

The Problems of Translating Towards a Pragmatics Perspective with Respect to Daily Composition in English Language Department's Students

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ABSTRACT:

It is common knowledge that the translation of figurative expressions often summarily referred to as metaphors is one of the many practical problems if not the most important particular one facing the translator of literary or non, literary texts, and the students of English and translation as well.

These problems can be linguistic or cultural or both, due to the wide dichotomy between the source language and the target language, and the culture that these media of expression represent.

Since the scope of metaphor is very wide (it may be single – viz one word – or extended; a collection, an idioms, an allegory, a proverb, a sentence , a complete imaginative texts [1]. An attempt has been made here to deal with one of its components: that of idioms.

Keywords: pragmatics, translation, perspective, composition, English to Arabic translating .

مشاكل الترجمة نحو منظور عملي فيما يتعلق بالتكوين اليومي لطلاب قسم اللغة الإنجليزية

علي قمار علي

الملخص:

من المعروف أن ترجمة التعبيرات التصويرية غالباً ما يشار إليها بإيجاز على أنها استعارات هي إحدى المشكلات العملية العديدة إن لم تكن الأكثر أهمية والتي تواجه مترجم النصوص الأدبية أو غير الأدبية وطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية والترجمة أيضاً .

يمكن أن تكون هذه المشاكل لغوية أو ثقافية أو كليهما ، بسبب الانقسام الواسع بين لغة المصدر واللغة الهدف ، والثقافة التي تمثلها وسائل التعبير هذه.

نظراً لأن نطاق الاستعارة واسع جداً (قد يكون مفرداً - بمعنى كلمة واحدة - أو ممتد ؛ مجموعة ، مصطلحات ، قصة رمزية ، مثل ، جملة ، نصوص خيالية كاملة [1]. تم إجراء محاولة هنا للتعامل مع أحد مكوناته: المصطلحات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: (البراغماتية، الترجمة، المنظور، التأليف، الترجمة من الإنجليزية إلى العربية).

Introduction:

Idioms have ever proved to be pitfalls to translator. R. Gleme, a professor at the school of interpreter in the university of Geneva, cites the following story in this respect: "On one occasion, a Russian delegate in the course of a discussion in a conference attacked an American delegate and at some point in his a dialectics, said in Russia, "There's a dead dog hidden here", by which he meant merely, "that's where the shoe pinches" [2]. The interpreter misrendered is into there's a nigger in the wood pile. He did not, unfortunately, remember that the head of the American Delegation, the under secretary of State for labor, was a coloured man ... there was diplomatic incident"[3].

On occasions inaccurate translating of idiom may mean very little to a native or non- native speaker or even the result will utterly bewildering – and possibly high amusing.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the nature of idioms to describe typical methods that can be used in translating idioms across Arabic and English, for which , to my best knowledge, no former work has been carried out (save few articles by Newmark and others on translating metaphor from English into language other than Arabic.

Last but not least, this work is far from having exhausted every aspect of the subject. Since the scope of every component of figurative language covers huge interesting subject which may furnish material for broader research [3].

1. Metaphor and figurative language:

Figurative language, in the most general sense, refer to any manner or method by which a writer or speaker "figurative forth" or gives distinctive shape or form to a succession of words and ideas (Robinson, 1970: 205). In this sense, particular kinds of sentences, like antithesis and parallelism, are figures, and particular ways of transferring meaning or words from one signification to another, like metaphor, are figures[5].

The oldest known instance of figurative language dates from the end of the third millennium B.C. in Mesopotamia shortly before the second world war an Oxford archaeological expedition discovered at Sippar (Iraq) a buried stone thought to have been served as a lintel to the main doorway of a school. The words inscribed with a uniform on it were these: " May he who sits in the place of learning shine like the sun" [6]

Metaphor is traditionally taken to be the most fundamental form of figurative language. The word metaphor comes from the Greek word metaphors derived from meta meaning, "over", and pher in, "to carry". It refers to an particular set of linguistic process whereby aspects of one object are "carried over" or transferred to another object, so that the second object is spoken of as if it were the first.

There are various types of metaphor, and the number of "objects" involved can vary, but the general procedure of transference" remain the same:

*Awake for Morning in the Bowl of Night
Has flung the stone puts the stars to flight.*

(Edward Fitz Gerald, The Rub'aiyat of Omar Khayyam)

It's what's under the bonnet that counts;

(Car advertisement)

Figurative language is language which does not mean what it says. In the two examples above: Night is not a bowl of water, and morning does not throw stone into it, and Care do not wear bonnets [6].

In the history of rhetoric, metaphor has been described as the most important "semantic change" (or shift) and the most elaborated creative device in language and literature. Hence it is not surprising that so much has been written on metaphor since Aristotle's poetics).

2. The term "idiom" :

The term "idioms" is derived from the Greek *idios*, which mean "private", personal [7].

In English as well as some other language which have borrowed it, the term has expanded in the course of time to acquire other

meanings.

In English the concept has been called lexical cluster, (semantically) exocentric expression, collection (not to be confused with Firth's use of collocation) and phrases, frozen collocation, formula and locution.

Although the terms تركيب لغوي خاص وتعبير مخصوص . اصطلاح . Have been found in respectively, the combination عبارة اصطلاحية seems to be the dominant usage in Arabic [7].

2.1 The definition of idioms:

Most dictionaries as well as scholars define idioms as: a conventionalized form of expression whose meaning cannot be deduced from the meaning of its components when they stand alone [8].

Idioms are the stuff of conversation and their foundation in the spoken as well as the written language places them in the forefront of a language's evolution.

They can appear in poetry or in the language of Shakespeare;

*Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
While, like a puffed and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
and rocks not his own rede.*

(Shakespeare, Hamlet).

And in other literary genres;

*" It was lucky for Flory that at present he was
too busy to have time to think. The whole camp was at sixes and
sevens since his long absence,*

(George Orwell, Burmese Days).

In his preface to *Immaturity*, O.B. Shaw says: I did set up one condition in my early days, I resolved that I would write nothing in my early days, I resolved that I would write nothing that would not be intelligible to a foreigner with a dictionary, like the French Voltaire; and I therefore avoided idioms.

Later on I came to seek idioms as being the most highly vitalized form of language ... (Quoted from Kennedy, 2010: 48).

Ideas expressed by idioms produce a strong impression on the reader, idioms do not just convey some information to the reader's mind, they appeal to his emotions, his esthetic perception, his background. An idiom makes one feel part of one's own language community, one's cultural heritage.

English is very rich in idioms expressions; in fact it's a difficult to speak or write English without using idioms (O.D.C.I.E. vol.1, 2009: Vii) .

Arabic literature, on the other hand, is rich in metaphor and idioms, idiomatic phrases are the commonest structure.

Idioms to sentences are also common. As the case in English, and many other languages. Idioms in Arabic reflect the customs, manner ways or of life and outlook and life of the Arab nation.

2.2 The different sources of idioms:

After exploring several works and dictionaries on the subject (see bibliography, I.) , I have found that there are many different sources of idioms, Many idioms phrases come from the everyday life of English people and their numbers amount to thousands.

They come from home and family:

To be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth

يولد وفي فمه ملعقة من فضة (للتعبير عن الحظ السعيد منذ الطفولة)

To hit the nail on the head

يصيب كبد الحقيقة

There are many to do with food and cooking:

To jump out of the frying pan into the fire

كالمستجير من الرمضاء بالنار

A pie in the sky

عشم أبلس بالجنة (حلم صعب التحقيق)

Other from agriculture life:

To put one's hand to the plough

يشمر عن ساعد الجد

To separate the wheat from the chaff

يميز الغث من السمين

Many others come from nautical and military life:

To be in the same boat

Still water run deep	كلنا في ألهم سواء
Ships that pass in the night	شخص كتوم (في باب السرية) للتعبير عن المعرفة العابرة
To fight a pitched battle	ساعة الصفر (بدء التنفيذ)
<u>Many include parts of the body, colour, and animale:</u>	
To lose face	يفقد ماء وجهه
To have finger in in the pie	له في كل عرس حصة
Under one's nose	تحت سمع وبصر
To give someone the cold shoulder	في باب التعبير عن التجاهل
A blue film	فلم خلاعي
Green belt	حزام أخضر (من النباتات والاشجار حول الاماكن)
To have a bee in one's bonnet	في باب التعبير عن انشغال الذهن بفكرة
Pretty kettle of fish	في باب التعبير عن الحال المسبب للنكد
To buy a pig in a poke	كمن يشتري السمك في النهر (دون معاينة)
Let sleeping dogs lie	دع الثقة نائمة لعن الله من يوقظها ، أو : لا تثر المتاعب

Idioms from special situations:

World of business, buying and selling , health and illness, holidays and travels, politics and government, telephoning, and work and industrial relations:

Wall street

سوق الاسهم والسندات

To go window shopping

التبضع بالنظر الى وجهات المحلات فقط دون شراء

Shop –lifter

لص مخازن (نشال)

To go for a song

في باب البيع بثمن بخس

Poor health

في باب اعتلال الصحة

To pass away/ to kick the bucket

يموت او يتوفى

To come round

يفيق من غيبوبة او اغماء

A package holiday

سفرة جماعية

A globe trotter

رحال ، جواية ، دائم الاسفار (سندباد)

A five – star hotel

فندق درجة اولى

A busman's holiday

عطلة يزاول فيها المرء نفس عمله اليومي

10 Downing street

مقر رئاسة الحكومة البريطانية

The white house

مقر رئاسة الحكومة الامريكية (القصر الابيض)

The cabinet

مجلس الوزراء

The shadow cabinet

وزارة الظل (المعارضة)

Right / left wing

جناحا الحكومة او الحزب المتطرفان

A hot line

الخط التلّفوني (الهاتفّي) بين رؤساء الدول

To ring off

ينهي مكالمة هاتفية

To take the call

يتسلم النداء او المكالمة

A white – collar worker

موظف او عامل مكتبي

A blue – collar worker

عامل مهني

To fire someone/ to give someone the sack

في باب الفصل او الطرد من العمل

To these we might add another variety of idioms derived

From history, classical works, romance, tales, geography, and religion.

to meet one's Waterloo

في باب التعبير عن الهزيمة او الخسارة التامة

Even thou Brutus

في باب الخيانة و التكرار للأصدقاء

Midas touch

في باب التعبير عن النجاح (المالي) بغض النظر عن نوعية العمل

Sword of Damocles

للتعبير عن خطر محقق (كالسيف المسلط)

Achille's heel

للتعبير عن نقطة ضعف او المقتل

David and Goliath

في باب النزال غير المتكافئ والذي يفوز فيه الاضعف

Rich as Croesus

في باب التعبير عن الغنى الفاحش (اموال قارون)

Casanova

كازانوفا (زير النساء)

A quixotic project (from Cervantes' Don Quixote)

مشروع خيالي

Cinderella

شخص مهضوم الحق

Open sesame

في باب التعبير عن العلاج السحري لكل موقف

To build castles in Spain

في باب التعبير عن عقد الآمال العريضة

Not for all the tea china

عمل حتى ولو عرض عليه ثراء الصين

Dead sea fruit

شيء يعجبك مظهره ويخيبك مخبره

2.3 Form , structure , and meaning of idioms :

Idioms take many different forms and structures. They can be very short (A large number of idioms consist of some combination of noun and adjectives):

Cold war

حرب باردة (سياسية)

French leave or rather long

اجازة بدون استئذان

To fish in trouble vaters

التصيد في الماء العكر

Fortune favours the brave

انما تؤخذ الدنيا غلابا

Two hands better than one

ما خاب من استشار

or even compound and complex:

you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs:

لا حلوى بلا نار، او : ولا بد دون الشهد من أبر النحل

adversity makes strange bed-fellow

مصائب الزمان تضطرك لمعاشرة أغرب الاقران

You find fault with a fat goose

لا تعدم الحسنا ذاما / شخص صعب الارضاء

An idioms semantics are a complex entity; komesarov presents five aspect of its meaning, they are:

- a) The idiom's figurative meaning.
- b) It's literal meaning
- c) Its emotive character
- d) Stylistic register

e) National colouring (Komessarov, 2014: 50)

Where, a) and b) the figurative meaning of the idioms is its raison deter. It is the basic part of its total sense. The idiom "red tape" means bureaucracy, to kick bucket' is a sardonic way of saying that someone died, and to wash dirty linen in public means to disclose one's family troubles to outside.

The figurative meaning of the idioms is inferred from its literal meaning. "Red tape", to kick the bucket, and to wash dirty linen in public also mean, respectively, a coloured tape, to deal a blow to a bucket, and some kind of laundering, though in some cases this aspect is subordinate and serves as a basis for the metaphorical use.

c) As regards their emotive (affective) character the meaning of idioms can be:

- positive, e.g.

"to kill birds with one stone is a good one"

الحصول على شيئين بمجهود واحد (عصفورين بحجر)

- negative, e.g.

" to find mar's nest' figuratively means a discovery which looks valuable or promising but which turns out to be worthless. Its literal meaning is a ludicrous mistake for it is against the nature of things –mars are not birds in nests. In Arabic the idiom means:

في باب تفخيم الامور وتضخيمها مغالطة

- neutral, e.g.

" Rome was not built in one day" is a natural statement of fact.

لم يبن العالم في يوم واحد

Therefore idioms are worded as:

- recommendations, e.g.

" you should mind your P's and Q's

حسن الفاظك

- warning, e.g.

" you cannot eat your cake and have it"

في باب التحذير والخص على عدم الاستئثار بالشئ

- describe undesirable situation, e.g.

(to have) 's skeleton in one's cupboard

في باب التعبير عن وجود أشياء محرجة لدى المرء لا يرغب أفشاءها

- humorous, e.g.

"to push up the daises

نمت الزهور على دمنته ، في باب مات وشيع موتا

d) stylistic register, this aspect of meaning may be:

- bookish or elevated in style, e.g.

" to join the majority "

حشر مع الناس عيد

" all is well that ends well

العبرة بالخواتم (النتائج)

- colloquial, e.g.

" the butcher, the carpenter, and the candle maker, or Tom, dick, and Harry.

كل من هب ودب

- or even vulgar, e.g.

" to be a pain in the neck"

مصدر ازعاج

"my foot!

قطعا لا ! (طز بالعامية المصرية)

e) national colouring. The meaning of the idioms may be nationally coloured, that is, include some words (usually proper or geographical names) which mark is as the product of certain nation, the following:

" French leave"

اجازة بدون استئذان

" Turkish bath"

حمام تركي (شعبي)

" castle ambitions "

آمال عريضة ، اضغاث أحلام

3. Idioms and metaphor:

Idioms and metaphor are similar in that both are characterized by figurative; they both have meaning which are not their original meaning, and may have a literal meaning as well as the figurative. The difference between them lies in the strength of the imagery: in idioms expressions the words convey rather than illustrate the

meaning; in metaphor expressions the words colour is meaning (Duff, 2008: 89) .

Thus, for instance, to fall in love is idiomatic: the four words must be taken together, and in this combination they have a figurative meaning.

Whereas an expression such as get down to brass tacks is metaphorical: here the figurative meaning is far stronger, but the bond between the words is weaker, for if we substitute the neutral word "work" for image "brass tacks", we end up with an idiom, "get down to work".

4. Typical method of translating idioms:

In translating idioms the translator should proceed from the assumption that an idioms is an important part of the text, therefore whenever the author of the source text uses an idiom, it is the translator's duty to try and produce it with utmost fidelity. His choice for an equivalence in the target language will be influenced by the five aspects of its semantics. The translator will not run short of adequate equivalence; he can scoop up from a rich stare of adequate equivalence; he can scoop up from a rich stare of idioms and metaphor in Arabic.

Some scholar and theorists of translation propose various methods for translating idioms, suggests three general types of adjustment [9];

- 1) from idioms to non-idioms,
- 2) from idioms to idioms, and
- 3) from non-idioms to idioms.

Catiya (1974: 184-186) expands these three types into four and rearrange them in order of performance. I list them as follows together with some modifications derived from my personal teaching experience.

- a) An idiom may be translated preserving all the five aspects of its semantic structure [10]. That means that the translator makes use of an idiom in Arabic which has the identical figurative meaning derived from the same literal meaning (that is containing the same image) as in the English language idioms, and which preserves the same motive,

stylistic and national characteristics. The first thing the translator should do therefor, is to look for such an idiom in the target language; compare:

Behind ones back	من وراء الظهر (في باب التآمر او ما شابه)
Walls have ears	ان للحيطان آذاناً (نصح بالتزام السرية)
To wash the hands from a case	يغسل اليدين من قضية (يتخلى)
To kill two birds with one stone	اصابة عصفورين بحجر واحد

However, the list of such direct equivalentents is rather limited. The translator has a good chance of finding the appropriate idiom in Arabic if the original expression is, so to speak international, that is, if it originated in some other language, say Latin or Greek, and was later borrowed by both English and Arabic. Such international expressions may also be derived from the bible, works of classical writers, famous aphorisms and the like, compare:

A good Samaritan	السامري الصالح (فاعل خير)
Achilles heel	عقب أخيل (نقطة الضعف)
Sword of Damocles	سيف ديموقليس (خطر داهم، سيف مسلط)
Open sesame	افتح يا سمسم (تعبير عن العلاج السحري لكل موقف)
To be or not to be	الليكون او لا يكون
Iron curtain	الستار الحديدي (طوق لايمكن الفكك منه)
To shed crocodile tears	يذرف دموع التماسيح (في باب النفاق)

Image, that is, has a different literal meaning, As often as not identical figurative meanings can be inferred from different collocations in the two language; compare:

A chip off that old block الاسد	هذا الشبل من ذاك
To rain cats and dogs	مطر كأفواه القرب
Diamond cut diamond	لا يفل الحديد الا الحديد
The leopard cannot change his spots	الطبع يغلب التطبع

Here the change of literal meaning of idioms does not detract much from its effects.

This method of translation should not be used if the Arabic idiom is distinctly nationally marked. An English author or an English –speaking character will, normally, not worn people, in the Arabic translation of a novel, do not carry coal to new castle.

The use of such purely English idiom may be justified if the translator's aim is to conceal the foreign origin of his text, but this is a rather exceptional case. In most cases a neutral idiom will be preferred, e.g.: لا تبيع الماء في حارة السقائين or لا تأخذ التمر الى هجر

c) An English idiom may be translated by reproducing its form in Arabic, which has no equivalent figurative expression or image. In this case producing the literal meaning of the idiom through a word- for -word translation, may preserve all other aspects of its semantics structure; compare:

people who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

من كان بيته من زجاج لا يرمي الآخرين بالحجارة

d) And, finally, instead of translating an idiom, the translator may explain and analyse its figurative meaning, so as to preserve at least the main element of its semantic structure. In this case no Arabic idioms phrase or imitation is used except the idiom's explanation; for example this idioms;

To dine with Duke Humphrey

Is rendered into Arabic as:

" يغدو بدون طعام ويموت من الجوع"

" كان من تقاليد القوم في بريطانيا ان يتوجه الاثرياء"

بعد انتهاء قداس يوم الاحد الى موائد عامرة للغداء، اما

الفقراء فلا مكان لهم يذهبون اليه سوى البقاء في الكنيسة
والتحلق حول قبر الدوق همفري (وهو أسم رمزي)، وبالطبع
لا طعام يرتجى.

This method is the translator's last resort: though undesirable, it may prove unavoidable in the absence of a better alternative [12].

Conclusion:

An idiom is a figurative meaningful extension of meaning an idiomatic utterance has two important aspects of meaning. These are the literal meaning or the image composed by its constituent lexical items and its figurative meaning. Corollary to its structure an idiom should be translated according to its overall meaning rather than the meaning of each of its lexical items if the concept they refer to exists in both English culture and Arabic culture.

Also one needs to distinguish between idiomatic expressions that are common to both Arabic and English and those which are peculiar to one of the language. In Translating expressions of the second kind, the translator should not feel constrained to render idiom for idiom: it is primarily the context of the passage and of course the idiomatic potential of Arabic – that should determine his choice [11].

Finally, whereas the translated work inevitably loses many idioms in the process of translation, it also stands to gain a number of idioms. For instance, "at sixes and seven" may be rendered Arabic as;

"مشوش بحالة فوضى بلا نظام او ترتيب"

Which is an idiomatic loss, and "to sail under false colours" as;

"وقل لمن يدعي في العلم معرفة حفظت شيئا وغابت عنك اشياء"

Which is an idiomatic gain, such idiomatic renderings do much to make the translation come alive, for it is by means of such distinctive expressions that the message can speak meaningfully to people in term of their own lives and behavior.

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