an English man is legally entitled to his privacy. No other person may enter his house without his permission or make decisions on his behalf. Reference to duty towards God and family is quite apparent in the explanation of the Arab proverb's meaning which is not the case in the English one. But the two versions still express approximately two similar connotations for each people

2.1.4.5.2. لا يلدغ مؤمن من جحر مرتين

The Arab proverb لا يلدغ مؤمن من جحر مرتين was rendered literally by 55%of the informants (11/20) as *A believer does not sting/is never stung from the same lair/hole/place twice* and was interpreted by 30% of the respondents (6/20) as *A believer / A Muslim never falls in the same sin twice, One does not fall in the same trouble twice, A believer does no make the same mistake twice.* The rest of the respondents 4/20 didn't translate the proverb at all.

The word *believer* refers to someone who is intelligent and shrewd. This maybe confirmed by one of the sayings referred to Prophet Muhammad which runs as follows: المؤمن كيس فطن.The proverb means that a clever shrewd person is always anxious to avoid repetition of an unpleasant experience s/he had. Both the literal renditions and interpretations of the participants are totally insufficient in terms of meaning for an English reader. All the informants' translations are associated with religious terms as sin, Muslim and the word believer which bears the connotation of insight and shrewdness in Arabic. The respondents' attempts showed clearly the influence of religion on their translations and their language in general.

The equivalent English proverb suggested in the model answer is *a fox is not taken twice in the same snare*. The word *fox* here has two meanings; it may refer to an animal of the dog family or a clever person. Both meanings suit the proverbial expression, since the fox (animal) bears the connotation of a shrewd person. The English version expresses perfectly the Arab proverb's intended meaning. The following are similar English proverb which may function as acceptable equivalents to the Arab proverbial expression: *Once bitten, twice shy* and *A burnt child dreads the fire*.

The influence of religious and ethical systems on idioms and proverbs in one language (of the languages involved in translation), and the other's different way of mapping the same reality or idea (which is not based on religion) makes the translator's task very difficult. The

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respondents' low percentage of finding equivalents or providing successful interpretations confirms the aforementioned idea. Hence the disparity between English and Arab cultures and the different ways each culture represents the same reality influence the choice of their idiomatic and proverbial expressions' constituents and hinder their translation process in a fundamental way.

2.1.4.6. Culture Bound Proverbial Expressions

This category deals with proverbs whose meaning is primarily based on culture bound concepts. These culture bound expressions are deemed a salient translation problem, especially when translating between two languages with distinct cultures such as Arabic and English.

2.1.4.6.1. إن حضر الماء بطل التيمم

The proverbial expression إن حضر الماء بطل التيمم was left out without translation by 60% of the informants (12/20). The other 40% of the respondents (8/20) translated only half of the expression into *If water is present there is no …, If water is …, If water is provided for …*.It can be noticed that the respondents failed completely in providing equivalents for the words الوضوء/التيمم. These two words are culture bound terms.

The problem here is not with الوضوء for it has an equivalent in English and reference to a bilingual dictionary solves the problem. Rather the difficulty here lies in translating التيمم. This is due to the fact of non-existence of an English equivalent to the Arab word because the concept doesn't exist in the target culture and is deemed totally alien. Though all the students understood the expression and its constituents very well, no one suggested an intelligible paraphrase to the term التيمم and only some of them tried and failed. This may be due to the fact that the respondents are unfamiliar with the use of such a strategy.

The translation of the expression suggested in the model answer is *If water is present for ablution, then the use of earth is discontinued*. The rendering of التيمم *as the use of earth* is considered odd and less emotive in the English version. التيمم is a religious term which means

washing with clean sand for ablution because of the unavailability of water in some places. This emotive idiom shows how such culture-bound expressions awaken the feelings of the Arabs and, when translated, they would not have the same influence on the target audience due to the differences in culture that resulted in differences in the degree of emotiveness for each people. This can justify this proverb being more emotive to the Arabs than its translation is to the English.

This expression has other connotations in Arabic. For instance, in a classroom a teacher is present and one of the students takes his/her dictionary to look for a word meaning. Another one may say إن حضر الماء بطل التيمم *meaning* that since the teacher is here; consult him/her instead of your dictionary. Here the teacher is compared with الماء and the dictionary with التيمم.

2.1.4.6.2. ما خاب من استخار

The Arab proverbial expression ما خاب من استخار was left out without translation by 55% of the informants11/20 and misinterpreted by 30% (6/20) of the respondents as *Who asks advice from others does not get down, If u ask others u don't loose, Who asks others for their opinions does not fail* and *Those who ask other people are not disappointed*. The rest of the participants (3/20) translated the expression approximately in the same way as *Who asks God will not get down* and *Who asks God is never disappointed*.

The respondents' attempts to interpret the expression were misleading. The informants rendered the word استخار *as* استشار. In fact the two concepts are distinct; the former refers to asking God and the latter to asking people. The participants' confusion of the two terms may be due to the fact that because they didn't find an English equivalent, they replaced it by the closest word which they thought would be appropriate. But it doesn't really express the intended meaning of the original version. This is a reminder of the Italian adage which runs as follows: *The translator is traitor*. This means that if the translator doesn't pay close attention to the real intended meaning of the expression in question, especially with the type of

expressions dealt with in the present research, s/he is likely to fall into the trap of distorting the actual message conveyed by the source version.

Actually, the word استخار/ may be given the following definition in Arabic: أدى صلاة الاستخارة. It is a religious term (The prayer asking God to make a good choice). The Translation suggested in the model answer is *He who accomplished the prayer asking God guidance to make a good choice never fails.* Though this rendering gives a clear image of the proverbial expression real meaning, it is less emotive for English readers. Achieving the same degree of emotiveness when translating such fixed expressions is a goal usually unfulfilled by translators, especially when the languages involved are remote culturally such as Arabic and English because the concepts dealt with are totally odd and alien to the target audience.

Consequently, the translation of idioms and proverb represent a real area of difficulty for translators. These fixed expressions generally have meanings only in terms of the culture in which they are used. They are the ones which absorbed the national heritage of their source language and express their meanings through the symbolic systems of their native culture as the categories dealt with in this sub-section have shown. With regard to translation, this kind of expressions maybe challenging because a translator can often find no one-to-one correspondence in both languages. However, their translation maybe manageable if translators are equipped with a relevant cultural background, well aware of the translation techniques and bear in mind the fact that they should exchange cultural messages and not merely linguistic ones.

2.1.5. Synthesis of the Results

The respondents encountered problems in the two stages of translation process i.e. decoding the cultural messages of the task's idioms and proverbs and re-encoding them (producing intelligible target versions). In other words, since these frozen chunks of words as referred to by Teilanyo whose overall meaning differs from the meaning of the words involved posed a real difficulty to the informants, first in terms of inferring their intended

meaning and second producing presumably similar target versions.

Approximately 40% of the respondents approached the task items literally; hence they failed totally in expressing their intended meaning. The actual meanings of the expressions dealt with in this research cannot be predicted from the referential meanings of their constituents. Idioms and proverbs reflect cultural human experiences encoded by language as a means of recording social facts; hence their form is completely governed by their native culture norms. Furthermore, the informants' reliance on pure literal translation has shown that they deal passively with the translation of such fixed expressions. This maybe due to the fact that they are not aware of the cultural significance of these expressions or because they couldn't predict their actual meaning which cannot be inferred unless one has the relevant cultural clues

The percentage of the respondents' attempts to interpret was 30%. About 22% of these attempts were misinterpretations; most of them were from the English versions. The low percentage of successful interpretations 8% as well as the qualitative analysis of the erroneous ones reflect that the informants' ability to comprehend idioms and proverbs is unsatisfactory because of their inadequate socio-cultural knowledge and their unfamiliarity with such fixed expressions or with the use of figurative language in general.

About 50% of the task items were left out without translation though it was noticed that the respondents put optimal efforts in the relevant translation task. This maybe justified by the answers of the informants during the informal interviews which stated clearly that that was due to their inability to understand the English task items or their incapability to produce versions with respect to the Arab expressions especially stories and religious concepts based ones, in the natural form of English.

The difficulties faced by informants at the level of each subdivision maybe summarized as follows:

Expressions associated with animals are among the most difficult parts of language to

translate. Animals are used as symbols and each animal conveys meanings differently according to the connotation it bears in the source culture. Hence the participants faced serious hindrances with respect to inferring the animal's connotations and /or providing the appropriate cultural substitution.

Expressions associated with ecological conditions are more emotive for their source people and the climatic phenomena that are parts of these expressions generally bear specific connotations with respect to their cultural environment. The respondents didn't pay attention to that and the majority of them either rendered them literally or misinterpreted them. Therefore, when translating, one must take into consideration the climatic conditions of the source and target languages regions and their connotations in the culture of each one.

Heroes, specific incidents and stories based idioms and proverbs represented a real area of difficulty for the informants either at the level of interpretation or translation. The respondents found it very difficult to guess the real meaning of expressions whose etymology and connotations are deeply interwoven and the key words of some of them are totally odd and alien, especially with their insufficient English cultural knowledge. Even when they inferred the intended meaning of the Arab expressions which was obvious for them (according to the data collected from the informal interviews), the majority of them were not able to express the task items' intended messages in an acceptable English form. Hence, when translating such fixed expressions, a process of interpretation with reference to a relevant cultural background accompanied by an analogy of the two cultures in question is necessary.

The informants also encountered a difficulty when dealing with Islamic concepts based idioms and proverbs. As stated in the theoretical chapter, reference to God and religion is much frequent in Arabic than it is in English. The respondents either rendered the Arab expressions in a way that suits their expectations and convictions which are totally alien and unintelligible to an English reader, or they refrained from doing any attempt.

When translating expressions that include terms reflecting culture specific concepts or

terms, there is no one-to-one correspondence in both languages. Thus the respondents failed in providing equivalents for these expressions. They even failed in producing versions that give a clear picture to an English reader of the concepts that exist only in their culture (Arab Muslim culture).

The results obtained from the analysis of data confirm the claims of approximately 70% of the respondents' that their failure in understanding and translating the task items was due to cultural disparity between Arabic and English and the paucity of English cultural information they possess.

2.1.6. Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the data revealed that the respondent's general performance with respect to translation of idioms and proverbs was on the whole unsatisfactory and reflected clearly their translation incompetence. The percentage of acceptable answers was only 11%. This means that 89% of the task items were either rendered erroneously or were left out without translation. Furthermore, this low percentage of acceptable answers reveals that the informants encountered a considerable amount of difficulty in their attempts to translate the sample given (the task items). Furthermore, the exploration of the respondents responses has shown (reflected) their lack of knowledge of the English socio-cultural patterns which resulted in a bad translation outcome. In addition, the majority of informants seemed not to be well aware of all the translation techniques that might be helpful in achieving a successful rendition.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, the translation of idioms and proverbs is more than a passive pure literal process. It is a meaning reproducing activity which demands a deep analytic process with reference to the cultural background of the source language and considerable efforts on the part of translators.

This chapter has tried to highlight the main problems encountered by the participants when translating idioms and proverbs through a translation task especially designed for the purpose of this study (see appendix). It has also attempted to show how culture moulds these fixed expressions and influences their forms and how the insufficient knowledge of the socio-cultural patterns of the languages involved in translation (Arabic and English) hinders significantly their translation process and leads to a bad result (unacceptable target versions).

General Conclusion and Recommendations

This work attempted to discuss the problems encountered by 3rd year LMD students in the English Department, at University of Mentouri (Constantine) in Arabic/English/Arabic translation of idioms and proverbs with a view to improve the students' outcomes.

The first part of the theoretical chapter gave some definitions of translation. Then, it introduced its main types and the utility of each one. Finally, it attempted to give a clear image of the definition of culture and to draw attention to the tight relationship between translation and culture.

The second part of the theoretical chapter provided a general overview of idioms and proverbs. Then, it tried to highlight the problems encountered by translators when dealing with such fixed expressions. Finally, it tried to show how idioms and proverbs are linguistic representations of human experiences and social facts of particular cultures and explored what makes them problems in translation.

The second chapter incorporates a description of the test and the participants. It also includes a careful and thorough investigation of the informants' responses. The analysis of data was made in accordance with the model answer suggested by the two translation teachers. The practices usually followed within qualitative and quantitative methods. The obtained results helped draw many important conclusions (remarks) that might be helpful in improving the students' outcomes.

Because of time constraints, only one research tool was used; a test that comprises 20 Arab and English idioms and proverbs for 3rd year LMD students to be translated in both directions: Arabic and English. It was administered to students after they completed two years of translation training; both theoretical and practical. This test aimed at highlighting the students' weaknesses with respect to translation and to check their degree of awareness toward the role culture plays in such a process and towards the cultural aspects of English itself.

The results obtained have shown that the students' translation performance is totally inadequate and that the cultural knowledge they have didn't enable them to infer the fixed expressions' intended meanings successfully and/or to translate them appropriately. Furthermore, the students' ignorance of the translation techniques was clearly reflected in the poor versions they produced.

The test confirmed the research hypothesis. What was noticed is that the majority of the respondents' translations were expressed in plain non-idiomatic language and that the expressions' intended messages were not culturally transmitted into the target language. The students' incapability and/or incompetence reflected clearly in their responses (either at the level of interpretation or translation) was due to their insufficient knowledge of English socio cultural patterns in the first place. Furthermore, their ignorance of the translation strategies and compensation techniques made matters worse. This can be justified by the fact that even when the students were lucky in inferring the expressions' connotations, they failed in producing acceptable target versions.

Moreover, the test answered one of the research questions, 'to which strategies students resort when translating idioms and proverbs'. The answer is that most of them resort to pure literal translation or leaving them out without translation. Some of them resort to interpretation which was erroneous in approximately 73% of the whole percentage of these cases (interpretations). Following the results of the present test, it is recommended to build up (develop) a thorough awareness to students towards the crucial role of culture in understanding idioms and proverbs appropriately and translating them successfully, and mastery of pertinent translation strategies and techniques is required.

First, it is recommended that there should be a real collaboration between teachers of translation, civilization and literature to serve the students' purpose in acquiring a pertinent English cultural background that may help them in mastering the English language in general and translation in particular. Such collaboration is expected to initiate the students to many

cultural aspects of language that are totally alien to their own and to raise their degree of awareness towards the significant influence of culture on language in general and the literary one in particular of which idioms and proverbs are key components. In addition, it may make the task easier for translation teachers to draw the students 'attention to the disparity between languages (the present research is concerned with cultural one) and its impact on the translation of idioms and proverbs. Mythical etymology, history, environmental dimensions, social behaviours, beliefs, folklore …etc are all important aspects of language which need to be introduced to students.

Second, it is recommended that the translation of idioms and proverbs should be based on a cognitive interpretative approach with reference to the source culture. These fixed expressions reflect cognitive and cultural experiences and are structured and mapped according to the cultural signs of their native language that bear particular significance and connotations. Hence, the process of inferring their intended meanings should be based on the tastes and convictions of the original culture, otherwise significant misinterpretations and/or total distortions of their connotations may result.

Regardless the strategy or the approach the translator (student) resorts to, the actual message of the proverbial and/or idiomatic expression should be inferred. Because the translator can never produce successful versions out of original versions s/he can not understand, and resorting to a pure literal rendition blindly with the ignorance of the original versions' contexts will undoubtedly result in unacceptable target versions.

Since different cultures conceptualize the world in different ways, idioms and proverbs are characterized as being culture specific. In this regard (Dagust, 1976:32) states that "there is no simplistic general rule for the translation of (...) idioms and proverbs, but their translatability depends on (1) the particular cultural experiences and semantic associations exploited by them, (2) the extent to which these can, or cannot, be reproduced non-anomalously into the target language, depending on the degree of overlap in each particular

case".

Katan (1999) suggests that a cognitive approach to the study of culture can be seen in terms of the form of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating and interpreting them. This view of culture suggests when translating idioms and proverbs to a target language of any other culture, one needs to be aware not only of the patterns of thinking and acting in one's own culture, but also of the target language actual models of reality. Nida (1964) described the best translation as he called it as the one capable of evoking in the target language reader the same or similar response as the source language version does to the source language reader.

Although one finds Nida's claim a rather unreachable objective, it is still believed that some of it can be achieved provided that the following two conditions are satisfied: First, the translator (student, translation trainee) must understand the way in which both audiences (source or target) perceive the world and structure their experience. Second, s/he must also try his/her best to find a way to accommodate his/her version to the experience of the target by resorting to many strategies in search for cognitive equivalence. Hence the product maybe a target language equivalent, a paraphrase, a version translated literally and accompanied by an explanatory translator remark or even a footnote. Here the translator is invited to choose the most suitable strategy that might be helpful in his/her work; s/he may even use more than one strategy simultaneously if it is to convey the intended meaning and to result a successful rendition.

The argument in favour of a cognitive approach to the translation of idioms and proverbs derives from the notion of (*cognitive equivalence)*; where these fixed expressions can be translated from one language to another with a minimum loss. Therefore, idioms and proverbs should be looked at as cognitive constructs rather than linguistic entities or rhetorical phenomena (Dagust, 1976). In other words, idioms and proverbs represent instances of how people conceptualize their experience and how they record it. Hence, it is believed that the

cognitive approach will work towards this purpose.

It can be concluded that translators, whose task is to produce target language idioms and proverbs that bear a close meaning resemblance to the source language ones, should be aware of cognitive and cultural issues when translating from Arabic into English and vice versa. Therefore, it is not enough for translators to be bilingual, but they should be bicultural as well. In this regard, Culture is a framework within which all communication comes to pass. The success of the translator's activity to triumph over the cultural barrier depends on the ability to be aware of how culture in generally functions, that is to understand the cultural and experimental logic of a foreign culture which lie behind the original act of speaking or writing; to understand the potential of the two symbolic systems in terms of their image making; to understand the hidden cultural meaning formed by values and conventions; to be able to much all of these with appropriate linguistic and cultural responses. The heart of his task is to be a mediator not between two texts but between two cultures.

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Résumé

Cette recherche vise à mettre en évidence les difficultés de la traduction des constructions idiomatiques et des proverbes empreints de concepts culturels. Cette thèse démontre que les différences culturelles constituent une source importante de difficultés lors de la traduction anglais/arabe/anglais de ces expressions. Ces difficultés résultent des comportements propres à chaque culture ou encore des différences d'interprétations des mêmes concepts. Elle traite également des possibilités de conservation des connotations ces locutions, en sensibilisant les étudiants de l'influence de la culture sur les proverbes et les constructions idiomatiques en les aidant à développer leurs performances dans le domaine de la traduction interculturelle. Les résultats obtenus nous encouragent plus à méditer sur l'approche cognitive interprétative selon les normes de la culture source, afin de produire des versions qui expriment les mêmes significations que les expressions de la langue source et qui apparaissent plus ou moins naturelle dans la langue cible.

الملخص

يتطرق هذا البحث إلى دراسة المصاعب التي تلاقي المترجم أو الطالب عند ترجمة العبارات الاصطلاحية و الأمثال المنصهرة في بوتقة الثقافة. تشكل الاختلافات الثقافية مصدرا رئيسيا لهذه المصاعب عند الترجمة من العربية إلى الانجليزية و بالعكس. تنشأ هذه المصاعب من السلوكيات والتصرفات الخاصة بكل ثقافة أو حتى من الاختلافات في تأويل- تفسير ـ نفس المفاهيم.كما يهدف هذا البحث إلى تخطى هذه الصعوبات محاولا الحفاظ على معاني هذه العبارات و ذلك بتحسيس الطلبة بتأثير الثقافة على العبارات الاصطلاحية و الأمثال ومساعدتهم على تحسين أدائهم في ميدان الترجمة بين مختلف الثقافات.النتائج المتحصل عليها تشجعنا على استعمال أسلوب تأويل المفاهيم وفقا لقواعد الثقافة الأصلية كوسيط عند ترجمة مثل هذه العبارات بهدف الحصول على عبارات مترجمة تحمل نفس معاني العبارات الأصلية و تكون شبيهة إلى حد ما بعبارات اللغة الهدف.