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Problems of Idioms in Translation

Case Study: First Year Master

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Submitted by: Supervised by:

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Dedication

Above All, I Thank Allah, The Almighty For Having Given Me The Strength And Patience To Undertake And Complete This Work Glory And Praise For Him.

My work is dedicated to:

My dear father, Al Djoudi, who has been my model for hard work, persistence and personal sacrifices.

My dear mother, Houria, who always encourages me in hard times by her precious advice. Thank you my dear parents for your patience and steadfast support.

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Abstract

The present study is a linguistic investigation of equivalence above word level. It deals with the difficulties of non equivalence posed in translating English idioms into Arabic and vice versa, and the methods used by M1 students to find the suitable equivalent in the target language. The aim of this study is to examine the type of difficulty students of M1, Applied languages studies at Mentouri University Constantine, face while translating idioms and tries to suggest solutions and identify strategies that may help to limit or avoid these difficulties. In this respect, a test made up of twelve English idioms and ten Arabic ones is given to M1 students to be translated. The results of the study show that there are potential problems in the process of translating idioms from English into Arabic and vice versa. Furthermore, the findings show that the context of use helps a lot of students of English to guess the appropriate meaning of idioms. They also confirm our hypothesis and reveal that, except word for word translation, students' use of other translation strategies is limited.

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List of Abbreviations

SL.   Source Language

TL.   Target Language

SC.   Source Culture

TC.   Target Culture

TR.   Transparent Idioms

S-TR.   Semi-Transparent Idioms

S- OP. Semi Opaque Idioms

OP.   Opaque Idioms

General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem

Language is a system of communication that is used by a particular community of speakers. It has literal and figurative meanings. The literal meaning is the direct reference of words or sentences to objects. The figurative sense, however, is different from the literal one in the sense that it is used for giving an imaginative description or a special effect. In this case, the meaning of individual words in an expression has nothing to do in the comprehension of the whole meaning. Such a meaning characterizes notions like metaphors, similes and idioms. Idioms have a great extent use in everyday language, and they are considered as one of the most frequently used means of non-literal language. Their frequent, spontaneous and appropriate use is usually a mark of good English, and an indication of native or near native command of the language. In this respect, ESL/EFL learners do their best to use and, especially, to translate idioms correctly and efficiently in order to achieve idiomacity and provide a native like language. The problem, however, is that despite recent development in the field of translation theory and application, idiomatic expressions still pose a serious challenge for translators and foreign learners.

2. Aim of the study

Taking into consideration the great importance of idioms, and believing in the difficulties that may be posed while translating this type of figurative language, the main aim of this study is to examine the type of difficulty students of English face in translating idioms, and try to suggest solutions and identify strategies that may help to limit or avoid these difficulties.

3. Research Questions and Hypothesis

Our research work is directed by the following questions:

1. What are the difficulties that students find while translating idioms, and what are the reasons behind them?

2. What are the possible strategies that should be followed to overcome these difficulties?

In order to answer these questions, the research hypothesis could be stated as follows: If students of English use the accurate strategies, like paraphrasing and cultural substitution, while translating idioms, then they would be able to translate them correctly.

4. Methodology

Investigating the problems of translating idioms can be best realized through a quantitative method. This method helps to identify the problems students face in translating idioms with a view to improve outcomes. In this respect, a test including twelve English idioms and ten Arabic ones is given to students of a Master degree to be translated into English and Arabic. Since the method used in this study is the quantitative one, the analysis of our test relies mainly on the comments inferred from the numbers, figures and tables in the practical part.

5. Structure of the Study

This study consists of two chapters; the first one is theoretical, while the second is empirical. Chapter one provides a theoretical background about the translation process with a focus on the notions of equivalence and non-equivalence as essential issues in this process. It highlights the different types, characteristics, classifications and categories of idioms. In order to extend our discussion about idioms, a comparison between idioms and metaphors, clichés, fixed expressions and proverbs is also included.

Chapter two deals with a detailed analysis of the students' test. The test is made up of twelve English idioms and ten Arabic ones given to students of Master1 to be translated into English and Arabic in order to test their abilities in translation and be guided by their answers. The analysis of this test mainly relies on examining the students' test, commenting on the results shown in the figures and tables, and then drawing conclusions.

Chapter One

Translation and Idioms

Introduction

Translating idioms is one of the most difficult tasks for translators. The main problems consist in recognizing an idiom, understanding it and distinguishing idiomatic from non-idiomatic usage. Aiming at investigating the problem of recognition and comprehension of idioms, this chapter which is divided into two parts, gives a detailed theoretical background about idioms. Part one is an introductory section that provides some definitions of translation, equivalence and non-equivalence and culture. It also lists the translation difficulties and the accurate strategies that may help students to solve these problems. Part two, however, is more detailed. It includes many definitions of idioms together with their different types, categories and characteristics. In addition, an explanation of the way idioms should be used and interpreted is given. Moreover, similar notions like metaphors and clichés, proverbs and fixed expressions are also discussed and compared to idioms in order to highlight the main differences between them, and provide a clear image for students about idioms.

1.1. Translation

1.1.1. Definition of Idioms

The field of translation has been recently given a major concern in applied linguistics, and this has led to many definitions of translation. According to Nida and Taber (1982:12), 'Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalence of the source language (SL) message firstly, in terms of meaning and secondly, in terms of style'. In their definition, Nida and Taber highlight the major bases of translation. It involves

two languages, the source language and the target one, and it can be oral or written. It is highly dependent on the context, and equivalence is one of its essential elements.

Zagy (2000), on the other hand, considers the translation aim as transferring the meaning to the target language (TL) rather than converting the words and grammatical forms of the original language. Catford (1995:20) however, defines the translation process as 'the replacement of textual material in one language, by equivalent textual material in another language'. He distinguishes between total translation which is the replacement of SL grammar and lexis by equivalent TL grammar and lexis, and restricted translation that is based on the replacement of SL textual material at only one level.

1.1.2. Equivalence and Translation

Equivalence is a term used by many writers to describe the nature and the extent of the relationship which exist between the SL and TL text. Leonardi (2000) states that for Nida (1964:9) defining and explaining the equivalence nature and conditions is considered as the main objective of translation studies. Therefore, Nida (1964: 8) makes a distinction between formal correspondence and dynamic equivalence. According to him, formal correspondence "focuses attention on the message itself in both form and content". Its purpose is being as faithful as possible to the source culture and it lets the reader, as Nida (ibid.) puts it, "knows as much as he can of the customs, manner of thought and means of expression". Dynamic equivalent, on the other hand, seeks an equivalent effect on the target reader. It follows that the features of the source culture are of secondary importance in favour of the fulfilment of the source text's function and the production of an equivalent effect. In this respect, Nida and Taber (1982) favor dynamic equivalence because it is based on "the principle of equivalent effect" (cited in Leonardi, 2003: para.9) and it aims at complete naturalness of expressions.

By introducing the notion of 'equivalent in different', Jackobson (cited in Bassnett 1980: 39) insists on the view that translation can always be carried out regardless of the cultural or grammatical differences between the S and T text. He writes (ibid.): "whenever there is a deficiency" where the translator cannot find a direct equivalent to a particular SL word or text, "terminology may be qualified and amplified by loan words or loan translations, neologisms or semantic shift".

Armstrong (2005:45) goes in the same direction of Jackobson and he admits that "full equivalence is rare", but the translator has to look for the nearest possible equivalent.

1.1.3. Non-Equivalence in Translation

Sometimes the translator may face the problem of non-equivalence while translating a SL message into a TL one. This is mainly because of the existence of differences at the cultural, grammatical, lexical or stylistic levels.

According to Baker (1992) non equivalence may be at the level of word or above it. Non equivalence at word level can occur because of 'the absence in the target culture of a relevant situational feature for the source language text (Bassnett, 1980:39). This is because the concept may be lexicalized in the SL and not in the TL. Sapir and Whorf (1964) have best illustrated this phenomenon through giving the example of 'snow'. European countries have many words for snow because it falls many times in the year, in contrast to other countries, like Arab ones, that lexicalize only one type of snow. This phenomenon is highly related to culture.

Non equivalence can also appear above word level, since words do not occur on their own, but they "almost occur on the company of other words" (Baker, 1992:46). Sometimes

the comprehension of a word meaning is impossible until it is combined with other words to form stretches of language. According to Johnson (1975),

> The great pest of speech is frequently of translation. No book was ever turned from one language into another, without imparting something of its nature idiom; this is the most mischievous and comprehensive innovation, single words may enter by thousands and the fabric of the tongue continue the same, but new phraseology changes much once; it alters not the single stories of the building, but the order of the columns (cited in Baker, 2001:46).

Non equivalence above word level characterizes notions like metaphors, collocations and idioms. Idioms will be dealt with, in details, in the second part.

1.1.4. Language, Culture and Translation

The term culture refers to a set of beliefs that control a particular country or group behaviors. It is defined by Taylor (cited in Hymes, 1964: 455) as a 'complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, customs and any capacities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society'. Among these beliefs, language is considered as an essential part that constitutes one's culture. It is as the Longman dictionary describes it 'the heart within the body of culture' (cited in Bassnett, 1980:22). This is involved in the process of translation through the influence of the source and target cultures. Culture has a great impact on the process of translation in the sense that the degree of integration of the source text (ST) in the target culture (TC) may vary, and may cause serious problems for the translator. In this respect, culture may lead to different types of translation. Translation may, sometimes, result in a "shift towards the target culture, and the translated text may or may not merge completely in the target culture" (Yowelly and Lataiwish, 2000:107). This is called 'integration'. Translation may preserve only the source culture (SC), and in this case it is termed 'source translation'. It may also preserve neither the source nor the target culture, and here, it is called 'alienation' (Yowelly and Lataiwish, 2000:106).

1.1.5. Translation Problems

A translation problem is any type of difficulty in the source language (SL) text that obliges the translator to stop translating. This difficulty is mainly due to grammatical, stylistic, cultural or lexical problems.

1.1.5.1. Grammatical Problems

Grammatical problems are the result of complicated SL grammar, different TL grammar or different TL word order. Among the most frequent grammatical problems:

a. The translation of verbs 'be', 'have' and modals.

b. The translation of tenses and articles.

c. The translation of adjectives and personal pronouns.

d. The translation of nominal, verbal and conditional sentences.

1.1.5.2. Stylistic Problems

The style, or the way of writing, of a particular SL text may pose different problems for the translator. One of these problems is fronting, in which a word, a phrase or a clause is stated at the beginning of a sentence in an unusual way. For instance, 'suicide he committed' instead of 'he committed suicide'. The purpose behind such a fronting is to emphasize on the fronted word, or to draw attention to its importance to the meaning of the whole sentence. Other stylistic problems may include parallelism, ambiguity, redundancy, and nominalization vs. verbalization (Ghazala, 1995:18-24).

1.1.5.3. Cultural Problems

A number of problems may be raised in cross-cultural translation. According to Yowelly and Lataiwish (2000:107), "the greater the gap between the source and target culture,

the more serious difficulty would be". Translation between English and Arabic which belong to two different cultures (the Western and the Oriental cultures), and which have a different background is a best example of such problems. Cultural problems may include geographical, religious, social and linguistic ones. Hence, the expression "*summer's day*" in 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day' will be best translated into Arabic as '*spring's day*' to convey the same meaning.

1.1.5.4. Lexical Problems

Lexical problems usually occur when a word or an expression is not understood, misunderstood or totally unknown to translators. Synonymy, polysemy and monosemy, collocations, metaphors and idioms are considered as the most common lexical problems (Ghazala, 1995:24). Idioms which are special phrases with special meanings will be discussed in details in the second part.

1.1.6. Translation Strategies

The term 'strategy' refers to a method or a procedure used by a translator to solve a particular problem while translating. Baker (1992:36) summarizes the translation strategies as follows:

1.1.6.1. Translation by a Superordinate

This strategy is used to solve the problem of non- equivalence in all languages, because the hierarchical structure of semantic fields is not language specific.

1.1.6.2. Translation by More Neutral and Less Expressive Word

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

1.1.6.3. Translation by Cultural Substitution

This strategy is based on replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a TL one that has not the same exact meaning, but has equivalent effect on the target audience.

1.1.6.4. Translation by Using Loan Words:

This technique works well when dealing with culture-specific items, modern concepts and buzz words. When using loan words, it will be better to follow them with explanations, especially if they are repeated many times in a text.

1.1.6.5. Translation by Paraphrase Using Related Words

It will be useful to use this strategy when a SL term has an equivalent in the TL, but in a different form, and when it is more used in the source language than the target one.

1.1.6.6. Translation by Paraphrase Using Unrelated Words

This strategy is highly used in case where a source language item is not lexicalized at all in the target language. It is mainly based on the modification of a superordinate or the unpacking of the source item meaning.

1.1.6.7. Translation by Omission

This technique is used when a particular word has no equivalent in the TL, and it plays a little role in the development of the source text (i.e., its omission does not alter the meaning of the text) (Baker 1992:28-36).

1.1.6.8. Translation by Compensation

By compensation, Newmark (1982) means playing down a particular feature at the point it occurs in the ST, and introducing it elsewhere in the target text.

1.2. Idioms

1.2.1. Definition

One of the most important aspects of English is idioms. They are frequently used in a wide variety of situations, from friendly conversations and business meetings to more formal and written contexts. An idiom is a group of words which has, as a whole, a different meaning from the meaning of its constituents (The Longman Pocket Dictionary: 2001). In other words, the meaning of the idiomatic expression is not the sum of the words taken individually.

According to Langacher (1968:79), "an idiom is a kind of complex lexical item. It is a phrase whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of the morphemes it comprises". This definition shows two basic characteristics of the idiom; it is a complex lexical item, and its meaning cannot be inferred from its parts.

In his turn, Carter (1987:65) defines idioms as special combinations with restricted forms and meanings that cannot be deduced from the literal meanings of the words which make them up. Accordingly, an idiom is learned and used as a single unit. It should not be analyzed into its constituents; it is unchangeable and always carries a figurative meaning.

In addition, Ball (1968:1) finds that an adequate definition of an idiom is "the use of familiar words in an unfamiliar sense". Palmer (1996: 80), on the other hand, states that "an idiom is semantically like a single word, it doesn't function like one. A large number of idioms contain a verb and a noun, but although the verb may be placed in the past tense, the number of the noun can never be changed", for instance, the expressions 'kick the bucket' and 'kicked the bucket' (someone who dies) are largely used in English, in contrast to 'kick the buckets' which never occurs.

Jarvie (1993:148) writes:

> An idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot easily be worked out from
> the words it contains. Idioms have the potential to cause foreign learners of
> a language to some difficulty. If you say to a native speaker visiting a place
> for the first time, 'how did you find Stratford?' you will get the response
> 'great-I loved it; or I did not like the place at all'. But if you ask a non-
> native speaker the same question, the response may be' how did I find
> Stratford? The train took me there. Here 'find' is used idiomatically.

This example shows that native speakers can easily understand idioms; but non- native

speakers find a lot of problems in recognizing and using them.

1.2.2. Fixed Aspects of Idioms

Most idioms are unchangeable in the sense that they have fixed forms and meanings.

The grammar or the vocabulary, however, of an idiom can sometimes have a slight variation.

Variation	Example
Occasionally an idiom in the active voice can be used in the passive.	-Government ministers always **pass the bucket**, if they are challenged about poverty (blame someone else / refuse to accept responsibility). **-The bucket has been passed** from minister to minister. No one seems prepared to accept the responsibility.
Some verb-verb based idioms also have noun-compound forms.	-There is too much **buck-passing** in government nowadays. No one accepts the blame for anything.
One or more words in the idiom can be varied.	_Stop acting the fool / goat (stop acting stupidly).

Table 1: Fixed Aspects of Idioms (McCarthy and O'Dell, 2003)

1.2.3. Types of Idioms

According to Makkai (1972), (cited in Fernando, 1996:3), there are two types of idioms: idioms of encoding and those of decoding.

1.2.3.1. Idioms of Encoding (Identifiable)

Idioms of encoding are those idiosyncratic lexical combinations that have transparent meanings. This type of idioms could be best recognized through making a comparison between different languages by the use of proper prepositions. Therefore, 'at' is used instead of 'with' in the English expression 'drive at 70 m.p.h' (not drive with as in French).

1.2.3.2. Idioms of Decoding (Non-Identifiable)

Idioms of decoding refer to those non-identifiable and misleading lexical expressions whose interpretation could not be figured out by using only independently learned linguistic conventions. They include expressions like 'beat around the bush' and 'fly off the handle'. This type of idioms could be classified into lexemic and sememic.

A- Lexemic idioms include:

a. Phrasal verbs: e.g.,' to come up with',' to turn off ','to take part in'.

b. Phrasal compounds: e.g. 'black ice', 'black board'.

c. Incorporating Verbs: e.g.' man-handle'.

d. Pseudo-Idioms: e.g. 'spick and span', 'kit and kin'.

B- Sememic Idioms, on the other hand, usually, convey pragmatic meanings related to a particular culture. They include:

a. Proverbs: e.g. 'Chew of something over', 'A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.'

b. Familiar Quotations: e.g. 'Not a mouse stirring'.

McCarthy and O'Dell (2003:06) give another classification to the English idioms types focusing on their possible combinations, as it is shown in the following table:

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

Table 2: Different types of English idioms (McCarthy and O'Dell, 2003:06)

1.2.4. Characteristics of Idioms

Technically, an idiom is a kind of lexical unit in which the whole meaning of the expression is not apparent from the meanings of its components. Bell (1974:1-2) identifies certain features which are essential in the recognition of idioms. Some of these features are:

1.2.4.1.Alteration of Grammatical Rules

The idiomatic expression is not always grammatical, but it is established, accepted and used by native speakers of the language with a fixed structure and meaning.

E.g. 1. It's ages since we met (singular with a plural noun).

2. He is a friend of mine (possessive instead of personal pronoun).

1.2.4.2. Conventional Phrases

Idioms are special expressions which are almost known and agreed by all the members of a particular community.

E.g. 1. How are you doing? (Expression used to ask someone about his health).

2. Once in a blue moon (rarely, infrequently).

1.2.4.3. Alteration of Word Order

Idiomatic expressions in English, usually, do not respect the English word order.

E.g. 1. It may be well ahead of time (normal word order).

2. It may well be ahead of time (probably): idiomatic expression.

1.2.4.4. Figurativeness

The main feature that characterizes idiomatic expressions is that the words are used metaphorically. Therefore, the surface structure has a little role to play in understanding the meaning of the whole expression. For example, in 'to bury the hatchet', meaning 'to become friendly again after a disagreement', the meanings of the words 'to bury' and' the hatchet' are different from the meaning of the whole expression.

1.2.4.5. Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs are the most common type of idioms in English. Many of them carry idiomatic meanings that cannot be inferred from the form, unless the phrase is already known.

E.g. 1. After war began, the two countries broke off diplomatic relations (discontinue).

2. Most automobile companies bring out new modals each year (to show or introduce).

In addition to all these features that are important in the recognition of idioms, Baker (1992:63) identifies the grammatical and syntactic restrictions of idioms. For her, a speaker or a writer cannot normally do any of the following with an idiom:

a. Addition: Adding any word to an idiomatic expression would alter its meaning, or remove its idiomatic sense. Thus, adding the adverb 'very' to the adjective 'red' in 'red herring' (*very red herring) affects the figurativeness of its meaning completely.

b. Deletion: Deleting the adjective 'sweet 'and the article 'the' from the expressions 'have a sweet tooth' and 'spill the beans' would change totally their meanings. Hence, (*have a tooth) and (*spill beans) have no idiomatic sense.

c. Substitution: Idioms accept no replacement of words even if those words are synonyms. For example, 'the long and short of it' means the basic facts of a situation. The adjective 'long' cannot be substituted by another adjective, like tall, despite they have nearly the same meaning.

d. Modification: Any changing in the grammatical structure of an idiom leads to the destruction of the idiom's meaning. For instance, the expression (*stock and barrel lock) is no more idiomatic because of the altered order of the items in the expression 'lock, stock and barrel' completely.

e. Comparative: Adding the comparative form 'er' to the adjective 'hot' in the expression 'be in hot water' changes the conventional sense of the idiom which has the meaning of 'be in trouble'.

f. Passive: The passive form 'some beans were spilled' has a different meaning from its active form 'they spilled the beans' meaning 'they reveal a surprise'.

All these restrictions should be taken into consideration since they affect the degree of idiomacity of lexical items, and they may remove their main feature of figurativeness.

1.2.5. Classification of Idioms

The main feature that differentiates between the different kinds of idioms as easily understandable or totally opaque is the degree of idiomacity that an idiom carries. Idioms are categorized in a continuum from transparent to opaque called 'the spectrum of idiomacity'. The latter has an important role in the comprehensibility of idioms. Therefore, idioms can be divided into two broad categories:

1.2.5.1. Transparent-Opaque Idioms

Two types are included in this category:

1.2.5.1.1. Transparent Idioms

In this category, idiomatic expressions have a very close meaning to that of the literal one. Hence, transparent idioms are usually not difficult to understand and translate, because their meanings can be easily inferred from the meanings of their constituents (Fernando, 1996).

E.g. 1. Fight a losing battle: يحارب في معركة خاسرة

2. Stand firm: يثبت على موقفه

3. Back and forth: ذهابا وإيابا

1.2.5.1.2. Semi Transparent Idioms

The idiom usually carries a metaphorical sense that could not be known only through common use. i.e., the meaning of its parts has a little role to play in understanding the entire meaning. For example, 'break the ice' means 'relieve the tension'.

1.2.5.1.3. Semi-Opaque Idioms

This type refers to those idioms in which the figurative meaning is not joined to that of the constituent words of the idiom. In other words, the expression is separated into two parts; a part of the phrase has a literal meaning, while the other part has a figurative sense. For example, 'to know the ropes' means 'to know how a particular job should be done'.

1.2.5.1.4. Opaque Idioms

Opaque idioms are the most difficult type of idioms, because the meaning of the idiom is never that of the sum of the literal meanings of its parts. In other words, it would be impossible to infer the actual meaning of the idiom from the meanings of its components. This is mainly because of the presence of items having cultural references. These culture-specific items have a great influence on the comprehensibility of idiomatic expressions.

E.g. 1.To burn one's boat (to make retreat impossible).

2. Kick the bucket (die).

3. Spill the beans (reveal a secret) (Kharma, 1997: 41-42).

1.2.5.2. Culture-Free and Loaded Idioms

The main feature that leads to the difficulty in translating idioms is their culture specificity. An idiom, as the Oxford Dictionary (1983) defines it, is" a form of expression peculiar to a language". The term' peculiar', in this definition, means that idioms are

meaningful or they have sense in only one language or one culture. Therefore, it is difficult, if not impossible, to find such an idiom in another different language. Some idioms, however, as metaphors and proverbs, have direct equivalents and hence, they can be easily translated into other languages. An example of that is the English expression 'shoot a line' which has a direct equivalent in Arabic 'يتفاخر بنفسه'(to be proud of oneself). The difference between the two expressions is in the degree of transparency. 'shoot a line' is totally opaque (it is very difficult to understand it, and its meaning cannot be derived from the meanings of the words 'shoot' and 'line', and so it is a loaded culture idiom). The Arabic expression, however, is easily understandable, because it has a transparent meaning and thus, it is a culture free.

Having a wide knowledge of the cultural references, as well as the context of use is the key for better understanding and interpreting idioms, and mastering their different uses. In this respect, Ponterotto (1994:3) states that "it is necessary to understand metaphoricity and its culture-specific connotations in order to correctly interpret even simple texts."

1.2.6. Interpretation of Idioms

Translating idioms is one of the most difficult tasks for translators. It involves far more than the replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages, and it may involve discarding the basic linguistic elements of the SL text. According to Baker (1992:65), the first difficulty that a translator comes across, while translating idioms, is the ability to recognize and distinguish idiomatic from non-idiomatic usage. Recognition is difficult, and sometimes impossible, since many idioms can be slightly modified, while others can be discontinuously spread over a clause. Those which are easily recognizable include expressions which violate truth conditions, such as: *'it's raining cats and dogs, throw caution to the winds, storm in a tea cup, jump down someone's throat, and food for thought.'* Expressions which seem ill-formed, or which do not follow the grammatical rules of the

language are also included here, like for instance, 'trip the light fantastic, blow someone to kingdom come, put paid to, by and large'. Expressions which begin with 'like' (like structure-simile), as 'like a bat out of hell' and 'like water off a duck's back', also suggest that they should not be interpreted literally. As a rule, the more difficult an expression is to understand and the less sense it makes in a given context, the more likely a translator will recognize it as an idiom (Baker, 1992:65-66).

1.2.7. Use of Idioms

Any kind of language is not always appropriate in all occasions. In case where a writer or a speaker uses idiomatic language, s/he usually focuses attention on his shared cultural beliefs with the members of his/her community, and the kind of audience his speech is directed to. In this respect, s/he knows that it is not at ease to deliver a message using figurative language, and to have the same effect on the target reader as it is in the SL. This is mainly because unawareness of the connotations of a given expression or phrase may cause serious problems for those people being addressed. Idioms are also different and each one has a specific context to occur in. Standard idioms for example, are suitable for formal situations, while slang and informal ones are used in normal situations. Native speakers of a language can easily know the different uses of idioms and avoid the pitfalls of inappropriate ones. In case of non-native speakers, it will be better for them to learn idioms of the language the way they learn its other vocabularies, and try to master their appropriate contextual uses.

Idioms' uses, however, are highly related to the functions they fulfil in discourse. Therefore, Fernando (1996:1) provides three functional uses of idioms. For him, an idiom can be ideational, interpersonal or relational.

- Ideational idioms carry specific experiential representation like for example, 'bread and butter' (a simple bread and butter issue).

- Interpersonal idioms are those ones that represent an exchange between a speaker and a listener in a particular discourse, as when expressing conviviality in 'bless you' and disagreement in 'go to hell'.

- Relational idioms aim at connecting different parts of discourse to achieve cohesion and coherence like for example, in sum, on the other hand and in addition.

According to Langacher (1968:80), "if well suited to the occasion, metaphorical use of idioms is more colourful and effective than straightforward prosaic statements."

1.2.8. Idioms and Metaphors

Language is a system of communication that is used by a particular community of speakers. Metaphors constitute a large part of this everyday language. They have been recognized as rhetorical devices that compare two seemingly different objects. King (2000:216) defines metaphors as 'describing something by using an analogy with something quite different'. For example, 'the words are clear as crystal' is an idiom that expresses the similarity between the words and the crystal in the degree of clarity. According to King (2000:216), the ability to explain a complex vague expression making it more understandable and clear is the beauty of metaphors.

Moreover, both idioms and metaphors, as Maalej (2005) states, have a power of likening .i.e., they cannot be understood if they are taken literally. The difference between the two, however, can be marked through a separate existence of a basic correlation. The latter is

due to the fact that idioms in the past have an old reference which represents systematic metaphors.

According to Maalej, idioms and metaphors are culture-specific aspects of a particular language, i.e., the non-existence of a direct one to one correspondence in the TL of a particular idiom in the SL is the result of culture-specific metaphors. In this respect, Maalej states:

> Culture-specific metaphors are best represented in phraseology. Native language idioms and set phrases can blend together ethno-specific concepts pertaining to the world view of it speakers, to their national character, as well as their traditional social relations, thus becoming an embodiment of national dispositions and spiritual values. They are presented metaphorically indirectly and figuratively, which is why culture-specific metaphors produce idioms that have no corresponding counterparts in another language (2005: 215).

1.2.9. Idioms and Clichés

Prefabricated speech has a great extent use in performed language. Idioms, for example, which are "complex bits of frozen syntax, whose meanings are more than simply the sum of their individual parts" (Nattinger and De Carrico, 1992: 32), are considered as one feature of this type of speech. Idioms, however, are not the only kind of prefabricated speech; there are many other sorts of formulaic fixed phrases like clichés. Clichés are similar to idioms in that, they include patterns which are relatively frozen, but they are different from them, in the sense that these patterns are usually made up of extended stretches of language. Clichés like 'there is no doubt about it', 'a good time was had by all' and 'have a nice day' differs also from idioms in the way that they are easily understandable from the meaning of their individual constituents. In contrast to idioms which are often learnt as a single unit without taking into account the meaning of their parts (ibid.).

1.2.10. Idioms and Proverbs

Like idioms, proverbs "are special, fixed, unchanged phrases which have special, fixed, unchanged meanings" (Ghazala, 1995:142). Proverbs, however, are different from idioms in the sense that they display shared cultural wisdom. In other words, proverbs are easily understandable and, in most cases, the speaker may utter only the first part of the proverb to express the whole meaning. Thus, 'do not count your chickens' is used instead of 'do not count your chickens before they have hatched'

Although proverbs are considered as culture-specific because they are very bound to culture, many proverbs have direct equivalents in different languages. For instance, the English expression 'out of sight, out of mind' has a similar proverb in Arabic ' البعيد عن العين بعيد عن القلب '. Other examples may include:

Forbidden fruit is sweet: كل ممنوع مرغوب

A fox is not taken twice in the same snare: لا يلدغ المؤمن من جحر مرتين

Like a bull in a china shop مثل الأطرش في الزفة

Idioms and proverbs are not always transparent, and their meanings are sometimes ambiguous. Yet learners are fascinated by them since they are always intrigued with expressive colorful language. Idioms and proverbs are also a part of figurative language that produces cultural information, and their use shows that the person is a part of that social group that uses them (Hatch and Brown, 1995:202-203).

1.2.11. Idioms and Fixed Expressions

Fixed expressions like 'having said that, as a matter of fact, ladies and gentlemen, as well as and all the best' are similar to idioms in the sense that they allow a little or no variation in form. Fixed expressions, however, are different from idioms in the way that they

have almost transparent meanings. Hence, the meaning of 'as a matter of fact' for example, can easily be inferred from the meaning of its constituents, in contrast to idioms like 'pull a fast one' or 'fill the bill', where the meaning of the whole expression is different from the meaning of its parts. But in spite of its transparency, the meaning of a fixed expression, as that of an idiom, is sometimes more than the sum meanings of its components. Similar to idioms, meeting any fixed expression brings up in the mind of the reader all the aspects of experience associated with the different contexts in which the expression is used. This feature is the leading cause to the widespread use of fixed and semi-fixed expressions in any language (Baker, 1992: 63).

Conclusion

Idioms always cause a lot of problems to learners of a foreign language. Students usually find difficulties in recognizing an expression as idiomatic or not, and then understanding its exact meaning. This is mainly due to the fact that idiomatic expressions carry a metaphorical sense that makes the comprehension of an idiom difficult if not impossible. In other words, the meaning of an idiom cannot be deduced from the meaning of its constituent parts. In addition, the source and the target cultures have a great influence on the comprehensibility as well as the translatability of idioms. Hence, better understanding and using idioms needs both knowing their historical background and familiarity with both the S and the T cultures, and having a clear idea about their different situational context.

Chapter Two

Test

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the difficulties students face during the process of translating idioms, mainly the problem of non- equivalence. It also aims at identifying learner's strategies in interpreting both familiar and unfamiliar idioms, from English into Arabic and vice versa, especially when they do not find a direct equivalence in the target language. This chapter provides also details about the research strategy adopted to check the hypothesis together with the means used to collect data for analyzing it, including site and sample selection, and the analysis approach adopted in this research.

2.1. Research Methodology

The objective of this study is to test how first year Master students translate idioms from English into Arabic and vice versa, and what are the pitfalls they face while translating. Case study is the appropriate way to study the practice of students in reality, and to collect the suitable data to analyze them. Therefore case study is the research strategy that will be used in this research.

2.2. Data Collection and Sampling

Our research is based on a case study of the English Department students. From this department, a number of students are chosen randomly to be tested in order to achieve our research objective. This case study is not meant to be an exhaustive one of all the students of the English Department because a study like that will take a longer time to end up with reliable results. This is mainly because the researcher has to move in his analysis from first to third year students in order to have a representative sample and to produce meaningful outcomes. Therefore, first year Master students are chosen as a sample for this study mainly because we assume that these learners possess an adequate linguistic competence in both English and Arabic together with some knowledge of the English culture. These students are majoring in applied languages, have studied translation for six semesters, and they are supposed to have some knowledge about idioms. The test is given to twenty one (21) students taken randomly from all students of first year Master. The test is used in our study as the tool of research because it is the appropriate technique for better answering the research question and justifying the hypothesis.

2.3. Description of the Test

The test includes four main parts. The first part is a test of knowledge made up of twelve (12) de-contextualized idioms selected on the basis of their frequency in English use and according to the degree of transparency. The second part is related to the first one. It consists of the same twelve previous idioms, but they are taken in their different contexts of use in order to make a comparison between the results in part one and two. The third part includes ten (10) Arabic idioms given to students to be translated into English. The aim

behind this is to investigate the students' pitfalls in translating idioms in both English and Arabic. The fourth part, however, deals with the students' procedures or strategies while translating English idioms into Arabic and vice versa.

All the selected English idioms are taken from the Dictionary of English Idioms in Use', 'Exercises on idioms', and 'Essential idioms in use'. However, Arabic idioms are taken from the book of Ghazala (2004) and 'Kharma (1997).

2.4. Data Analysis

2.4.1. Translation of De-Contextualized Idioms into Arabic

The students' test aims at investigating the student's knowledge of English idioms and the degree of comprehensibility of these idioms. In other words, it attempts to examine the students' degree of familiarity and non-familiarity with idioms, and the extent of their usage in the process of learning English as a foreign language. The test, as it is stated before, consists of twelve English idioms; each group of three idioms represents one category, chosen randomly from the four categories of idioms (transparent, semi transparent, opaque and semi opaque), and they vary in their difficulty according to the spectrum of idiomacity. The following table shows the degree of familiarity and unfamiliarity of students of English with English idioms:

Idioms	Number of correct and incorrect answers		Percentage of familiarity category
	Correct Answers	**Incorrect Answers**	
-**Transparent Idioms**			
1. A ray of hope	21	0	
2. Draw the line at	04	17	
3.Turn a blind eye to	19	02	
Total	44	19	
Percentage	**69.84%**	**30.15%**	**69.84%**
-**Semi-Transparent idioms**			
4. Break the ice	05	16	
5. keeps one's word	13	08	
6. See eye to eye	07	14	
Total	38	25	
Percentage	**60.31%**	**39.68%**	**60.31%**
-**Semi-Opaque idioms**			
7. Beat around the bush	17	04	
8. Make both ends meet	04	17	
9. Know the ropes	02	19	
Total	23	40	
Percentage	**36.50%**	**63.49%**	**36.50%**
-**Opaque idioms**			
10. A basket case	01	20	
11. A barrel of laughs	04	17	
12. A horse of a different color	0	21	
Total	**05**	**58**	
Percentage	**7.93%**	**92.06%**	**7.93%**
Total of all correct answers	**110**	**142**	
Percentage of all correct answers	**43.65%**	**56.34%**	

Table 03: Percentage of Student's Familiarity and unfamiliarity with English
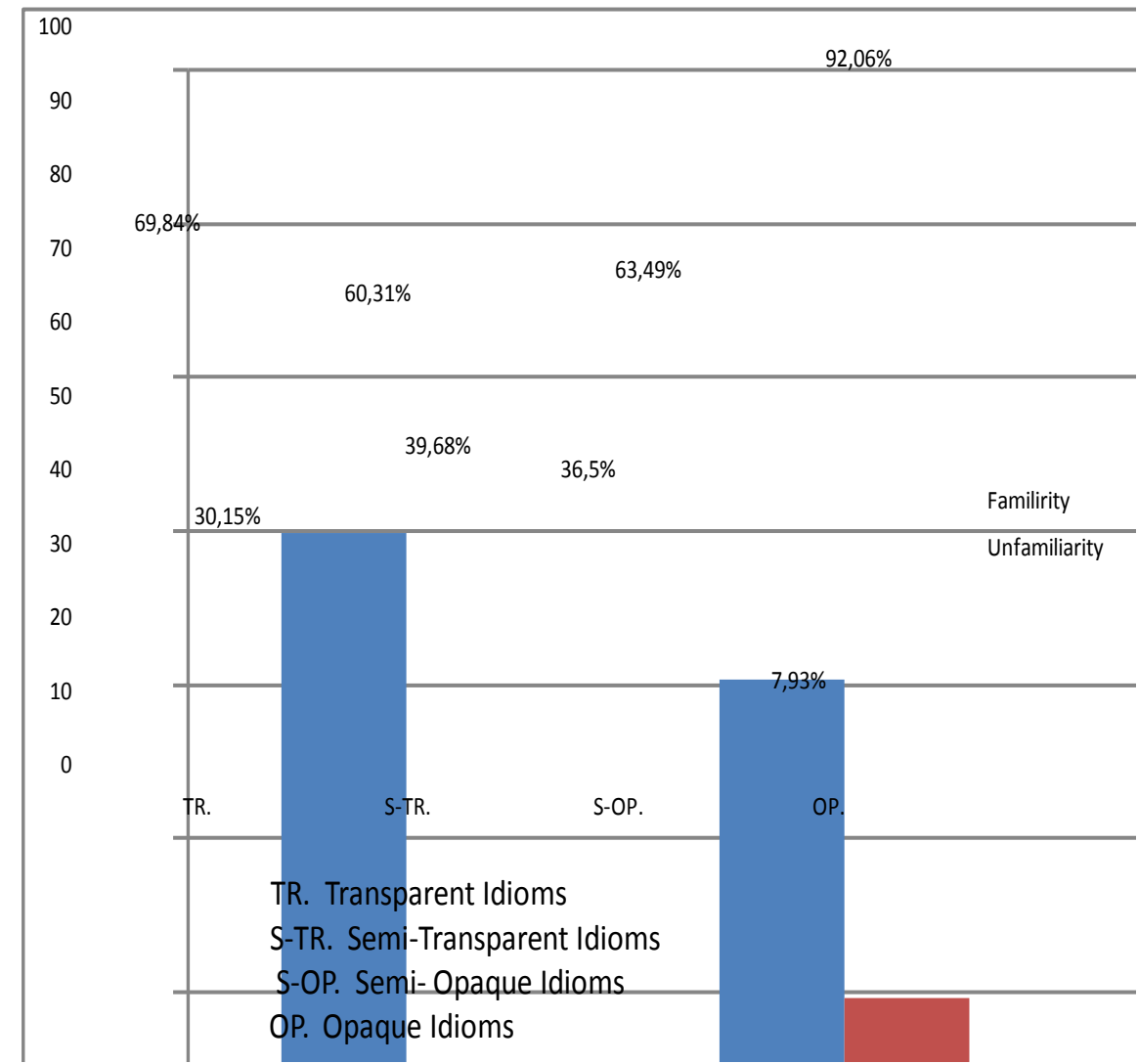
Idioms

Figure 01: Percentage of Student's Familiarity and unfamiliarity with
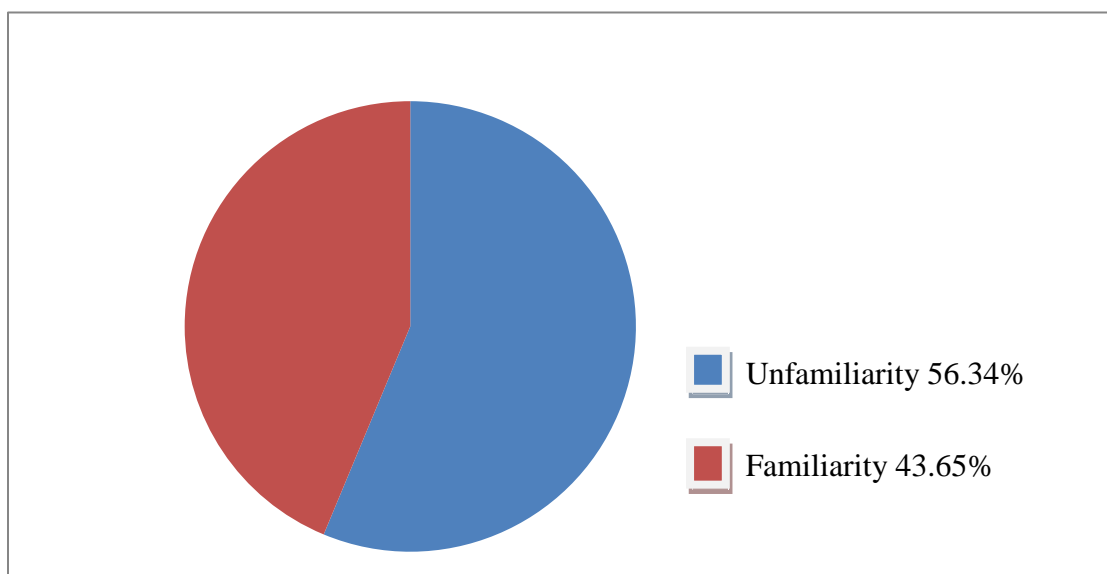
English idioms

Figure 02: Familiarity and unfamiliarity with de-contextualized English idioms

2.4.1.1. Results

Table 3 above reveals that the degree of idiomaticity has a great influence on the percentage of students' familiarity and unfamiliarity with English idioms. It is observed that the highest score is recorded for transparent idioms with 69.84% for familiar idioms and 30.15% for unfamiliar ones. Semi-transparent idioms also recorded a high score and come in the second position after transparent idioms with a percentage of 60.31% for appropriate guesses and 39.68% for inappropriate ones. The other two categories of idioms (semi-opaque and opaque) get low scores and hence, they come in the last positions with rates of 36.50% for correct answers and 63.49% for incorrect ones for semi-opaque idioms, and 7.93% and 92.06% for opaque ones. In the whole we can say that students of English are familiar with English idioms with a percentage of 43.65% and unfamiliar with them with a rate of 56.34%. It is also noticed that the percentage of familiarity decreases with the increase in the degree of

idiomacity (69.84%, 60.31%, 36.50%, and 7.93%), in contrast to the percentage of unfamiliarity which increases from one category to the other (30.15%, 39.68%, 63.49%, and 92.06%).

2.4.1.2. Analysis

Transparent idioms recorded the highest score because they can be easily understood from their literal meanings. In other words, students can infer the meaning of the idiom related to this category by only knowing the meaning of its constituents. Transparent idioms so, are easy to interpret by most students because of the high degree of closeness between their literal and figurative meanings, and their simple structure that results in a clear and simple translation into Arabic. The high degree of transparency of idioms belonging to this category has also facilitated the use of their literal meanings to derive the figurative meanings. This can be applied to idiom one and three in the first category 'a ray of hope' and 'turn a blind eye to' which are made up of simple and clear words that help students to draw a clear metaphorical image leading to the comprehension of the idiomatic meaning. In contrast to idiom two 'draw the line at' which, although it belongs to the transparent category, is difficult to interpret in an appropriate way because in the surface it has the meaning of drawing a line. Therefore, the majority of students translated it as 'يرسم الخط على, ارسم هدفك , ارسم الطريق إلى '. So, familiarity decreases as the degree of idiomatcity increases. Semi-transparent idioms or partial idioms, in comparison to transparent ones, are somehow difficult to interpret. This is mainly because the expression is usually divided into two main parts; one part has a literal meaning while the other part has an idiomatic sense that cannot be understood from the constituent words. An example of that is idiom one 'break the ice' in the transparent category where the first part of the expression 'break' is lexically understandable, because it has a

literal meaning, while the second part 'the ice' is idiomatic. As a whole it has the meaning of relieving the tension. In semi-opaque idioms, the percentage of difficulty and unfamiliarity increases to 63, 49% together with the degree of idiomaticity making this category nearly in the same position with opaque idioms. In opaque idioms so, the degree of complexity and indirectness increases to the highest level leading to an opaque and ambiguous combination that cannot be understood by students of English unless it is already learned.

2.4.2. Translation of English Idioms into Arabic within the Context of Use

Part two of the test consists of the same previous twelve idioms, but in this case they are used with their context. The major aim behind designing such a part is to show the importance of the context of use in the translation of idiomatic expressions, and the way it helps students to interpret idioms easily and correctly. The outcomes of the test of this part are shown in the following table:

Idioms in Context	Acceptable Idioms	Unacceptable Idioms	Total Percentage of Familiarity
-**Transparent Idioms**			
1. Although her doctors told her that she has a dangerous illness, she still has **a ray of hope** to recover.	21	00	
2. He was utterly unprincipled, but he **drew the line at** black mail.	11	10	
3. You should not really drink here, but I'm willing to **turn a blind eye to**	21	00	
Total	**53**	**10**	
Percentage	**84.12%**	**15.87%**	
- **Semi-Transparent idioms**			**55.15%**
4. Andy likes to tell a jock to **break the ice.**	10	11	
5. If Mary said she will bring you the book, she will do it: she	18	03	

always **keeps her word.**		
6. After a long discussion, they did not **see eye to eye** on this matter.	14	07
Total	42	21
Percentage	**66.66%**	**33.33%**
- Semi-Opaque Idioms		
7. Let's come to the point; why should you always **beat around the bush**	19	02
8. That man made me lose half my salary last night. Now I wonder how I will **make both ends meet.**	05	16
9. I will enjoy my job as soon as I **know the ropes.**	04	17
Total	28	35
Percentage	**44.44%**	**55.55%**
- Opaque Idioms		
10. If Gloria has one more crisis, she will be **a basket case**	05	16
11. Let's invite Chang to our party. He is **a barrel of laughs**	07	14
12. If he wants money to buy a land, that's **a horse of a different color.**	04	17
Total	16	47
Percentage	**25.39%**	**74.60%**
Total of all answers	139	113
Percentage of all answers	**55.15%**	**44.84%**

Table 04: Frequency of Student's Familiarity with the Four Categories of English Idioms
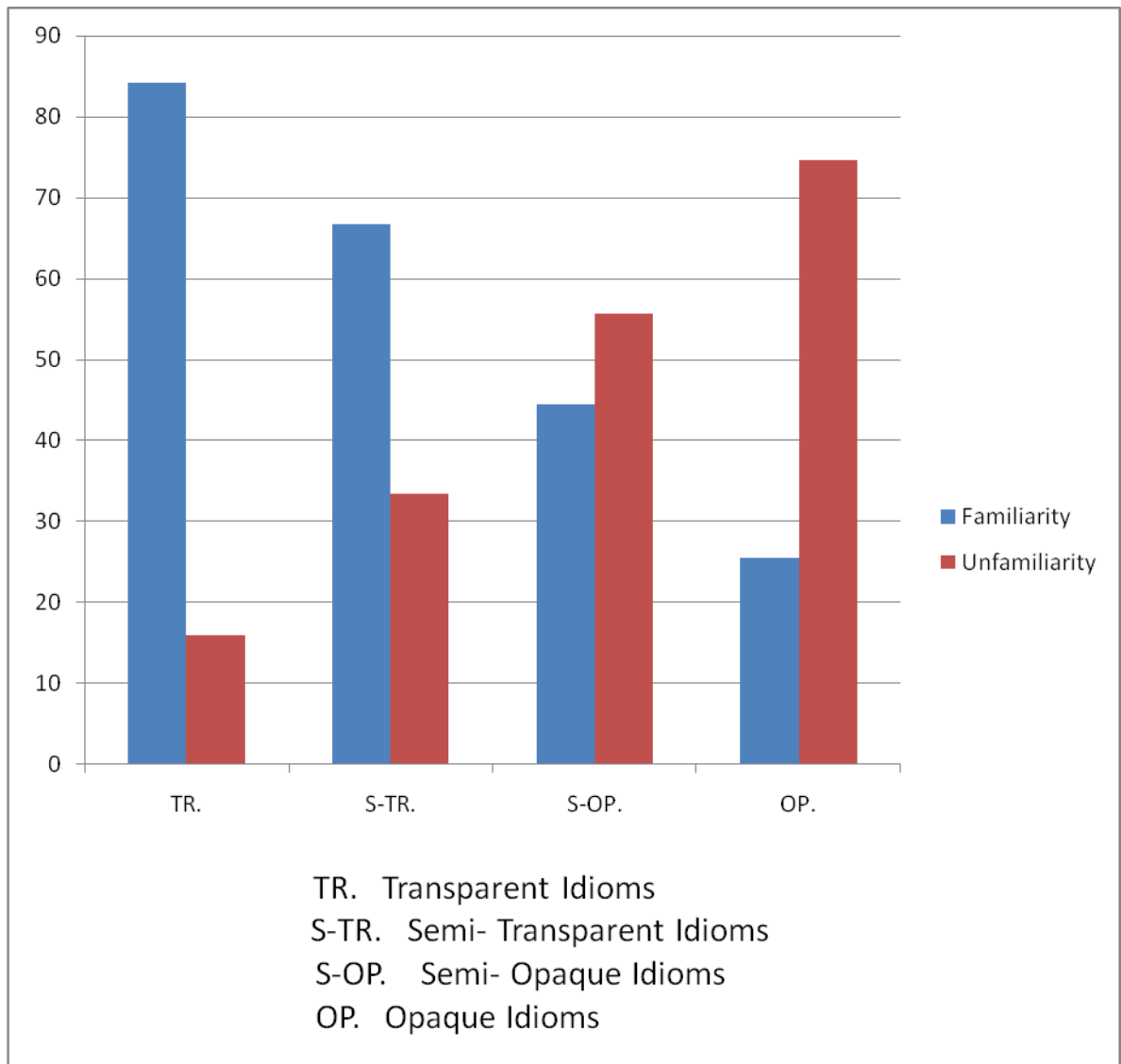
Figure 03: Percentage of Students' Answers within the context

Unfamiliarity 44.84%
Familiarity 55.15%

Figure 04: Familiarity and unfamiliarity with English idioms in context

2.4.2.1. Results and Analysis

By making a comparison between the results in part one and part two, we can notice that the number together with the percentage of correct answers increase. In the first part, where idioms are taken in isolation, the general percentage of familiarity with English idioms is 43.65%. In the second part, however, when these idioms are used in their situational context, the rate of acceptable translations increases to 55.15%.These results show that the context of use has a great impact on the comprehensibility and translatability of idioms. It helps the translator a lot in inferring the exact meaning of the idiom and, hence, provides correct answers. The situational context also in both the SL and TL removes any ambiguity and helps the translator to give direct interpretations. So, the context of use is of a major importance in translating any piece of discourse.

part one 44.84%

part two 55.15%

Figure 05: Difference in Percentage between Total Correct Answers in Part One and Two

2.4.3. Translation from Arabic into English

In this part, a test consists of ten Arabic idioms taken in their context of use are given to students. The purpose of this test is to examine the students' abilities to translate idioms from their mother language to their second language of learning. The outcomes of this test are represented in the following table:

N	Idioms	Appropriate Guesses		Inappropriate Guesses	
		Number of Correct Answers	Percentage	Number of Incorrect Answers	Percentage
1	إنهم يطبقون **شريعة الغاب**	06	30%	14	70%
2	سيداتي سادتي **أعيروني أذانكم**	15	75%	05	25%
3	الصديق الحقيقي **لا يطعن في الظهر**	10	50%	10	50%
4	قتل جاره **ببرودة دم**	12	60%	08	40%
5	انه رجل **عظيم الشأن**	05	25%	15	75%
6	**يستطيع أن يصنع المعجزات**...	07	35%	13	65%
7	كان الجنود **فريسة سهلة في الحرب**	06	30%	14	70%
8	داك الرجل **يتقلب في الثراء**	10	50%	10	50%
9	كان **يلعب على الحبلين**	03	15%	17	85%
10	سيق الناس إلى الحرب كما تساق **النعاج إلى المذبح**	03	15%	17	85%
	Total	77		123	
	Total of all translations	200			
	General Percentage	**38, 5%**		**61, 15%**	

Table 5: Percentage of Students' Appropriate and Inappropriate Guesses

90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

70% 75% 50% 50% 60% 75% 65% 70% 85% 85%

30 % 25% 40% 25% 35% 30% 50% 50% 15% 15%

appropriate

inappropriat
e

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
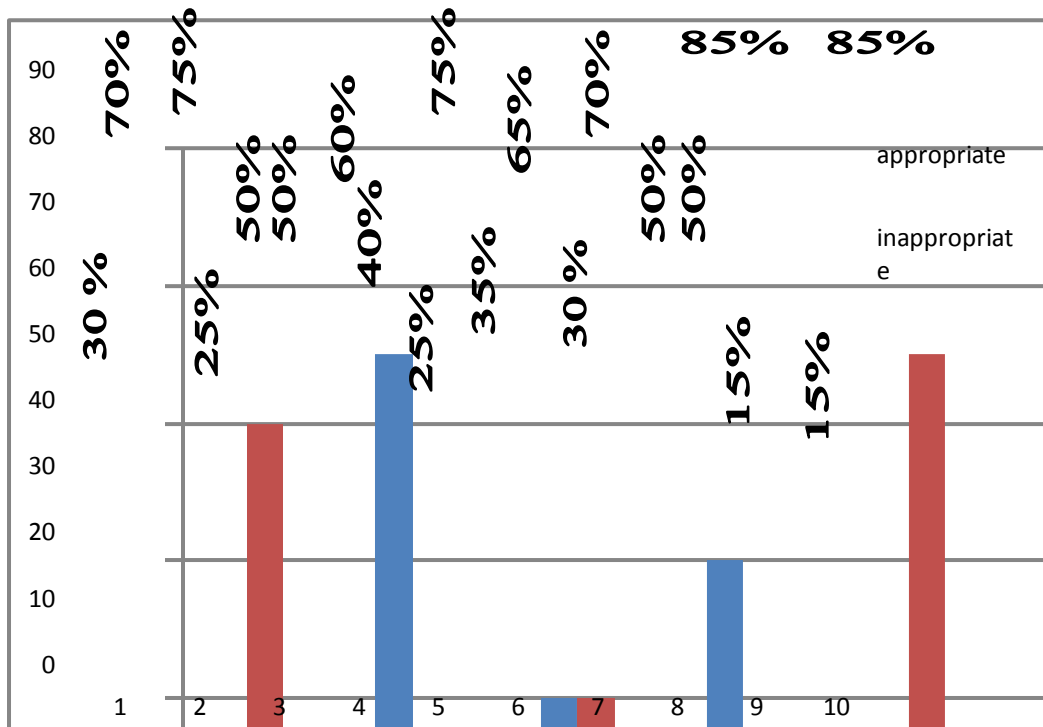
Figure06: Percentage of Students' Appropriate and Inappropriate Guesses

appropriate
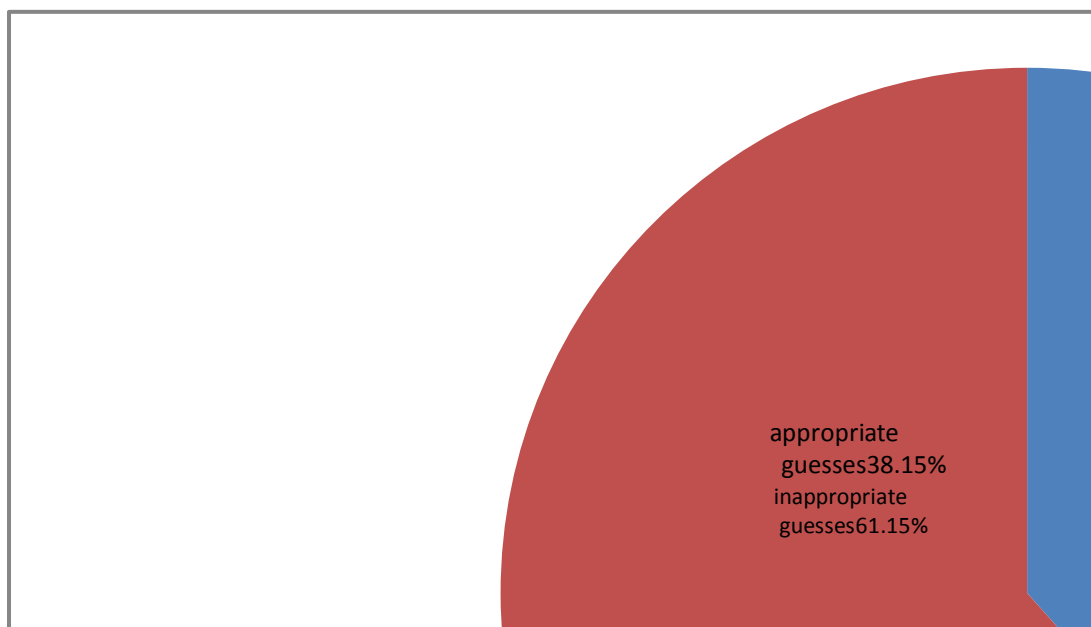guesses38.15%
inappropriate
guesses61.15%

Figure 07: General Percentage of Student's Appropriate and Inappropriate Guesses

2.4.3.1. Results and Analysis

Table 5 reveals that out of 200 translations there are 77 appropriate guesses (38.5%) and 123 inappropriate ones (61.15%). From these results, we can notice that there is a lower rate of successful guessing in the translation from Arabic into English than from English into Arabic in part two, which records 139 correct answers out of 252 (55.15%). This confirms that translating idioms from Arabic into English is a difficult task especially if students are not familiar with these idioms. These results also show that an idiom is hardly possible to guess unless it is already learned. Another point is that idiom 02 'سيداتي سادتي أعيروني أذانكم' has recorded the highest score (15 correct answers out of 20) (75%), in contrast to idioms 09 and 10 (سيق الناس إلى الحرب كما تساق النعاج إلى المذبح, كان يلعب على الحبلين) which have only three correct answers for both of them, but a percentage of 85% for incorrect ones.

2.5. Students' Strategies While Translating Idioms

To check the validity of the hypothesis that students' abilities of using some accurate strategies to translate idioms may help to translate them correctly, the students' translations are investigated.

The results of the students' strategies in the translation of English idioms into Arabic are represented in the following table:

Strategy	Idioms	Number of appropriate guesses	Total Answers	Percentage in each category
Word **for** **Word** **Translation**	A ray of hope	10	76	60.31%
	Draw the line at	07		
	Turn a blind eye to	02		
	Break the ice	08		
	Keep one's word	01		
	See eye to eye	07		
	Beat around the bush	10		
	Make both ends meet	05		
	Know the ropes	10		
	A basket case	04		
	A barrel of laughs	05		
	A horse of a different color	07		
Translation **by Omission**	00	00	00	00%
Translation **by** **Paraphrasing**	A ray of hope	07	40	31.74%
	Draw the line at	04		
	Turn a blind eye to	03		
	Break the ice	03		
	Keep one's word	05		
	See eye to eye	00		
	Beat around the bush	04		
	Make both ends meet	01		
	Know the ropes	02		
	A basket case	06		
	A barrel of laughs	03		
	A horse of a different color	02		
Translation **by** **Compensation**	00	00	00	00%
Translation **by Loan Words**	00	00	00	00%
Translation **by Illustration**	00	00	00	00%
Translation **by**	A ray of hope	00	10	7.93%
	Draw the line at	00		
	Turn a blind eye to	00		
	Break the ice	03		
	Keeps one's word	05		

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Cultural Substitution	See eye to eye	00			
	Beat around the bush	00			
	Make both ends meet	00			
	Know the ropes	00			
	A basket case	00			
	A barrel of laughs	02			
	A horse of a different color	00			
Translation by a Superordinate	00	00	00	00%	
Total Answers	126				

Table 06: **Students' Strategies in Translating English idioms into Arabic**

2.5.1. Translation of English Idioms into Arabic

2.5.1.1. Analysis

What is observed from the results in Table 06 is that except word for word strategy, students' use of other translation strategies is limited. The results show that the first strategy that has a great extent use by students of English is word for word translation (60.31%). Paraphrasing (31.74%) and translation by cultural substitution (7.93%) are less used. Word for word strategy is highly used by students because they generally think that it is the best strategy to translate idioms correctly, efficiently and effectively. According to them, the use of other strategies may distort or remove the idiom's figurative meaning and hence, distort the message.
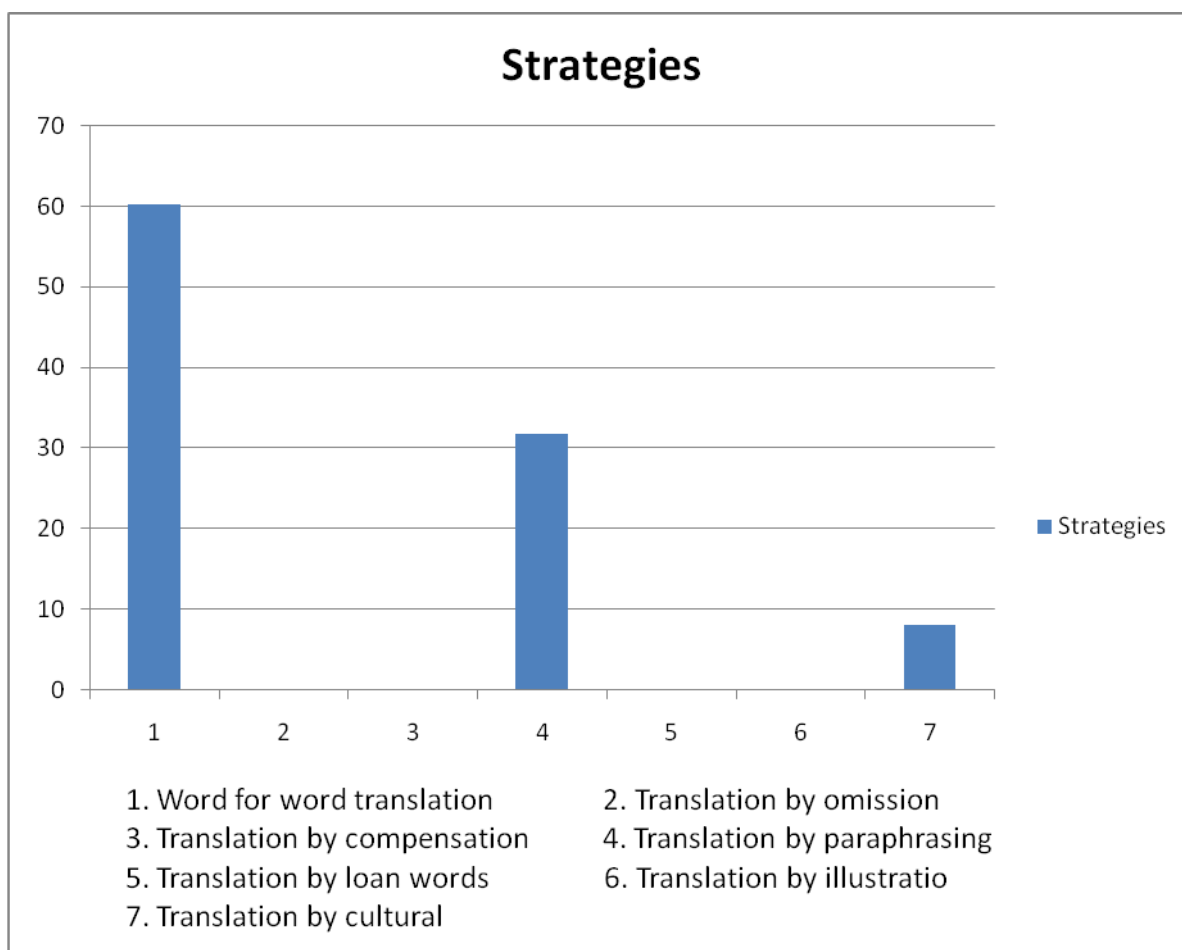
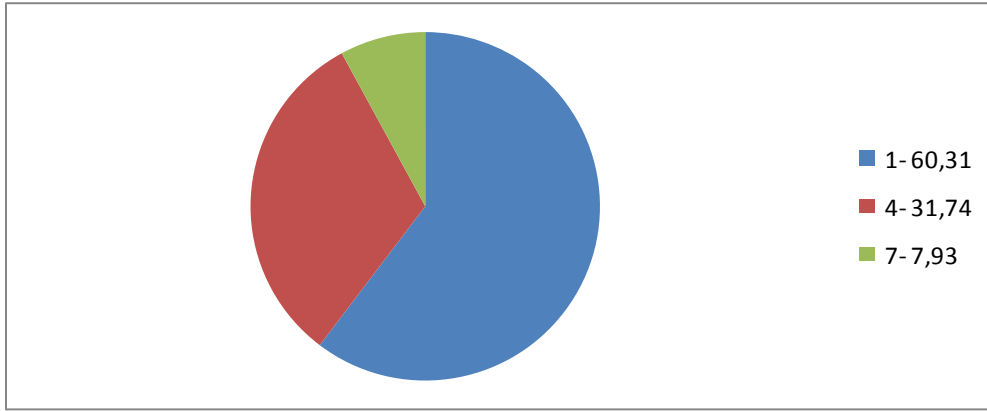**Figure 08: Students' Strategies from English into Arabic**

Legend:
- 1- 60,31
- 4- 31,74
- 7- 7,93

Figure 09: Total percentage of students' strategies from English into Arabic

2.5.2. Translation of Arabic Idioms into English

The results of the students' strategies in the translation of Arabic idioms into English are represented in the following table:

Strategy	No	Idioms	Number of Appropriate Guesses	Total Answers	Percentage in each Strategy
Word	01	إنهم يطبقون **شريعة الغاب**	14		
	02	سيداتي سادتي **أعيروني أذانكم**	06		
	03	الصديق الحقيقي **لا يطعن في الظهر**	05		
for Word	04	قتل جاره **ببرودة دم**	15		
	05	انه رجل **عظيم الشأن**	04	82	41.41%
	06	يستطيع أن **يصنع المعجزات**	10		
Strategy	07	كان الجنود **فريسة سهلة في الحرب**	03		
	08	داك الرجل **يتقلب في الثراء**	07		
	09	كان **يلعب على الحبلين**	08		
	10	سيق الناس إلى الحرب **كما تساق النعاج إلى المذبح**	10		
Translation by Omission		00	00	00	00%
Translation by Compensation		00	00	00	00%
Translation	01	اتهم يطبقون **شريعة الغاب**	02		

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Category	No.	Arabic	Count	Total	Percentage
	02	سيداتي سادتي أعيروني أدانكم	06		
By	03	الصديق الحقيقي **لا يطعن في الظهر**	04		
	04	قتل جاره **ببرودة دم**	02	41	20.70%
	05	انه رجل **عظيم الشأن**	06		
Paraphrasing	06	يستطيع أن **يصنع المعجزات**	03		
	07	كان الجنود **فريسة سهلة في الحرب**	06		
	08	ذاك الرجل **يتقلب في الثراء**	07		
	09	كان **يلعب على الحبلين**	05		
	10	سيق الناس إلى الحرب **كما تساق النعاج إلى المذبح**	00		
Translation by Loan Words		00	00	00	00%
Translation by a superordinate		00	00	00	00%
Translation	01		04		
	02		02		
	03		08		
	04		03		
By	05		08	59	29.79%
	06		05		
	07		06		
Explanation	08		06		
	09		07		
	10		10		
Translation by Illustration		00	00	00	00%
Translation	01	إنهم يطبقون **شريعة الغاب**	00		
	02	سيداتي سادتي **أعيروني أدانكم**	04		
	03	الصديق الحقيقي **لا يطعن في الظهر**	03	16	8.08%
By	04	قتل جاره **ببرودة دم**	00		
Cultural	05	انه رجل **عظيم الشأن**	02		
	06	يستطيع **أن يصنع المعجزات**	02		
	07	كان الجنود **فريسة سهلة في الحرب**	05		
Substitution	08	ذاك الرجل **يتقلب في الثراء**	00		
	09	كان **يلعب على الحبلين**	00		

	10	سيق الناس إلى الحرب كما تساق النعاج إلى المذبح	00		
Total of all answers		**198**			

<div align="center">

<u>Table 07</u>: Students' Strategies in Translating Arabic Idioms into English

</div>

2.5.2.1. Analysis

The figures show that, as in the translation from English into Arabic, word for word translation also comes in the first position with a percentage of 41.41%. What is also noticed is that although some translators do not consider it as a strategy of translation and state that it is acceptable only when translation is impossible, the strategy of explanation comes in the second position with a reasonable score of 29.79%. The strategy of paraphrasing and cultural substitution records scores of 20.70% and 8.08% while the remaining ones are not used at all by students. Hence, we can say that learners find many difficulties while translating both Arabic and English idioms, and for this reason they stick to either word for word translation or explaining the idiom meaning.
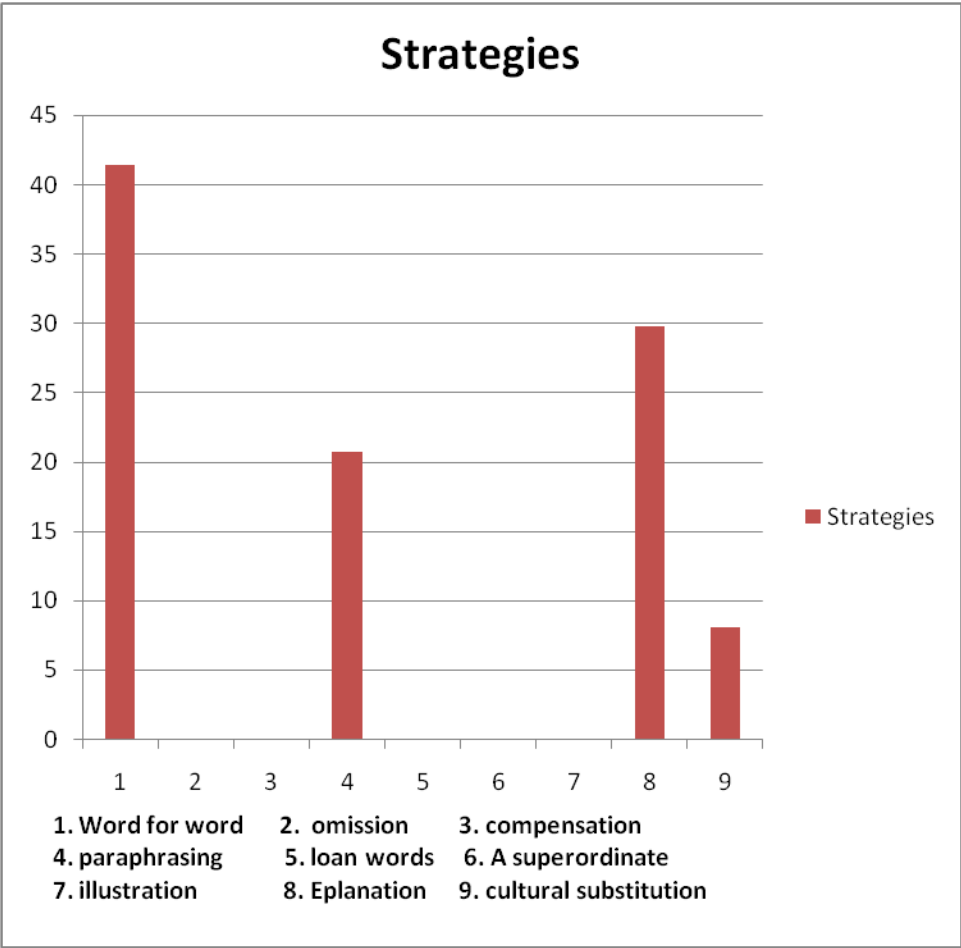
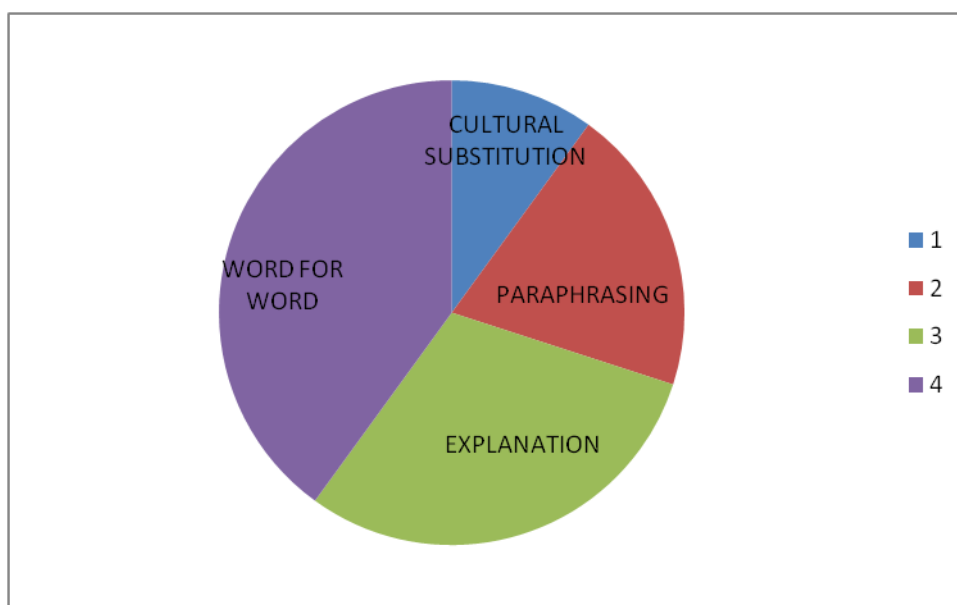**Figure 10: Students' Strategies from Arabic into English**

Figure 11: **Total Percentage of student's strategies from Arabic into English**

Conclusion

In short, translating idioms is one of the most problematic issues for ESL/EFL learners. The meaning is considered as the main leading cause to failure in achieving the appropriate translation of a particular idiom, because it may confuse those not already familiar with this idiom. One feature that characterizes all idioms is that it should be learned and used as a single unit of language in order to end up with a meaningful expression meaning. Students, however stick to word for word strategy because they think that the use of other strategies may change the words of the idiom and hence, changes its meaning. But this strategy is not always appropriate in such a type of translation. In case of transparent and semi-transparent idioms, it may help students to infer the meaning of the idiomatic expression through the meaning of its parts. But, for opaque and semi-opaque idioms, it is impossible to

do so, because taking into consideration the meaning of the idiom individual parts may totally confuse students.

General Conclusion

This study is concerned with investigating the problems of translating idioms from and into English, and the procedures used by Master1 students to find equivalents in the target language. The results show that students of English really find considerable difficulties in guessing the appropriate meaning of idiomatic expressions. Their familiarity with English and especially with Arabic idioms is somehow low, and their ability to interpret unfamiliar idioms is limited. This is mainly due to the fact that idioms are artistic and colorful expressions of the language in which the meaning is not obvious from the meaning of the constituent words. Hence, one way to understand and interpret an idiom is to see it in context.

The social context has an important role in facilitating the figurative interpretation of idiomatic expressions, in both English and Arabic, and hence, providing correct answers. Students' translations of de-contextualized idioms usually end up with unsatisfactory results simply because an idiom is largely related to the situation that gives it a special meaning. So, students should take into consideration the situation because it is apparently essential to make a correct translation.

In addition, the findings show that students do not use the accurate strategies that may help to achieve appropriate guesses. In both English and Arabic translations, they stick to word for word translation. Paraphrasing and cultural substitution strategies are sometimes used, but not in an appropriate way. As a result, students usually succeed in translating transparent and semi-transparent idioms, but when it comes to opaque and semi-opaque categories they are totally confused, because this type of idioms has to be taken as a single unit in order to provide acceptable translations.

Consequently, better understanding, using and translating idioms need mastering their situational occurrences and using the accurate strategies to solve the problems of non-equivalence and familiarity with the differences between the source and target languages. Students should also be exposed, more and more, to idiomatic expressions in schools and universities in order to extend their knowledge.

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ملخص

دراستنا هده عبارة عن بحث لغوي حول التكافؤ فوق مستوى الكلمة فهي تعتمد على دراسة الصعوبات التي

يحدثها عدم التكافؤ في ترجمة العبارات الاصطلاحية من اللغة الانجليزية إلى اللغة العربية و العكس و الطرق التي يستعملها طلبة الأولى ماستر لإيجاد المعادلة المناسبة في اللغة الهدف. هده الصعوبات لها عدة أسباب من بينها ال طبيعة المعقدة التي تتميز بها العبارات الاصطلاحية كونها خاصة بثقافة معينة تستعمل في الأساليب   الانشاية و يجب دراستها كوحدة متكاملة للوصول إلى الترجمة الصحيحة لكن الطلبة لا ياخدون بعين الاعتبار هده الميزة الأساسية للعبارات الاصطلاحية حيث أنهم يلجئون إلى الترجمة الحرفية و هدا ما يؤدي الى الترجمة الخاطئة. السبب الثاني الذي له تأثير كبير على فهم و ترجمة العبارات الاصطلاحية هو السياق اللغوي الذي تظهر فيه العبارة حيث انه يساعد كثيرا الطلبة على استنتاج المعنى المناسب للعبارات الاصطلاحية و تفادي الغموض.

في الجانب التطبيقي قمنا بتحليل الاختبار الذي أجريناه للطلبة مع إعطاء بعض التعليقات على ترجمتهم لنقوم بعدها بمقارنة بين ترجمات الطلبة من الانجليزية إلى العربية مع مثيلتها من العربية إلى الانجليزية لتوسيع دائرة التحليل و محاولة اقتراح حلول. خلال التحليل اطهرت لنا النتائج الصعوبات الموجودة خلال ترجمة العبارات الاصطلاحية من و إلى الانجليزية لهدا يجب على الطلبة زيادة توسيع معارفهم بالعبارات الاصطلاحية كما أظهرت النتائج أيضا أن السياق اللغوي يساعد كثيرا طلبة الانجليزية على الحصول على المعنى الصحيح للعبارة زيادة على ان باستثناء الترجمة الحرفية يمكن القول إن استعمال الطلبة لباقي الطرق في ترجمتهم يعتبر محدودا.