68. Applied strategies in translating idiomatic expressions: Cultural-bound analysis in Brida novel by Paulo Coelho

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Abstract

The main purpose of this paper is to throw some light on applied strategies at an idiomatic expressional level in a contrastive analysis framework by investigating the cultural-bound in Brida novel by Paulo Coelho from English translation into Persian. It is worthy to point out that the main theoretical framework of the present paper is based on Baker's (2011) model of translation in rendering idiomatic expressions. Further, within the text, there are some certain comparisons which are conducted to highlight the matches and mismatches in translation of idiomatic expressions both in English language and the Persian one. Hence, the core properties of this issue are described both in English and Persian. In addition, other researchers, translators, teachers and students may well take this information into account as one of the main platforms from which they find out some strategies in translation of idiomatic expressions. Moreover, to make the comparison clear any strategy has been classified and exemplified by the researchers. The result indicates the fact that *Idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form* at 32.48% is the most applicable strategies in translating idiomatic expressions when a translator faces cultural-bound obstacles.

Keywords: Idiomatic expressions, cultural-bounds, translation, source language (SL), target language (TL)

Deyimsel ifadeleri çevirmede uygulanan stratejiler: Paulo Coelho'nun Brida romanında kültüre bağlı analiz

Öz

Bu makalenin temel amacı, Paulo Coelho'nun İngilizce çevirisinden Farsça çevirisine Brida romanındaki kültürel bağları inceleyerek, karşıt bir analiz çerçevesinde deyimsel bir anlatım düzeyinde uygulanan stratejilere ışık tutmaktır. Bu makalenin temel teorik çerçevesinin, deyimsel ifadeleri oluştururken Baker (2011) çeviri modeline dayandığını belirtmekte fayda var. Ayrıca, metin içinde, deyimsel ifadelerin hem İngilizce hem de Farsça çevirisindeki eşleşmeleri ve uyumsuzlukları vurgulamak için yapılan bazı karşılaştırmalar bulunmaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu konunun temel özellikleri hem İngilizce hem de Farsça anlatılmıştır. Ek olarak, diğer araştırmacılar, çevirmenler, öğretmenler ve öğrenciler bu bilgiyi, deyimsel ifadelerin çevirisinde bazı stratejiler buldukları ana platformlardan biri olarak dikkate alabilirler. Sonuç, benzer anlamdaki ancak farklı biçimlerdeki

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deyimsel ifadenin% 32.48 ile bir çevirmen kültürel sınırlarla karşılaştığı zaman deyimsel ifadeleri çevirmede en uygulanabilir strateji olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Deyimsel ifadeler, kültürel sınırlar, çeviri, kaynak dil (SL), hedef dil (TL)

1. Introduction

In nowadays world translation of idiomatic expressions is one of the means of communication among people and as a field of research took place over the recent years. Due to the fact that idiomatic expressions rarely occur on their own, they encounter the translators to difficulties. It is worthy to point out cultural connotations and carrying the particular stylistic forms exacerbates the obstacles in rendering. Therefore, the identification and appropriate equivalences may diverse the problems inherent in translation of idiomatic expressions.

Moreover, the linguistic perspective of idiomatic expressions is another difficulty. This significance becomes barrier when the starting point in the source text and the product in the target text in translating idiomatic expressions are a piece of linguistic materials. In other words, the message totally should carry from the Source Language (SL) into the Target Language (TL). It demonstrates the fact that not only the appropriate equivalent should be utilized but the syntactic aspect should be kept, too.

Due to the fact that idiomatic expressions are not linguistically analyzable translators at this point reconstruct the original in their minds through two certain consecutive channels: First, by breaking idiomatic expressions down into analyzable units in the target language; second, by their own knowledge in order for discovering the most appropriate equivalents. Hence, by dividing the idiomatic expressions into the smaller units they will be easier to be transferred from the SL into the TL. (Vazifehkhah, 2017)

Fernando(1996) distinguishes three subcategories of "idioms: 1. Pure idioms: Fernando introduced pure idioms as *a type of conventionalized, nonliteral multiword expression* (p. 36). Being nonliteral, pure idioms may be either invariable or may have little variation. Additionally, “these idioms are said to be opaque” (p. 32). For example, to spill the beans, as a pure idiom, has nothing to do with beans. 2. Semi-idioms: It is believed that such idioms have one or more literal constituents in their strings with nonliteral subsense. Hence, this type of idiom is considered *partially opaque* (p. 60). For example, foot the bill, which means pay, is considered as a semi-idiom. 3. Literal idioms: This kind of idiom is considered as either invariable or allows little variation. Literal idioms, moreover, are named transparent idioms due to the fact that their meanings can be interpreted base on their constituents. Of course, for certain, or in any case are some examples of literal idioms" (as cited in Hashemian & Arezi).

Moreover, Baker (1992) in her book *In Other Words* states that idiomatic expressions are likely unchangeable patterns of language which give no space and variation in form and sometimes convey such meaning which is somehow impossible to discuss from their individual components. She discusses five particular factors as:

1. The order of the words cannot be transformed. Their place is fixed.
2. An idiom expression cannot allow neglecting or omitting some words.
3. Extra words cannot be added as *have a narrow escape* or *have a narrow quick escape*.

4. Replacement in idiom expressions is not allowed.

5. Grammatical structure is not changeable (Hassan & Tabassum, 2014).

According to Zhang (2009) Idiomatic expressions are a type of multiple words units that have both literal and figurative meaning. In most situations, the imaginary meaning of an idiomatic expression cannot be readily divested from the literal meaning of the individual constituent in the unit (p. 6). Another scholar such as Al-Haddad (1994) pointed to cultural perspectives of idiomatic expression too. In this regard he pointed out that there must be some certain relationships between the meaning of most idiomatic expressions and the meaning of their constituents at some time in the past, and, if not, they would not have been expressed by them (Howwar, 2013).

Based on Baker (1992), there are four main problems which a translator may face:

1. Some idiomatic expressions may have no counterpart in the receptor language. Further, it is possible that different languages may express the same meaning through an individual word, an opaque idiom, a transparent fixed expression.

2. An idiomatic expression may have a same pair in the receptor language, but its context of use may be different; the two expressions may have different connotations, for example, or they may not be pragmatically translatable.

3. Sometimes an idiomatic expression in the source language refers to both its literal and idiomatic aspects.

4. The very convention of using idiomatic expressions in written discourse, the contexts which they can be used, and their frequency of use may be different from the source language into the target language (Akbari, 2013).

It is worthy to point out Catford (1965) believed that culture-bound expressions raise different translation problems. Translation is concerned with the replacement of a source language text by a target language one, where each belongs to a unique culture. It is crucial initially to obtain enough information of the receptor language culture before rendering an idiomatic expression. Translators should consider the time and place of the text, particularly if the text and its context are prone to change. (as cited in Al-Azzam et al., 2015)

1.1 Characteristics of Idiomatic Expressions

Idiomatic expressions have particular characteristics which are supposed to be considered by translators. Larson (1984, p. 142) pointed to idiomatic expressions` characteristics and name them as *particular* collocations and fixed combinations 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 purpose of the individual words. And he distinguished and compares two different types of metaphors 'dead' metaphors and proposes that idiomatic expressions are dead metaphors which are a part of the structures of the lexicon of the language (Ahmadi & Ketabi, 2011).

Moon (1998) defines characteristics of idiomatic expression as an enigmatic term, used in challenging ways. In lay or general use, idiomatic expressions have two main meanings. First, they demonstrate a particular meaning of an object in a language, music, art, and so on, which characterizes a person or group. Secondly, idiomatic expressions are a particular lexical collocation or phrasal lexeme, strange to a language (Horváthová, 2014).

Fernando (1996) suggests three ways of recognizing characteristics of idiomatic 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 idiomatic expression is an object which is accepted and used although it first started as something new and on an ad hoc basis.

3. The meaning of an idiomatic expression cannot be obtained from its words. The above characteristics of an idiomatic expression are very general and can be used to identify not only idioms but also proverbs, similes, collocations, etc. (Sadeghpour & et al., 2015).

1.2 Hypothesis

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

- Attempts to translate English idiomatic expressions into Persian will feature some certain translation strategies.
- The cultural-bound has direct effect in translating idiomatic expressions.
- Baker's (2011) strategies in translating idiomatic expressions are applicable.

1.3 Research Questions

This research is based on two main questions:

1. What is the role of cultural-bound in prevention of idiomatic expression's translation in Brida novel?

2. How much Baker's (2011) model of translation is applicable in translating idiomatic expressions?

1.4 Statement of the problem

Idiomatic expressions demonstrate the certain cultures. Further, they are useable in different conditions. Culture-specific items in source language in one side and people's various use of idiomatic expressions in different situations in another side; make translators into a real trouble. The lack of enough information about idiomatic expressions in the source language and who, where and what they imply on, can deviate the procedure of translating and face translators to misinterpretation, easily. However, it is not the only problem which translators face to deal with. Another significant problem is recognizing the identity of the messages.

1.5 Significance of study

Despite the fact that idiomatic expressions are hard to distinguish, but they are translatable even if contain cultural specific-items. It is worthy to point out idiomatic expressions are not negligible to be ignored during the process of translation. Furthermore, author would like to convey the message by idiomatic expressions. Hence, it is an imperative urgent to be kept by translators. This paper made an effort by investigating Baker' s (2011) model of translation proposes the practical strategies to come over the difficulties in translation of idiomatic expressions.

2. Method and materials

This paper took advantage from qualitative and quantitative approaches. In addition, the main instruments have been chosen from some related books, pamphlets and updated articles. Moreover, the main theoretical framework of the present study is in Baker's (2011) *In Other Words* book.

Moreover, this paper especially focuses on the third chapter, *Equivalence Above Word Level* (pp. 50-86), which argues about the obstacles and difficulties at the idiomatic expressional level.

3. Result and discussion

In this part of the study the researchers concentrate more on unusual characteristics of idiomatic expressions and cultural factors which affect in their translations. Furthermore, within the study, Baker's (2011) model of translation investigated to present the weighty information and applicable strategies in translation of idiomatic expressions. In addition, 80 samples of idiomatic expressions from Brida novel which faced the translator to the difficulties have been chosen and got under charged by Baker's (2011) model of translation. And finally, by getting the strategies which have been utilized by the translator, the researchers propose the most appropriate strategies to come over the difficulties such as the cultural bound.

Some idiomatic expressions follow unusual grammatical patterns. In addition, they include expressions or idioms which seem ill-formed because they do not follow the grammatical rules of the language, for example, *trip the light fantastic,* or *blow someone to kingdom come, put paid to, the powers that be, by and large* and *the world and his friend* (Baker, 2011, p.69). Hence, a translator can rely on this character to disambiguate the meaning. It is worthy to point out apart from being alert ill-formed idiomatic expressions, a translator should considered about the collocational items which come with any idiomatic expression whose the meaning is not accessible. Some idiomatic expressions have a unique collocational pattern. And is one of the most suitable ways to recognize them.

Baker (2011) believed that they form collocations with other items in the text as single units and enter into lexical sets which are different from those of their individual words. Take, for example, the idiom *to have cold feet*. Cold as a separate item may match or collocate with words like *weather*, *winter*, *feel* or *country*. In addition, feet on its own will perhaps collocate with *socks*, *chilblain*, *smelly* and so on. However, *having cold feet*, in its idiomatic or expressional use, has nothing necessarily to do with, *feet* or *chilblains* and will therefore generally be used with different set of collocates (p.70).

The unusual form of idiomatic expressions in one side and the cultural bound in another side exacerbate the hardship of their translations. The cultural aspects of idiomatic expressions should not be underestimated. Culture contributes in forming and shaping distinct communities and social groups. This importance becomes barrier when it makes clear variations between different nations, and national groups, as minor cultures may emerge as a result of certain factors. Hence, a translator is supposed to be knowledgeable about the TL culture.

Moreover, problems of idiomatic expression's translation lie not only in the linguistic and stylistic factors but also in the cultural differences between the source language and the receptor language. Cultural problematic items can be divided into two certain groups: First, difficulties associated with a translator's limits; and second, difficulties lie in the nature of the culture or language-specific expressions themselves.

3.1 The applicable strategies in translating idiomatic expressions

Baker (2011) in her book *In other words* proposes 6 main strategies to come over the difficulties in translating idiomatic expressions in the case that a translator not only faces to the problems to identify them, but when cultural-bounds make the obstacles:

3.1.1 Using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning and form.

Baker (2011) believes that this strategy involves using an idiomatic expression in the target language which conveys roughly the same meaning as that of the source-language idiomatic expression and, in addition, consists of equivalent lexical counterparts (p. 77). It is important to point out this strategy may not be as applicable as should be. Because, regarding the grammatical and lexical form of any expressions, the cultural factors in both languages are not match.

Table 1. Idiomatic expression of similar meaning and form

Idiomatic expressions	**Translation into Persian**
1. At absurd time (p. 5)	1. در ساعت های عجیب و غریب (ص.47)
2. That's risky we're now going to take together, Brida. (p. viii)	2. بریدا، خطری است که اینک،ما هر دو با هم به آن دست می زنیم.(ص.38)
3. I must be twice her age.(p. 3)	3. دست کم باید دو برابر او سن داشته باشم.(ص.39)
4. Perhaps he's testing me.(p. 4)	4. شاید دارد امتحانم می کند. (ص.47)

3.1.2. Using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form.

Baker (2011) claimed that it is often possible to find an idiomatic 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).

Table 2. Idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form

Idiomatic expressions	**Translation into Persian**
1. I must get a grip on myself (p. 14)	*1. نباید اختیارم را از دست بدهم (ص.58)*
2. Contradictory views (p. 13)	*2. ضد و نقیض (ص.57)*

3.1.3. Borrowing the source language of idiomatic expression.

This strategy shedding light on the significance role of borrowing in conveying the message in the case of lack of idioms or expressions in the TL. 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).

Table 3. Borrowing the source language of idiomatic expression

Idiomatic expressions	**Translation into Persian**
1. Secret societies (p. 20)	1. انجمن های مخفی (ص.68)
2. A king of clubs (p. 25)	2. شاه چوب دست (ص.74)
3. The Dark Night of Faith (p. 27)	3. شب تاریک ایمان (ص.67)

3.1.4. Translation of idiomatic expression by paraphrase.

Baker (2011) claimed that this is by far the most common way of translating idiomatic 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).

Table 4. Translation of idiomatic expression by paraphrase

Idiomatic expressions	**Translation into Persian**
1. Attended courses(p. 13)	1. دوره های زیادی را دیدم (ص.57)
2. Merely looked up from his accounts (p. 20)	2. سرش را از روی حساب و کتاب برداشت (ص.68)

3.1.5. Translation by omission of a play on idiomatic expressions.

The literal translation maybe is one of the certain ways to face to non-equivalence. That is why Baker (2011) pointed in her book that this main strategy involves translating only the literal meaning of idiomatic expressions in a context that allows for a concrete reading of an otherwise playful use of language (p. 84). Hence, the translator can fill the gap which has been made by cultures in two languages.

Table 5. Translation by omission of a play on idiomatic expressions

Idiomatic expressions	**Translation into Persian**
1. Heart is divided,(p. 29)	1. قلب تکه تکه می شود (ص.78)
2. That's how the Book of Genesis explain it; (p. 27)	2. سفر پیدایش توضیح می دهد که؛ (ص.77)
3. Wicca got up and showed Brida to the door. (p. 30)	3. ویکا برخواست و بریدا را تا دم در بدرقه کرد. (ص.80)

3.1.6. Translation by omission of entire idiomatic expression.

Baker (2011) proposed a certain strategy that idiomatic expressions may sometime be omitted altogether in the target text. She added this may be because it has no close match in the receptor language, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons (p. 85). It is worthy to point out in this case cultural aspects of the languages cannot match with each other and the only choice is the omission of idiomatic expressions.

Table 6. Translation by omission of entire idiom or expression

Idiomatic expressions	**Translation into Persian**
1.Storking her hair(p. 33)	

3.2. Data Analysis

In this section of the study the researchers concentrate on the quantitative analysis of the English-Persian parallel corpus with extracting 77 samples in Brida novel. In this regard, an attempt has been made to reflect the frequency and percentage which any of language is used. Hence, Table 1indicates the frequency and percentage of six certain strategies which are usable in facing to cultural-bound items. Moreover, in order for shedding light the subject, Figure 1 clarifies the total frequency.

Table 7. Frequency and percentage of six certain strategies in English-Persian parallel corpus

Types of strategies	**Total number**	**Percentage**
1. Idiomatic expression of similar meaning and form	17	22.02%
2. Idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form	25	32.48%
3. Borrowing the source language idiomatic expression	10	13%
4. Translation of idiomatic expression by paraphrase	17	22.02%
5. Translation by omission of a play on idiomatic expression	4	5.20%
6. Translation by omission of entire idiomatic expression	4	5.20%

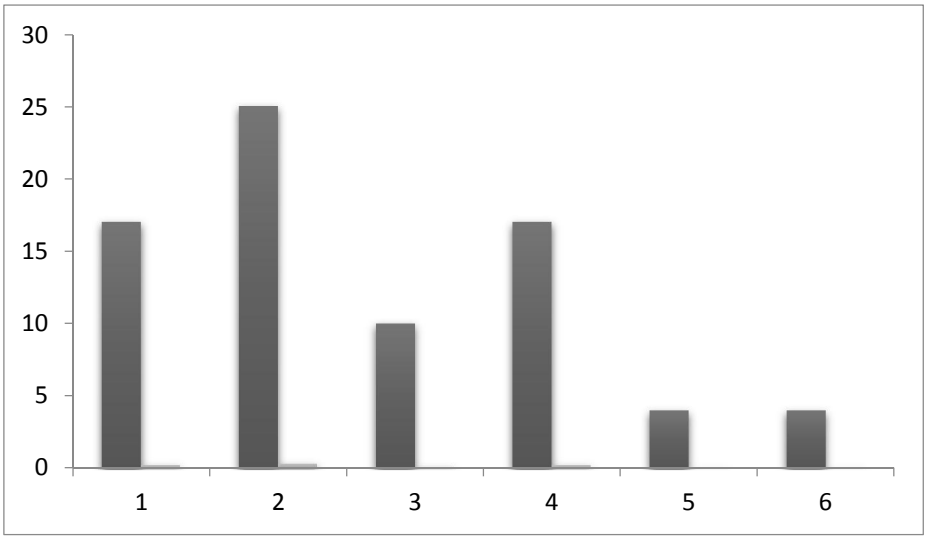


Figure 1. Total frequency of six certain strategies in English-Persian parallel corpus

4. Conclusion

The main purpose of this paper is investigating the applicable strategies to translate idiomatic expressions when the translator faces to cultural-bounds obstacles. It is worthy to point out the result demonstrates the fact that the most used strategy overall belongs Idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form at 32.48%. This originates in the fact that Translation by omission of a play on idiomatic expression and Translation by omission of entire idiomatic expression, any of them

formed only 5.2%. In addition, the research showed that the cultural aspects of languages both in the SL and in the TL made the differences in the usage of idiomatic expressions as result the translators are supposed to distinguish these differences and choose the most appropriate strategy. Thus, based on the obtained data Idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form is the most applicable strategies in translating idiomatic expressions when a translator faces to cultural-bound obstacles.

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