



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Investigating Translatability and Translation Strategies of Idiomatic Expressions in the Blind Owl by Hedayat Analyzing the Native Translator's Performance

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The globalization of communication has increased the importance of translation. However, sometimes cultural and linguistic differences between languages are challenging even more than the translator's role. Idiomatic expressions are often challenging issues in the realm of translation. This article has investigated applied strategies and translatability of idiomatic expressions in *The Blind Owl* (Būf-e kūr). Therefore, the well-known English translation by Bashiri (2013) was examined. The data were analyzed to find applied strategies and investigate the translatability and untranslatability of idiomatic expressions. Two hundred ninety idiomatic expressions were collected of the corpus and its English translation. A few untranslatable idiomatic expressions have been found due to linguistic and cultural differences. Moreover, the author's style in the book has impacted the translation. Although Bashiri's performance as a native translator in applying translation strategies was found efficient, in some cases, his familiarity with the language and culture of the source language does not lead to total correspondence between the source and target texts.

Keywords: Idiomatic Expressions, Translatability, Untranslatability, Native Translator, Culture-Specific Items.

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Introduction

Idiomatic expressions (idioms or fixed expressions) usually convey certain stylistic and specific cultural connotations, and also, the combination and the order of words cannot be changed (Baker, 2011). So, finding an adequate equivalent is difficult for translators. Idiomatic expressions may have a similar counterpart in the target language (TL), but two expressions may have different connotations (Baker, 2011). Comprehending the meaning of idiomatic expressions of each language needs good knowledge of both languages and cultures. One should be able to cope with finding a suitable equivalent for the idiomatic pairs (Shojaei, 2012).

Translating idiomatic expressions as an important part of every language have an important role between languages. People of different languages in any society use mostly different expressions or idioms to convert a similar meaning, in a way that while an expression might be completely touchable and easy-to-understand for the speaker of a specific language, the same set of words and expressions may seem fully ambiguous and even in some cases irrational to the speakers of the other (Baker, 2011). Cultural untranslatability occurs when a specific situational feature, which is functionally significant for the source language (SL) text, does not exist in the TL culture (Catford, 1965).

According to Catford (1965), the problem of translatability and untranslatability is not “dichotomy”, it is more like the variant between the absolute translatability and absolute untranslatability. Newmark (1988a) believed that, when translating some elements of language are not simple or obvious, the concept of translatability is one issue that can be discussed. Some previous studies report the untranslatability of literary items such as allusion and figure of speech due to cultural differences between languages (Mohammadi& Keshavarzi, AL-Harashsheh). Therefore, this study tries to investigate applied strategies by the translator’s performance in rendering the idiomatic expression to explore the reasons for untranslatability in detail. Idiomatic expressions are embedded factors in the culture and cultural aspects of translation are related to the beliefs, religion, customs, literature, and local conditions.

Hence, translator should know the source language’s religion, literature, and beliefs to dominate the precise meaning. Moreover, culture and language are improving in society at the same time (Moon, 1998). Therefore, translator should be careful about the relationship between culture and language. The study of translatability and untranslatability of idiomatic expressions can provide valuable insights into how translators tackle such idiomatic expressions in the translation process (De Pedro R, 1999). In the same vein, the present study investigated linguistic and cultural untranslatability in English-translated version of idiomatic expressions in Hedayat’s ‘The Blind Owl’.

Absolute untranslatability, whether linguistic or cultural, does not exist. At the same time, the perfect translation, i.e., one which does not entail any losses from the original, is unattainable, especially when dealing with literary translation (De Pedro, 1999). It can be true that there is no absolute untranslatable due to some translation strategies. One thing remains unclear; translators how could be unattainable when a book like *The Blind Owl* with a specific style is the corpus of study.

The present study attempted to explore which strategies the translator restored more often to overcome cultural and linguistic untranslatability in the process of translation and to identify the extent of the translatability of idiomatic expressions in Hedayat's 'The Blind Owl'. In addition, the study tries to assess the performance of native translator. The present study expands our knowledge about the translatability of idiomatic expressions in translated originals, and literary texts and provides insights into their translations. Newmark (1988) believes that a good translator or writer could often avoid errors of language use and uses the ordinary senses and show delicacy to language.

The purpose of this study is, analyzing the applied strategies in translating idiomatic expressions of the book *The Blind Owl* to see which strategies were adopted more often by the translator and to see that the translation strategies can deal with the problem of untranslatability or cannot. In addition, the study tries to clear native translator's performance in translating idiomatic expressions. Hedayat's well-known novel 'The Blind Owl' selected as the source text and English translated text as the target text.

In addition, Baker's (2011) translation strategies have been chosen as the theoretical framework of this study. The finding of this study will have an influential role in identifying appropriate strategies for translating idiomatic expressions and also will help many translators to find a suitable equivalent to express the meaning and translating as naturally and accurately as possible. Moreover, according to Catford's theory, this study intends to examine a translated text of the book *The Blind Owl* to determine the translatability and untranslatability of idiomatic expressions.

The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. Which particular strategies have been used by the native translator to translate the idiomatic expressions from Persian into English?
2. How do translation strategies deal with the problem of untranslatability?
3. What is the extent of translatability of the idiomatic expressions in the translation of *The Blind Owl*?
4. Does the native translator's familiarity with the Persian language and culture affect the correctness of the transference of the idiomatic expressions from Persian into English?

Literature Review

Introduction

The process of translating idiomatic expressions from one language into another is a work which obliges a translator to have knowledge of the culture and other related factors that is needed for translating the idiomatic expressions to identify and cope with the problems in the process of finding an efficient equivalent in TL. This study intends to examine English translation of the idiomatic expressions based on Baker's (2011) categorization of translation strategies. Also, this research sets out to investigate the translatability and untranslatability of idiomatic expressions based on Catford's (1965) theory.

Culture-specific Items

According to Nord (2001), CSI is a cultural phenomenon that is present in one culture but is not present in another culture (in the same way). Aixela (1996, 56) notes that “many discussions of CSIs have avoided offering any definition of the concept implying that it is intuitively recognizable”. Moreover, Aixela (1996) confirmed that CSIs could be recognized only with indication to a certain source text. Newmark (2010) considers that CSIs are seen as separate units like items in a glossary. Baker (2011) claimed that the culture-specific concept may be abstract or concrete and relates to a religious belief, a social custom, or a type of food.

According to (Newmark, 2001), culture is the greatest obstacle in the process of translation and for having an accurate translation, translator should refer to culture only in anthropological sense. He believes “in translation studies and in translation theory, culture covers the whole area of socio-linguistics” (173).

Translatability

Some scholars believe that translatability is ensured by the existence of linguistic factors such as syntactic and semantic categories shared by all languages (De Pedro, 1999). Other scholars have adopted the second approach based on the concept that translatability is jeopardized (according to which the reality is interpreted in different ways by different linguistic communities) (De Pedro, 1999). The third approach to translatability was developed in France in the late 1960s, challenging the notion of translation as a matter of transfer the meaning. This approach was found by Andrew Benjamin, Michel Foucault, Paul de Man and Jacques Derrida (De Pedro, 1999).

Newmark (1988a) believes when translating some elements of language is not simple or obvious, the concept of translatability is one issue that can be discussed. In previous studies, De Pedro (1999) deduced that text's function has an important role; a text with an aesthetic process makes translation difficult, whereas the informative function of text could be more accessible. As cited in Aixela (1996, 54), the first two laws of translatability proposed by Even-Zohar (1978) and Toury (1995) state that “translatability is high when textual traditions involved are parallel and when there has been contact between the two traditions,” (De Pedro, 1999).

The above-mentioned studies provide helpful information on the level of text; whereas translating idiomatic expressions seems to be one of the complicated issues in translation. This article has considered idiomatic factors. Omrani and Shams Hosseini (2021) believe that there are many idiomatic expressions in Iranian Culture that are not clear for other language speakers; thus, translators need to be knowledgeable of the culture of the source language. The most important problem is related to the differences between the cultures of the source and the target languages.

According to Reiss (2014, 31-38), “literary works, including literary prose, imaginative prose, and poetry in all its forms, are form-focused, in which the author makes use of formal elements for a specific aesthetic effect.” Therefore, it is necessary to find a similar device to represent its literary and aesthetic function in a form-focused text. For example, facing an idiomatic expression in such texts, the translator must replace it with an equivalent expression.

Untranslatability

Roman Jakobson classifies as untranslatable only poetry (Hatim & Munday, 2004). From this statement, the authors deduce that the sense may translate, while the form often cannot, “and the point where form begins to contribute to sense is where we approach untranslatability” (Hatim & Munday 2004, 10). Therefore, the domain of untranslatability approached because the idiomatic expressions represent the case of translating both sense (meaning) and form.

Catford (1965) presented the first definition for translation. He stated that translation is the replacement of equivalent textual material from one language into another language. Catford (1965) further states that “idioms and phraseological units should not be considered as the only possible translation units on the level of combination of words” (p.54). According to Catford (1965), “source and target language words do not usually have precisely the same meaning in the linguistic sense, but that does not mean that they could not nevertheless function well enough in the same situation” (p.49).

Nobody can ignore the differences across languages. Furthermore, there are some elements in one language but they cannot be used in other languages (Catford, 1965). However, there are some situations in which there is no one to one correspondence between languages, it is referred to as untranslatability (Catford, 1965). According to Catford (1965), Failure to find a TL equivalent is due entirely to the difference between the SL and the TL. Some examples of this type of untranslatability would be ambiguity, play on words (puns), polysemy (the quality or state of having a few meanings, as opposed to having a single meaning or many meanings), etc.

Catford (1965) made a distinction between linguistic untranslatability and cultural untranslatability:

1. Linguistic untranslatability: “failure to find a TL [target language] equivalent is due entirely to differences between the SL and the TL” (Catford 1965, 98). Some examples of this type of untranslatability would be ambiguity, plays on words, polysemy, etc.

2. Cultural untranslatability: arises “when a situational feature, functionally relevant for the SL [source language] text, is completely absent from the culture of which the TL [target language] is a part” (Catford 1965, 99). For instance; names of some institutions, clothes, foods and abstract concepts, amongst others.

According to Baker (2011):

Idioms and fixed expressions which contain culture-specific items are not necessarily untranslatable. It is not the specific items an expression contains but rather the meaning it conveys and its association with culture-specific contexts which can make it untranslatable or difficult to translate (P.71).

Baker (2011) claims that different grammatical structures in the SL and TL may cause remarkable changes in the way the information or message is carried across. These changes may induce the translator either to add or to omit information in the TT because of the lack of particular grammatical devices in the TL itself.

Baker (2011) states that:

"The way in which an idiom or a fixed expression can be translated into another language depends on many factors.... Questions of style, register, and rhetorical effect must also be taken into consideration" (pp. 75-76).

Regarding translation strategies, Baker (2011, pp.75-85) presents six strategies for translating idioms:

1. Using an idiom of similar meaning and form
2. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form
3. Borrowing the SL idiom
4. Translation by Paraphrase
5. Translation by Omission of a play on idiom
6. Translation by omission of entire idiom

Catford (1965) and Baker (2011) suggest that culture is rather a matter of degrees, linguistic and cultural differences between two different languages make perfect correspondence practically impossible. Moreover, from the Catford's theory and Baker's proposed strategies concluded that, idiomatic expressions usually convey certain stylistic and specific cultural connotations and also the combination and order of words cannot be changed. So, finding adequate equivalent is difficult for translators.

Role of a Translator in Translation

In translating idiomatic expressions which convey strong connotations, translation plays a very important role and since the translation is a mean for communicating between languages, the role of translators has more significance in the process of translation. Therefore, it can be a challenging issue for translators to find acceptable equivalents. Culture-specific items carry negative, positive, or neutral connotations (Afrouz, 2021). In translating idiomatic items, translation plays a significant role, and since the translation is a mean of communication between languages, the role of translators has more significance in the process of translation.

Baker (2011) argues that a person's competence for using idiomatic expressions of a foreign language is not comparable with that of a native speaker. Also, she suggests that most of the translators cannot hope to be same with native speakers of a language about judging when and how an idiom can be manipulated in the language when they are working into a foreign language.

The translator needs to have an experience in the translation studies to understand the source and the target language and the message in the original text which is proposed by the author of the text well (Floranti & Mubarak, 2020). Venuti (1995) believes that, the invisibility of the translator is a weird self-annihilation; undoubtedly, convincing and practicing translation reinforces its marginal status in Anglo-American culture. And finally, the translator's task is to create conditions under which the SL author and the TL reader can interact with one another (Lotfipour, 1997).

Venuti (1995) states that, the concept of invisibility of the translator is a cultural critique, a diagnosis that opposes the situation it represents. On the other hand, the issue should be considered to make the translator more visible to change and resist the conditions under which translation is theorized and practices nowadays. He believes that, the first step will be "to present a theoretical basis from which

translations can be read like translations, as texts in their own right, permitting transparency to be demystified, seen as one discursive effect among others".

In this part the role and the task of translator between two languages for making communication in the process of translation were discussed. To translate idiomatic expressions well, the translator first needs to be able to recognize them in the original text, then to find the meaning and finally to identify an appropriate equivalent to the TL. For dealing with problems of literary translation, translators should find pragmatics techniques. Literary translation consists of the translation of poems, plays, literary books, literary texts, rhymes, literary articles, non-fiction stories, short stories, etc. Translators should translate the language and render information to reader and translate the culture and context.

The Blind Owl

Sadeq Hedayat's 'the Blind Owl' is a masterpiece in the modern Persian literature. The Blind Owl is Hedayat's major literary work of the 20th century in Iran. It is believed that much of the novel had already been completed by 1930 while Hedayat was still a student in Paris. The Blind Owl was translated into French by Roger Lescot during World War II. In Germany, two translations appeared in the early 1960s. The Blind Owl was translated into English by D.P. Costello (1957), Henry D. G. Law, and Iraj Bashiri (2013).

Bashiri's translation was revised first in 1984 and then in 2013. In Turkey, in Poland, in Romania, in Mexico, in Urdu, in India, in Finland, in Armenian, in Japan, in Indonesia, in the Philippines, in the Netherlands, in China, in Czechoslovakia. (Afrouz, 2021). According to Costello (1997), the Blind Owl is considered as the most important work of modern Iranian literature. It is a haunting tale of loss and spiritual degradation.

Sadeq Hedayat's masterpiece details a young man's despair after losing a mysterious lover with potent symbolism and terrifying surrealistic imagery. The Blind Owl, which has been translated into many foreign languages, has often been compared to the writing of Edgar Allan Poe. Every work like the Blind Owl has many aspects: cultural, religious, literary, artists, socio-political, philosophical, and others, each of these aspects should be separated by experts to deal with it.

The Blind Owl is a kind of fiction and the correspondences are not as accurate as it. (Bashiri 2013, 78). Thus, this novel could be the best for the present study due to the majority of cultural-bound items such as idioms. According to Bashiri (2013), the Blind Owl is in two parts: Each part depicting a phase on a continuum of the cosmic drama dealing with birth and rebirth, while in the first life the character is distracted by visions that destine him to rebirth, in the second life, using the knowledge gained in his previous life, he successfully recognizes the cause of his rebirth and eliminates it (p.81).

Difficulties in Translating Idiomatic Expressions

Regarding terms or contexts, a concept, the untranslatable, is part of the translation process. Roman Jakobson's main idea was that "all cognitive experience and its classification is conveyable in any existing language" and he classifies as untranslatable only the poetry (Hatim & Munday; 2004, 10).

From this statement, the authors deduce that the sense may be translated, while the form often cannot “and the point where form begins to contribute to sense is where we approach untranslatability. This clearly is most likely to be in poetry, song, advertising, punning and so on, where sound and rhyme and double meaning are unlikely to be recreated in the TL” (Hatim & Munday; 2004, 10). From last statement, the domain of untranslatability is approached because the fixed expressions represent the case of translating both sense (meaning) and form.

Baker (2011) claims that, “the first difficulty that a translator comes across is being able to recognize that he or she is dealing with an idiomatic expression” (p.69). If the translator can recognize the idiomatic expression the next step is to decide how to translate idiomatic expression from the SL into the TL.

According to Baker (2011, pp.71-75):

the main difficulties involved in translating idiomatic expressions (idioms and fixed expressions) may be summarized as follows:

- a) An idiom or fixed expression may have no equivalent in the TL.
- b) An idiom or fixed expression may have a similar counterpart in the TL, but its context of use may be different; the two expressions may have different connotations.
- c) An idiom may be used in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time.
- d) The very convention of using idioms in written discourse, the contexts in which they can be used, and their frequency of use may be different in the source and TLs.

Theoretical Foundations

Carter (1998) classifies idioms as “a type of fixed expression that include; proverbs, stock phrases, catchphrases, allusions, idiomatic similes and discursal expressions” (P.66). Vinay&Darbelnet identify two translation strategies: direct translation and oblique translation which are similar to literal and free translation. Direct translation covers three procedures (literal, borrowing and calque translation) and oblique translation covers four procedures (transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation).

Anton Popovic (1976) also distinguished between linguistic and cultural untranslatability in A Dictionary for the Analysis of Literary Translation. Bassnett-McGuire (1980) defines the former as: “A situation in which the linguistic elements of the original cannot be replaced adequately in structural, linear, functional or semantic terms in consequence of a lack of denotation or connotation” (p.34). This categorization is very similar to the one proposed by Catford.

However, the Popovic’s definition of cultural untranslatability is substantially different from that of Catford. Catford’s initial approach about cultural untranslatability shows a fundamentally linguistic nature, whereas Popovic’s, as Bassnett-McGuire indicates, implies a theory of literary communication. Neubert established a classification in four different categories (Wilss 1982, 114):

1. Texts which are exclusively source-language oriented: Relatively untranslatable.

2. Texts which are mainly source-language oriented (literary texts, for example): Partially translatable.
3. Texts which are both source-language and target-language oriented (as the texts written in language for specific purposes): Optimum translatability.
4. Texts which are mainly or solely target-language oriented (propaganda, for instance): Optimum translatability.

This classification is arguable, as the limits established between the different degrees of translatability are vague and arbitrary. Correlation between a text and its degree of translatability, and its level of translation equivalence is not always straightforward.

Methodology

Corpus

The *Blind Owl* that is written by Sadeq Hedayat (1937) and English translated version by Iraj Bashiri (2013) provided the corpus of this study. This book was chosen because according to many famous writers and theorists, *The Blind Owl* is among the valuable and working ones.

- Henry Miller, the great American writer says that the book *The Blind Owl* is the best book I have ever read.
- Andréa Breton, the leader of surrealist movement says that *The Blind Owl* is one the top twentieth century novels.
- In Iran, the director Darioush Mehrjuie made the film “*Hamoon*” based on *The Blind Owl*.

In addition, Baker’s (2011) translation strategies have been chosen as the theoretical framework of this study. The finding of this study will have an influential role in identifying appropriate strategies for translating idiomatic expressions. Moreover, according to Catford’s theory, this study intends to examine two translated texts of the book *The Blind Owl* to determine the translatability and untranslatability of idiomatic expressions. The present study is based on strategies that were proposed by Baker (2011) for translating:

1. Using an idiom of similar meaning and form
2. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form
3. Borrowing the SL idiom
4. Translation by Paraphrase
5. Translation by Omission (p.75-85).

Based on Catford’s (1965) theory, the following definitions in *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*: Linguistic untranslatability: “failure to find a TL [target language] equivalent is due entirely to differences between the SL and the TL” (Catford 1965, 98). Cultural untranslatability: arises “when a situational feature, functionally relevant for the SL [source language] text, is completely absent from the culture of which the TL [target language] is a part” (Catford 1965, 99). This research was a corpus-based research and descriptive – comparative one that aims to highlight strategies for translating idiomatic expressions from Persian into English to identify the translatability and untranslatability of idiomatic expressions.

Design

This research was corpus-based research and descriptive – comparative one, highlighting strategies for translating idiomatic expressions from Persian into English to identify the translatability and untranslatability of idiomatic expressions. The present paper is based on a case study of the book *The Blind Owl* written by Sadeq Hedayat and its English-translated version. For investigating the translatability of the idiomatic expressions according to Catford's theory, the Baker's proposed strategies which is applied by translator for translating the idiomatic expressions were examined.

Procedures*Data Collection*

The data was collected from the book, the *Blind Owl* and its translation. The book was available in the market of Iran. However, the translated text was not so easy to find in the market. The translated text was downloaded from the www.academia.edu. Then the original book and its translation were viewed by the researcher in the process of analysis to find the idiomatic expressions in the original book and the parallel translation of idiomatic expressions in the translated text. The theoretical framework of this study is based on the translation strategy proposed by Baker (2011) for translating idiomatic expressions and Catford's (1965) theory for (un)translatability.

Data Classification

First, 290 idiomatic expressions of the book *The Blind Owl* were highlighted according to the glossary of Dehkhoda (1930-1931) online. Moreover, they have been searched in the website www.vajeyab.com and then, the equivalents of these items in translated text were specified. Second, the strategies have been adopted by the translator for translating the items were examined according to Baker's (2011) categorization of translation strategies. Third, in order to have a comprehensive picture of data gathering, tables were drawn for each part. Forth, the performance of the translator in translating the idiomatic expressions has been assessed by investigating his applied strategies. Then, the translatability and the untranslatability of the idiomatic expressions according to Catford's theory were investigated.

In order to make the study reliable, two raters rated the collected data. The researcher in this study arranged a table of collected data for evaluation. For analyzing the data as the raters with Ph.D., Degrees rated the data. Moreover, the raters are familiar with both Persian and English. This research was not an experimental type; it was descriptive; therefore, there were no participants or members.

Data Analysis**Adopted Translation Strategies**

After collecting the Persian idiomatic expressions and their English equivalents, the data are classified into two categories (translatability and untranslatability) according to Baker's strategies and Catford's theory. First, the data are investigated by Baker's strategies and the strategies are identified from English translations. Then, the data are set into above mentioned categories. In general, five translation strategies are identified as follows:

1. *Similar Meaning and Form*

This procedure focuses on both the form and meaning of an idiomatic expression. Example (1): همینکه به خودم آمدم

Meaning: 1. to begin acting and thinking like my normal self, 2. to recover my senses, 3. to recover my capacity for sound judgment.

Translation: when I came to myself.

In example (1), both expressions in Persian and English are idiomatic with the same lexical items.

Example (2): مرا مثل شمع آب می‌کند

Meaning: 1. If a strong feeling melts you away, you feel it stronger and torturing.

Translation: Like a candle, melts me away.

In example (2), translator has employed correct equivalent. Both expressions have same lexical items and same meaning.

Example (3): وقت را بکشم

Meaning: wasting time without doing a work.

Translation: to kill time.

In example (3), the lexical items and the meaning in both Persian and English fixed expressions are the same.

2. *Similar Meaning and Dissimilar Form*

Dissimilar form means that the lexical items of the SL idiomatic expressions are not the same as the TL idiomatic expressions; while, a semantic equivalent is given in TL.

Example (1): سوراخ منبیه

Meaning: 1. Every part of a place, 2. small spaces in something or parts of something that are difficult to reach.

Translation: Nooks and crannies.

In example (1), both Persian and English expressions have idiomatic meaning with different lexical items.

Example (2): هفتاد سال سیاه

Meaning: you do not care about something, especially the annoying things that someone else is doing or saying.

Translation: I don't give a damn.

In example (2), both expressions are in same idiomatic meaning but in different lexical items.

Example (3): مثل سیبی که نصف کرده باشند

Meaning: to look extremely similar to someone.

Translation: Spitting image of one another.

In example (3), both expressions carry the idiomatic meaning with different forms.

3. *Borrowing*

Borrowing means just the use of loan words.

Example (1): سیزده به در

Meaning: the thirteenth day (last day) of Norouz which is traditionally considered as unlucky and a sinister day, and people should not stay at home.

Translation: thirteenth day of Farvadin.

In example (1), Translator has borrowed a word from SL to clarify the expression for the readers in TL. But the English equivalent do not have the connotation of Persian expression.

Example (2): ریش حنابسته اش

Meaning: someone with henna-dyed beard follows the Islamic tradition to show his belief.

Translation: hennaed beard.

In example (2), the origin of the word “حنا” is Arabic. So, this word is a loan word in SL and translator has translated the loan word from SL into TL. “Henna” is a loan word in the English language as well.

Example (3): چهارشنبه آخر سال

Meaning: festival of fire (chahar shanbeh suri) is held the last Wednesday of a year. Chahar Shanbeh Suri celebration usually starts in the evening, with people making bonfires in the streets and jumping over them. Some believe jumping over bonfires is a way of taking away negative energy, sickness, and problems and in turn getting fulfillment, warmth, and energy. Chaharshanbe Suri serves as a cultural festival for many Iranians.

Translation: last Wednesday of the year.

In example (3), translator has borrowed the expression without its traditional and cultural meaning.

4. Translation by Paraphrase

This is the most common way of translating idioms and fixed expressions and the meaning of the idiomatic expressions are explained in a non-idiomatic way.

Example (1): فال گوش

Meaning: listen to someone's private conversation without them knowing.

Translation: Eavesdropping.

In example (1), translator has applied the paraphrase strategy for translating this idiomatic expression.

Example (2): کج سلیقه

Meaning: someone who cannot be careful about what says or does.

Translation: disposed of architect.

In example (2), as it is clear, translators have applied the paraphrase strategy for translating this expression.

Example (3): آب تو دلم تکان نمی خورد

Meaning: The smallest incident did not happen.

Translation: I could barely feel.

In example (3), translator just paraphrase the idiomatic expression.

5. Translation by Omission

This strategy is used often when an equivalent fixed expression is not found in the target language.

Example (1): یک مشت

Meaning: An amount that is as much as you can hold in your hand.

Translation: ---

In example (1), translator has omitted this fixed expression without any linguistic and cultural reason.

Example (2): تقلا و جان کندن

Meaning: suffering and striving.

Translation: ---

In example (2), translator has omitted the expression as well.

Example (3): حرفهای پوچ

Meaning: meaningless and useless talk.

Translation: ---

In example (3), translator has employed the omission strategy.

Translator has used the strategies such as; similar meaning and form, similar meaning and dissimilar form, paraphrase, borrowing, omission and some wrong translation which is not among the translation strategies. Paraphrase has the most frequency in translating the idiomatic expressions. Translator has omitted the cases for three reasons as the above-mentioned; (a) to prevent repetition (b) item is unnecessary to translate (c) compensate the meaning of expression by translating the similar expression.

Translatability

Translatability means translation is possible (Catford, 1965). In this study, most of the idiomatic expressions are translatable. Example (1): بپایش افتادم means; to ask someone, in a very emotional way, to do something for you, is translated to: threw myself at her feet. Example (2): روی هم رفته means; to do something completely or as well as you can, is translated to: on the whole. Examples (1) and (2) are clear because the translator has found the idiomatic expression in the TL. Example (3): از خود بیخود شده بودم means; get out of your normal state, is translated to: I lost consciousness. In example (3), translator employed the common way of translating when a match cannot be found in the TL or when is not appropriate to use the idiomatic expression in the TL. Therefore, the translation by paraphrase can prove the translatability.

As it can be seen in (table 1), example 4 is translatable, while the translator has employed an omission strategy. Sometimes it is possible that a translator omits one expression because of some logical reasons. For instance, معدوم شدنم is omitted by boy translator because the writer has written three different words with the same meaning in one sentence such as مرگم، معدوم شدنم، خواهد مرد. Translator for avoiding of repetition have omitted معدوم شدنم. But he translate the last word with the same meaning at the end of the sentence.

Table 1.

Examples of translatability

Example	Employed strategy by the translator	(un)translatability
Example 1	Similar meaning and form	Translatable
Example 2	Similar meaning and dissimilar form	Translatable
Example 3	Paraphrase	Translatable
Example 4	omission	Translatable

Untranslatability

Four expressions are borrowed by translator. (1) سیزده بدر means; the thirteenth day of Nouruz, which is traditionally considered as an unlucky and sinister day and should have left home for having a picnic, is translated the thirteenth day of

Farvardin by translator, is an untranslatable expression because this expression related to the culture of SL, 13 is an unlucky number in Iranian culture and at the first thirteenth day of the year, people should go out of the home. So, it is in the branch of cultural untranslatability. (2) یک قران و دو عباسی means; a unit of money during the reign of Reza Shah which was valueless, is translated two qerans and one abbasi, is in the branch of linguistic untranslatability, because this expression shows the unit of money in one era, also it shows the low price of money.

’حنا’ is a loan word in the SL, its language is Arabic. In Islam, khe(a)zaab (henna is used to dye beard and the hand) is included emphatic tradition for men. So, (3) ریش حنا بسته اش means; someone with henna-dyed beard follows the Islamic tradition to show his belief, is translated hennaed beard, is an idiomatic expression with strong religious connotation which is not possible to translate. It can be in the branch of cultural untranslatability. (4) چهارشنبه آخر سال means; festival of fire (chahar shanbeh suri) is held the last Wednesday of a year. Chahar Shanbeh Suri celebration usually starts in the evening, with people making bonfires in the streets and jumping over them. Some believe jumping over bonfires is a way of taking away negative energy, sickness, and problems and in turn getting fulfillment, warmth, and energy. Chahar shanbe Suri serves as a cultural festival for many Iranians. That is translated last Wednesday of the year. It is a cultural specific item which carry the strong cultural connotation is not translatable.

Results

This study attempts to illustrate the frequency of strategies applied by a native translator and the number of translatability and untranslatability. The quantitative results are shown in the figures. As shown in figure 1, the similar meaning and dissimilar form and the similar meaning and form are approximately at the same and the most frequency. Furthermore, just one wrong translation has been identified in the translation of idiomatic expressions by the translator. Translation by paraphrase is the most similar strategy that translators have applied in translating the idiomatic expressions. In figure 2, as it is clear, just four idiomatic expressions are untranslatable, and the others are translatable. It means that the translation of the idiomatic expressions is possible in this study.

Table 2. *Applied strategies by translator.*

Strategy	frequency	Percentage
Similar meaning and form	93	32.06%
Similar meaning and dissimilar form	94	32.41%
Borrowing	4	1.37%
Paraphrase	90	31.03%
Omission	8	2.76%
Wrong	1	0.34%
Total	290	100%

Figure1. Applied strategies by translator

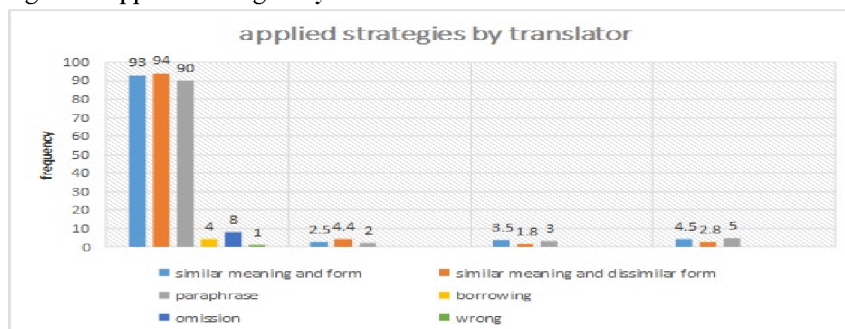
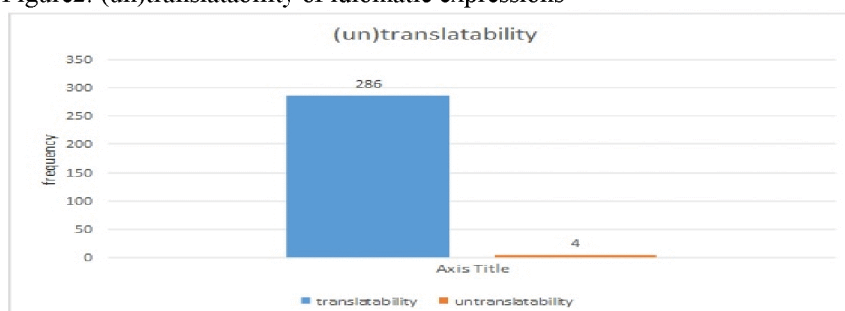


Figure2. (un)translatability of idiomatic expressions



In the present study, 290 idiomatic expressions were collected from the book *The Blind Owl*. It is found that out of 290, 93 idiomatic expressions were translated using similar meaning and form. 94 idiomatic expressions are translated into English using a similar meaning and dissimilar form (second strategy); the percentage of making use of the second strategy is almost near to the first one (Tables 2). According to Baker (2011, p.79), “just as the use of loan words is a common strategy in dealing with culture-specific items, it is not unusual for idioms to be borrowed.” Bashiri has borrowed four idiomatic expressions from the SL.

Translation by paraphrase is the fourth strategy. Bashiri has translated 31.03 % of idiomatic expressions into English. The fifth strategy is a translation by omission. As Baker (2011) states, “If there is no close match in the TL, and its meaning cannot be paraphrased, an idiom may be omitted.” Four cases of the idiomatic expressions are untranslatable due to the cultural and linguistic differences between the source and target languages. The (un)translatability percentages are calculated at 98.62 and 1.37 for translatability and untranslatability respectively. Most of the idiomatic expressions in this study are translatable.

A few of the idiomatic expressions are untranslatable in the study because of the following reasons: a. Idiomatic expressions may be culture-specific meaning and they may relate to specific religious, social, cultural, or political occasions. b. Cultural and linguistic differences between the languages cause translating of idiomatic expressions impossible. c. Sometimes an idiomatic expression has a

political or religious connotation while its counterpart in the target text may have a different connotation.

Discussion

Omrani & Shams Hosseini (2021) examined the strategies used to translate idioms according to Baker's (2011) categorization of translation strategies. Their study aimed to assess problems during the process of translation and investigation. They collected some Persian idioms from the novel 'The Blind Owl' and concluded that the most common strategy used in translation was 'translation by similar meaning and dissimilar form.' This present study came up with Omrani & Shams Hosseini's (2021) study revealing the critical role of idiomatic expressions in different languages. According to the findings in the study, translator has used three strategies approximately equal. The strategies used are as follows: 'similar meaning and form, similar meaning and dissimilar form, and paraphrase'.

In the study of Manipuspika & Winzami (2021) about idiomatic expressions, they have been realized that idioms and fixed expressions are culture-bound; therefore, it is easy to say that culture is complex to deal with translation. Moreover, idioms and fixed expressions cannot be formally translated due to their misleading forms. It is concluded that translation by 'paraphrase' is the most preferred strategy in translating idiomatic expressions. According to the findings of the present study, the most common strategy in the translation of the idiomatic expressions by the translator are 'similar meaning and dissimilar form' and 'similar meaning and form'.

According to Floranti & Mubarok (2020), translation of idiomatic expressions can be considered a challenging process due to their connotation. Based on the results, the translator prefers applying paraphrasing strategies. The translator needs to be experienced in understanding the source and target language well. In the present study, the performance of translator has been assessed. Therefore, the translator has employed three strategies (similar meaning and dissimilar form, similar meaning and form, and paraphrase) approximately equal. It can be concluded that, the translator was almost able to provide an acceptable translation due to his familiarity with language and culture of source language. However, cultural differences between the source and target texts lead to partial correspondence of the equivalences utilized in the translated texts. Moreover, the concept of untranslatability causes some cases of zero correspondence. While confronting an untranslatable item, different translators apply different strategies to overcome the challenge. In the present study, the most applied strategy for the very cases is paraphrase

The findings of the study are in line with those of Shojaei (2012) in the process of translating idiomatic expressions becomes more easily when two languages are more identical to each other. Another concept that considered in the study of Shojaei (2012) is that the translator must have deep knowledge of both SL and TL to understand the connotative meanings of idiomatic expressions. As it can be seen from the data analyzed, the linguistic and cultural differences between the languages make a few idiomatic expressions untranslatable. Moreover, concerning a few of the idiomatic expressions in which the translator has borrowed the words from SL,

having deep knowledge of the culture and language of the source text may not solve the problems that idiomatic expressions cause.

Raquel de Pedro (1999) believes that the consensus seemed to be that absolute untranslatability, whether linguistic or cultural, does not exist. Whereas, as stated in the results, there are a few untranslatable idiomatic expressions due to the linguistic and cultural differences between SL and TL and the style of the source text (some of the expressions have strong political and religious connotations). It can be concluded that absolute untranslatability does not exist. However, Fernando and Flavell (1981) warn us to be against the “strong unconscious urge in most translators to search hard for an idiom in the receptor-language, however inappropriate it may be” (p.82) (as cited in Baker 2012, 6). So, every similar correspondence in TL is not accurate or appropriate.

There is a difference between absolute untranslatability and untranslatability. Absolute untranslatability focuses on the translation without considering the factors such as style, context. That is important in translating idiomatic expressions. So, the untranslatability, in this regard, may happen. Some culture-bound items can be omitted when far-off from the cultural context (Keshavarzi, 2015). However, omission cannot be reliable when an author has an object of putting the item. Nevertheless, translators should compensate the item in another place if there is no way instead of omission. Hence, translators would have compensated in another part, or even they could have considered the TL’s culture instead of omitting the items.

Conclusion

Translators has used the strategies such as; similar meaning and form, similar meaning and dissimilar form, paraphrase, borrowing, omission, and wrong translation which is not among the translation strategies. Translation strategies made the process of translation easier for translators. However, the translation, especially the translation of idiomatic expressions, depends on many factors, for example, the context in which an idiomatic expression is translated, cultural or linguistic differences between SL and TL, and the ability of the translator to employ an appropriate strategy in the process of translation. So, it can be concluded that just having some knowledge of translation strategies is not enough. The accuracy of using the translation strategies depends on the context.

The translator has omitted eight cases of idiomatic expressions, and has applied the borrowing strategy for translating four cases. He has omitted the cases for three reasons as above mentioned; (a) to prevent repetition, (b) item is unnecessary to translate (c) compensate the meaning of expression by translating the similar expression. Most of the idiomatic expressions in the corpus are translatable, and just four cases of the idiomatic expressions are untranslatable. Two expressions are in the branch of cultural untranslatability. Thus, translator had to borrow it from SL. A reliable way for rendering this kind of expressions may be an explanation in parentheses to explain the connotation.

Pedagogical Implications

This thesis can be beneficial to several people:

1. Students of translation: the translation students can be familiar with the concept of (un)translatability and idiomatic expressions.

2. Professors of translation: the professors of translation can use the result of this thesis to show students how translation is not possible in translating idiomatic expressions.

3. Novice translators: the novice translators can also benefit from the results of this thesis to adopt more suitable approaches for translating idiomatic expressions. In other words, applied strategies by the translator in this study can guide them.

Suggestions for Further Research

There are some suggestions for further research as follows: First, sometimes context is important in translating the idiomatic expressions. So, translators are supposed to consider not only the meaning but the context. Second, there are still many other Persian books that have not been considered to work on their idiomatic expressions. Third, translatability at the word level can be considered as another path for researchers of translation studies. Fourth, due to the realism style of the book, some expressions and words have strong political and religious connotations, which can make it untranslatable; it can be a new path for other researchers. At last, it may be interesting to compare the performance of one non-native translator with a native translator about translating culture-specific items in literary works through the years.

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بررسی ترجمه‌پذیری و راهبردهای ترجمه عبارات اصطلاحی بوف کور و تحلیل

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جهانی شدن ارتباطات بر اهمیت ترجمه افزوده است. با این حال، گاهی اوقات تفاوت‌های فرهنگی و زبانی بین زبان‌ها حتی بیشتر از نقش مترجم چالش برانگیز است. عبارات اصطلاحی اغلب مسائل چالش برانگیز در قلمرو ترجمه هستند. این پژوهش، به بررسی راهبردهای کاربردی و ترجمه‌پذیری عبارات اصطلاحی بوف کور پرداخته است. از این رو، ترجمه بشیری (۱۳۹۲) مورد بررسی قرار گرفت و داده‌ها برای یافتن راهبردهای کاربردی و بررسی ترجمه‌پذیری و ترجمه‌ناپذیری عبارات اصطلاحی مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفتند. دوپست و نود عبارت اصطلاحی جمع‌آوری شد که تعدادی از آنها به دلیل تفاوت‌های زبانی و فرهنگی غیرقابل ترجمه بودند. علاوه بر این، سبک نویسنده کتاب نیز بر ترجمه تأثیر گذاشته است. اگرچه عملکرد بشیری به عنوان مترجم بومی در به کارگیری راهبردهای ترجمه کارآمد بود، در برخی موارد، آشنایی وی با زبان و فرهنگ زبان مبدأ منجر به تطابق کامل بین متون مبدأ و مقصد نمی‌شود.

واژه‌های کلیدی: عبارات اصطلاحی، ترجمه‌پذیری، ترجمه‌ناپذیری، مترجم بومی، عناصر فرهنگی.

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