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Non-Equivalence at Idiomatic and Expressional Level and the Strategies to Deal with: English Translation into Persian

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this paper is to throw some light on non-equivalence at an idiomatic and expressional level in a contrastive analysis framework from English translation into Persian. The present paper makes an effort to analyze six main strategies such as using an idiom or an expression of similar meaning and form, similar meaning but dissimilar form, borrowing the source language, translation by paraphrase, translation by omission of a play on idiom or expression and translation by omission of entire idiom or expression (Baker, 2011). Hence, the core properties of this issue are described both in English and Persian languages. Moreover, within the text, there is a comparison which is conducted to highlight the matches and mismatches between these two languages. Further, other translators may well take this information as one of the main platforms from which they find out some strategies in translation idioms and expressions. This study concludes Baker's (2011) proposed strategies are applicable and then proposes some weighty recommendations to be taken by translators in such a demanding issue.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is worthy to point out idioms and expressions enrich the languages and produce a strong impression on people. This originates in the fact that they rarely occur on their own. And that is why translating idioms and expression seem to be one of the complicated issues for translators. The difficulty of finding adequate equivalent arises from the fact that idioms and expressions usually carry certain stylistic and specific cultural connotations. As a result, it might be possible to claim diverse the problems inherent in rendering idioms and expressions are classified into two certain categories: identification problems and choice of equivalent.

Furthermore, both the starting point and the product in translating idioms and expressions are a piece of linguistic materials. Also, the assumption is that the source text and the target text stand in a relation of equivalents, and the message of the former one has been transferred into the latter. In this case, it is possible to analyze translating idioms and expressions as a process of replacing the SL linguistic units by corresponding in the TL. However, the main problem is to identify idioms and expressions through a text. Therefore, regarding linguistic knowledge, translators should be knowl-

edgeable in the extra-linguistics aspects. This importance includes the SL culture-specific, beliefs of a certain community and customs.

Another significant factor in order to identify idioms and expressions from the rest of the text is the separation between the form and meaning. The difficulty with this kind of view is that the same meaning appears in two different forms. With this view is that the finding equivalent is extremely difficult because of the fact that they are not linguistically analyzable. It is important to note that translators in such circumstances, first of all, interpret the cultural, social and functional aspects of idioms and expressions and then select the equivalents capable of performing the same function in the same situations. Moreover, at this point translators reconstruct the original in their minds through two main consecutive channels: First, by breaking idioms and expressions down into analyzable units in the receptor language; second, by their own knowledge in order for discovering the most appropriate equivalents.

Oxford Advanced Leaner's Dictionary (2010) defines an idiom as "a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words" (p. 771), and defines

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an expression as "things that people say, write or do in order to show their feelings, opinions and ideas" (p. 537). Webster's New World Dictionary of the American English (1988) defines idioms and expressions as 1) the language specific a district, community or class; the syntactical, grammatical or structural form peculiar to a language; 2) an idiom and expression established in the usage of a language that is an unusual item either in grammatical construction or in having a meaning that cannot be derived as a whole from the conjoined meanings of their elements; 3) style or form of artistic expression and idiom (as in painting, writing, composing) that is characteristic especially of an individual, a period or movement, or a medium or instrument (Linli Chen, 2009).

Moreover, Baker (1992) has claimed that idioms and expressions which contain culture-specific items are not merely understandable and possible to distinguish. However, the main issue is the meaning they convey and its association with culture-specific context which can make it understandable or difficult to translate (Mohammadi and Davtalab, 2011). Larson believed idioms and expressions are a string of word whose meaning is different from the meaning which is expressed by the individual words (Hassan and Tabassum, 2014). Newmark (1988) said that an idiom or expression as an "extended" metaphor that has two main functions: pragmatic and referential. The pragmatic function investigates the senses and delight. However, referential one examines the mental process, concept, and quality (p. 104). Based on McMordiew (1983) it is possible to claim that idioms and expressions are a number of words which in the case of standing together, mean something different from the individual words when they stand lonely (p. 4). According to Zhang (2009), Idioms and expressions are a type of multiple words units that have both literal and figurative meaning. In most circumstances, the imaginary meaning of an idiom cannot be readily divested from the literal meaning of the individual constituent in the unit (p. 6).

Palmer (1976) in his book Semantic, A New Outline, has claimed an idiom semantically like a single word but it does not function like one. However, grammatically an idiom may consist of more than one word. Therefore, the meaning of an idiom cannot be predicted from the meaning of the words that composed it (p. 98). According to McMordiew (1983), we can say that an idiom or an expression is a number of words which [when they are] taken together, mean something different from the individual words of the idiom or expression when they stand alone through a certain text (Vulanović, 2014). Moreover, Moon (1998) has pointed out that an ambiguous term, used in conflicting ways. In lay or general use, idioms and expressions have two major meanings. First, idioms and expressions are a particular means of expressing something in the language, music, art, and etc., which characterizes a person or group. Secondly (and much less common in English), idioms and expressions are a particular lexical collocation or phrasal lexeme, peculiar to a language (Strakšienė, 2009). Larson (1984) calls the idioms and expressions as particular collocation or fixed combination of words which have a meaning as a whole, but the intention and meaning of the combination are not the same as the meaning and intention of the individual words (p. 142).

Further, one of the most important problems in translating idioms and expressions is to choose the closest equivalents in the TL. According to Newmark (1988), in translating idioms from the source language into the target language; it is particularly difficult to match equivalent of two languages both in meaning and frequency perspectives. He believes that the main problems, a translator's faces, are not grammatical but lexical, i.e. words, collocations, and fixed phrases or idioms (p. 28). Moreover, Crystal (1980) said that the idioms and expressions are semantically and often syntactically limited. In a semantic aspect, it is significant to know the meaning of the individual words cannot individually produce the meaning of idiomatic and expressional items as a whole. In a syntactic aspect, the words do not permit the usual variability they show in another context (p.179). According to Strakšienė (2009), one of the problems a translator faces in translating idioms and expressions is the lack of equivalence at the idiomatic and expressional level. All languages have idioms and expressions. But it is not easy to find an equivalent in the target language that corresponds ones in the source language in both form and meaning. Idioms and expressions may contain a culture-bound item and this poses a problem for the translator (Akbari, 2013).

Idioms and expressions are embedded factors in the culture. Hence, testators, in order to dominate the precise meaning, should have less or more knowledge about the source language religion, local conditions and totally its cultural backgrounds. And that is why idioms and expression have been known as a social phenomenon. Moreover, translators should be careful about the relationship between culture and language; because, to some extent, culture and language improve in a society at the same time. As a result, there are some cultural items which are not in its counterpart in another language.

As regard, an idiom does not follow the meaning of individual words, it is possible to conclude that it does not follow the compositional meaning either. Hence, it is an "accepted phrase, construction, or expression contrary to the usual patterns of the language or having a meaning different from the language or having a meaning different from the literal" (Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, 1972). Fernando (1996) suggests three ways of recognizing idioms and expressions: 1. That is a combination of words, for example, red herring, make up, smell a rat, the coast is clear, however, even a word can be an idiom, though there is a debate over this. 2. The idiom or expression is something which is accepted and used although it first started as something new and on an ad hoc basis. 3. The meaning of an idiom or an expression cannot be obtained from its words. The above characteristics of an idiom or an expression are very general and can be used to identify not only idioms but also proverbs, similes, collocations, etc (Sadeghpour, Khazaeefar, Khoshsaligheh, 2015).

1.1. Hypothesis

In light of the discussion exhibited in the rest of introduction above, the present study provides the following hypothesis:

- Translation of idioms and expressions might be challenging.
- Attempts to translate English idioms and expressions into Persian will feature some certain translation strategies.
- The mentioned Baker's (2011) idioms and expressions translation strategies are applicable.

The above hypotheses draw upon the blurry image of idioms and expressions' translation strategies as they have not been made clear to translators. The present paper aims to clarify the concept of non-equivalence at an idiomatic and expressional level in Persian language and presents six certain strategies in order to help translators. Moreover, this study has developed a rigorous evaluation methodology for idioms and expressions, which contains theorists' and scholars' suggestions and judgments.

1.2. Research Questions

This research is based on two certain questions:

- What is the role of non-equivalence at an idiomatic and expressional level in translation?
- What is the role of translation strategies in translating idioms and expressions from the English language into Persian?

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The notion of difficulties at the idiomatic and expressional level that made by culture specific-items have a great effect on translating which have gained more momentum and attention than the past. Hence, the existence of different definitions and classifications for translation strategies indicate that strategies are vibrant and convey the relevant concept in translation. Even knowledgeable translators used to encounter difficulty in translating idioms and expressions. Subsequently, this aspect of translation gives translators incentive to study and engagement to cover more deeply about this weakness. Furthermore, a myriad number of idioms and expressions have a similar word order and grammatically forms with the common clauses and sentences, so it is an imperative urgent to be distinguished by translators from one to another in order to avoid word-by-word or literal translation. These problems might be one of the most brilliant obstacles that impede during the process of translation, and then by making gaps mislead translators.

1.4. Significance of Study

Idioms and expressions are an inalienable part of any language that has a basic role. In the translation of idioms and expressions, the most important factor for translators is to extract the appropriate equivalences both semantic and syntactic in the target language. Since the meaning cannot be understood from a single word; therefore, it makes a serious problem for translators. The process of translation especially idioms and expressions oblige translators to have a perfect knowledge of both source and the target language; to find the most appropriate inter-lingual equivalences. Moreover,

people use the idioms and expressions in completely various certain circumstances that are different from one language into another; however, it conveys the similar meanings. Hence, the significance of this study lies on the strategies to cope with non-equivalence at idiomatic and expressional level.

1.5. Method and Materials

This paper used the descriptive and qualitative method of writing and is a library research, the main instruments have been chosen from some related books and some certain pamphlets and articles. Further, the major theoretical framework of this research has been chosen from Baker's (2011) In Other Words. Moreover, this paper especially concentrates on the third chapter, Equivalence Above Word Level (pp. 50-86), which discusses those obstacles and difficulties at the idiomatic and expressional level, that prevent translators to find the appropriate equivalences. Also, the strategies to cope with these difficulties have mentioned clearly and exemplified. In addition, the first step taken in the process of writing in this research was gathering the related sources about this aspect. Another step was to concentrate on related previous works that were done by the other researchers (whether finding difficulties or practical strategies). The next step put Mona Baker's (2011) In Other Words book under the close inspection and gathering the related ideas about problems in idiomatic and expressional translation.

2. TRANSLATION OF IDIOMS AND EXPRESSIONS

2.1. Difficulties

Once an idiom or expression has been identified and interpreted in a suitable way, the next step is how to translate and convey the message. The main difficulties in which were involved in translating idioms and expressions are totally different from interpreting ones. As a result, this section researcher classifies three main difficulties based on Baker (2011, pp. 71-75) at this level. These factors are as following:

 An idiom or expression in ST may have no equivalent in the TT: An idiom or expression may have no equivalent in the target language. The way a language chooses to declare or does not different meanings and conceptions cannot be predicted and only occasionally match the way another language chooses to express the same meanings. One language may declare a given meaning by means of a single word, another may express it by means of a transparent fixed expression or a third may express it by means of an idiom and so on (Baker, 2011, p.71).

A formula such as *Merry Christmas* which related to specific social occasions provides a good example. This originates in the fact that there is not any direct equivalent in Persian. Because based on Persian's culture winter has not been celebrated; instead, the spring has been glorified. Hence, غيد مبارک is the closest equivalent. Therefore, translators should be meticulous for understanding such difficulty and

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select the best strategy to deal with it. Idioms and expressions that contain culture-specific items are not necessarily understandable. It is not the specific items an expression contains but rather the meaning it transfers and its association with culture-specific which can make it untranslatable or difficult to translate (Baker, 2011, p. 71). For example, the Persian expression زيره به كرمان بردن (literally: 'to transfer cumin to Kerman') does not have a direct equivalent in English. Therefore, the culture-specific item is one of the main difficulties in translating of idioms and expressions.

- 2. Idioms and expressions may have a similar counterpart, but different context in use: Another difficulty in translating of an idiom or expression may have a similar counterpart in the target language, but the different context of use; the two expressions may have different connotations, for instance, or they may not be pragmatically transferable (Baker, 2011, p.72). Let the cat out of the bag is an English idiom which means to reveal the secret. In Persian, دهن أخى كردن ('let the cat out of the bag') also has a usage. In Persian, such an idiom means by animus thought to reveal what has been heard and indicate the hostility. As a result, the context of use is different.
- 3. Idioms and expressions that may be used in both idiomatic and literal in SL: Fernando and Flavell (1981) have been discussed about the difference in the rhetorical effect of using idioms and expressions in general and of using particular types of idioms or expressions in the source and target languages and quite rightly conclude that translation is an exacting art. Idioms and expressions more than any other feature of language demand that the translator is not only accurate but highly scrupulous to the rhetorical nuances of the language (Baker, 2011, p.75).

Idioms and expressions have been defined in many different ways. Occasionally, by some signs such as consciously wrong ordering might be possible to understand them. However, the difficulty is made when the recognizable border between idiomatic and literal translation is not clear. Hence, a translator should be scruples to find them out and discovers whether possible to translate literally. Therefore, the third difficulty indicates the amalgamation of both literal and idiomatic meaning through the translation of a certain idiom or expression. In such a case, a translator may translate an idiom or expression literally. For example, *Let's go Dutch* is an English idiom that refers to money which anybody should pay his or her own. A translator may translate a literally: 'let's go who you are from Netherland').

In the following, practical strategies in order for applying these difficulties were examined:

2.2. Practical Strategies

In translating idioms and expressions translators meet various difficulties that are not easy to overcome. As it was pointed already the main problem is the lack of an equivalent in idiomatic and expressional level in the target language. It would be perfect if translators could find the closest equivalent in the TL as the original one. It is one of the most dif-

ficult factors in translating because idioms and expressions have unpredictable meaning and grammar. Thus, translators should select the best strategies to cope with such difficulties

Lörscher (1991) describes translation strategy as "a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language to another" (p. 76). Newmark lists the following translation strategies, which particularly fall along a cline of concentration, one extreme being total focus on the source text/language and the other important element being total focus on the target text/language: wordfor-word translation, literal translation, faithful translation. Then, he accentuated the undeniable role of semantic translation, and idiomatic translation in this regard (Sadeghi and Farjad, 2014). Further, Nida and Taber (1969) discussed three translation strategies for idioms and expressions: 1. Translating idioms and expressions with non-idiomatic and expressional ones, 2. Translating idioms and expressions with their pairs in the TL, 3. Translating non- idioms with idioms (p. 106).

Many theorists and researchers have been proposed different strategies which practically deal with idioms and expressions. A variety of translation methods have been developed to provide different ways. This originates in the fact that an attempt has been made to make the slight changes from the SL into the TL. Furthermore, it is worthy to point out idioms are practiced without knowing their precise origins. As a result, translators are supposed to elect the appropriate strategies or methods and come over such difficulty. Further, Seguinot (1989) stated there are three practical strategies in translation of idioms and expressions:

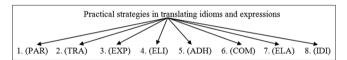
- "Translating without interruption for as long as possible:
- Correcting surface errors immediately;
- Leaving the monitoring for qualitative or stylistic wrongs in the text to the revision stage." (Adiel and Ahmed, 2016)

Gottlieb (2010) proposed eight practical strategies to deal with non-equivalence at idiomatic and expressional level:

- Paraphrase (PAR) is a kind of translation strategies in which the source language idiom and expression are correspondently rendered as the target language phrase. It is an expression of the meaning of an idiom using the words as a phrase often in an attempt to make the meaning easier to understand.
- 2. Transposition (TRA) is a translation strategy in which the SL idiom and expression are correspondently rendered as a receptor language pairs.
- Expansion (EXP) is a kind of translation strategies which the original language idiom and expression are correspondently rendered as a TL phrase through using a circumlocution.
- Elimination (ELI) is a translation strategy that the SL idiom and expression are set aside while translated into the target language text without creating a considerable semantic deficiency in the target text.
- 5. Adherence (ADH) is a grammatical relation between idioms and expressions in the SL and the TL texts in

- which the idiomatic expressions in the SL are rendered metaphorically in the target text.
- 6. Compensation (COM) is a kind of translation strategies in which a non-idiom SL is correspondently translated as a target language idiom. In this strategy, translators may either delete or play down a feature such as an idiomaticity at the point where it happens in the source and introduce it elsewhere in the receptor language.
- 7. Elaboration (ELA) is a type of translation strategies in which a non-idiom SL is correspondently translated as a receptor language idiom using more words in the target text with no counterparts in the source language. It is done for sake of clarity and understandability of the SL text
- 8. Idiomatization (IDI) is a grammatical relation between idioms and expressions in the SL and the TL texts in which non-idioms and expressions in SL text are rendered metaphorically while translated into the target text (Rashdi and Mavaddat, 2014).

2.3. Gottlieb Practical Translation Strategies in a Sight



3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Idioms and expressions like any aspect of language include two main types. The very first one is universal, and second refers to culture specific. The universal aspect of language relates the linguistic and grammatical point of view which surrounded by any language. Although, culture specific or lexical specific items due to the fact that is particular in any region are difficult to understand. Moreover, in the following six certain strategies based on Baker (2011, pp. 76-86) will be analyzed. In this regard, at first, in order for shedding light the subject, the researcher analyses the main strategies and then exemplifies any related difficulty from the English language into the Persian one.

3.1. Using an Idiom or Expression of Similar Meaning and Form

Translators through this strategy fall under the categorization of same semantic and syntactic point of view in both languages. This strategy involves using an idiom or expression in the receptor language which conveys roughly the same meaning as that of the source-language idiom or expression and, in addition, consists of equivalent lexical counterparts (Baker, 2011, p. 77). It is important to point out this strategy rarely achieved because languages differ from any single concept.

3. 2. Using an Idiom or Expression of Similar Meaning but Dissimilar Form

The main reason in which idioms and expressions are not allowed to translate word- by- word might be the result of unintelligible concept in the receptor language. Thus, the best translation strategy to translate idioms and expressions is the one close to the natural ones in the target language which have the same meaning and effect as the original text. Moreover, idioms and expressions are based on the realization of the context. They lead readers to the metaphorical atmosphere; hence, should not be translated literally. During the process of conveying the message between two languages, a translator is obliged to make the same impact on the readers in the TL as the impact on readers in the SL.

This originates in the fact that occasionally a translator faces the differentiation in lexical aspect rather than semantic one between two languages. In this case, the meaning of the target idiom or expression is as same as the source one, but the major difference is in the lexical items. Based on this strategy a translator follows the semantic equivalent to convey the message from the source language into the target language. Baker (2011) has claimed that it is often possible to find an idiom or expression in the target language which has a meaning similar to that of the source language idiom or expression, but which consists of different lexical items (p. 78).

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e.g.1: Contradictory views مند و نقیض .
e.g.2: Her heart raced. 2. غلبش را از جا کند .
e.g.3: Her eyes were beginning to fill with tears.
چشم هایش رنگ به رنگ شد .
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3.3. Borrowing the Source Language Idiom or Expression

Some factors such as differentiation in textual pragmatic and ideological point of view between two languages make sense and lead to set up the uniqueness of idioms and expressions. Due to the fact that conveying the message is one of the main requirements and widely demands by the target language readers, a translator obliges to fill the gap between the source language and the target language by borrowing idioms and expressions. Baker (2011) puts out just as the use of loan words is a common strategy in dealing with culture-specific items, it is not unusual for idioms or expressions to be borrowed in their original form in some contexts (p. 79).

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e.g. 1: Road of Rome مقدس رم المجدده عليه المجدد عليه المجدد e.g. 2: All the road lead to Rome. معمدره ها به رم ختم میشود.g. 3: A king of clubs معمدره ها به درم ختم میشود.g. 3: A king of clubs
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3.4. Translation of Idiom or Expression by Paraphrase

The meaning of idioms and expressions, for example, do not follow the meaning of individual words and occasionally cannot be found in the target language. Hence, translators paraphrase and clarify the used idioms and expressions with the extra explanation in the TT. Paraphrases are alternative ways of expressing the idioms and expressions in the same content. Moreover, they have a basic role in a wide range

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of natural languages processing task, such as summarization. Therefore, they are useful to make clear any perplexing issue such as culture specific-items. Furthermore, Baker (2011) has claimed that this is by far the most common way of translating idioms and expressions when a counterpart cannot be found in the target language or when it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic or expressional language in the target text because of differences in stylistic preferences of the source language and the target one (p.80).

e.g. 1:I mustgetagriponmyself. 1. نبایداختیار مرااز دستبدهم. e.g. 2: Attended courses. 2. دوره های زیادی را دیدم

e.g. 3: Brida nodded. 3. ابريداسرش را به نشانه تاكييد تكان داد

3.5. Translation by Omission of a Play on Idiom or Expression

In order to be able to convey the message from the source language into the target language, a translator is allowed to translate idioms and expressions literally. This condition becomes the bearer when no alternative is possible to take place instead of the counterpart in the SL. Further, based on this strategy a translator sheds light the message without distortion. In addition, Baker (2011) strongly remarked in her book that this certain strategy involves rendering only the literal meaning of an idiom and expression in a context that allows for a concrete reading of an otherwise playful use of language (p. 84).

e.g. 1: And those cards arranged in no particular order began to have a troubling effect on her reasoning.

و آن کارت های نامرتب کم کم نظم شعور او را به هم می ریختند. 1

3.6. Translation by Omission of Entire Idiom or Entire Expression

Baker (1992) has claimed that this strategy may sound rather drastic and impact on translating, but in fact, it does no harm to omit to translate a word or expression in some contexts. If the meaning conveyed by a specific item or expression is not important enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations, translators can and often do simply omit to translate the word or expression in question (Hosseinnia, 2014). Moreover, Baker (20111) proposed that this is a certain strategy that an idiom or an expression may sometimes be omitted altogether in the target text. She added this may be because it has no close match in the target language, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons (p. 85).

4. CONCLUSION

Throughout different part of paper, it was shown that all the strategies proposed by Baker (2011) are applicable in translation of idioms and expressions from the English language into the Persian one. Those Baker's proposed strategies were as following using an idiom or an expression of similar meaning and form, similar meaning but dissimilar form, borrowing the source language, translation by paraphrase, translation by omission of a play on idiom or expression and translation by omission of entire idiom or expression. It is

worthy to point out through the research it was found that, 1. One of the main difficulties is how to recognize idioms and expressions within the source text. This originates in the fact that some of them have same grammatical structures as the other units in a language. 2. It was found that lacking enough information about the SL culture is the second main area of difficulty. 3. It was found out that, the main trend of translators in order for translating an idiom and expression is a literal translation. 4. It was found that translation of idioms and expressions might be challenging. However, miscomprehension to recognize idioms and expressions in the original text is the main reason to mistranslate them.

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