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Translation of Idioms across Languages

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Abstract

This paper explores translation of idioms across a set of languages (viz. English, Arabic, French, Kurdish, Persian and Turkish), applying Baker's (1992/2011) strategies for translating idioms. The study first examines Baker's strategies as to whether they can be considered a practical model to extrapolate in rendering idioms across languages. Secondly, given the type of strategies employed, the study attempts to find out whether idioms can be treated as a culture-specific or universal phenomenon. The results show that Baker's strategies require modification to be considered a practical model, and that idioms generally carry properties of the culture in which they emerge.

Key Words

Translation, translation strategies, idioms, proverbs, cross-cultural translation

Introduction

Idioms are fixed expressions that are said to cause translation impediments since literal translation of such expressions often does not result in an adequate translation. According to Dickins *et al.* (2017: 293), an idiom is "a fixed expression whose meaning cannot be deduced from the denotative meanings of the words that constitute it". Likewise, Larson (1998: 23) refers to idiom as "a string of words whose meaning is different from the meaning conveyed by the individual words". Given these definitions, proverbs can also be regarded as idioms in the sense that they are fixed expressions whose applied meaning goes beyond the literal meaning of their individual components. A proverb is

defined as "a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation" (Meider, 2004: 3). Holme (2004: 65) contends that "proverbs are idioms in the sense that they are expressions that use figurative language or metaphor in a repeated way to represent an agreed meaning". It can be concluded that all proverbs are idioms and can be studied as such, especially in the realm of translation. However, not all idioms are proverbs in the sense that idioms do not necessarily carry wisdom or moral lessons, which is the case in proverbs. If we closely look at the study of idioms from a translation studies perspective, we will see that more than often not translation scholars and researchers incorporate proverbs in the study of idiom translation. For instance, in her strategies for translating idioms and fixed expressions, Baker (2011: 81) does not make differentiation between idioms and proverbs; she uses the proverb *shut the stable door when the horse has bolted* to exemplify translating idioms by paraphrase. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, we shall not set proverbs apart from idioms, but treat them under the same banner.

To attest the validity of Baker's strategies as a model for translating idioms, we shall apply the strategies in translating idioms across five pairs of languages, namely: English-Arabic, English-French, English-Kurdish, English-Persian and English-Turkish. This endeavour will be followed by a thorough, critical discussion of the nature of the translation of a set of representative idioms across the languages in question.

1. Baker's strategies for translating idioms

By observing actual translations carried out by professional (or semi-professional) translators**,** Baker (1992/2011) identifies a set of strategies to overcome the problem of non-equivalence. It is crucial to point out at the outset that Baker does not necessarily propose her strategies as a prescriptive model for translators and translation scholars to follow, but rather as descriptive strategies found in actual, authentic translations:

> The strategies are not preconceived, nor are they suggested as ideal solutions; they are identified by analyzing authentic examples of

> translated texts in a variety of languages and presented as 'actual' strategies used rather than the 'correct' strategies to use. (Baker, 2011: 6)

However, the strategies, especially those specified for translating idioms and fixed expressions, are generally perceived as a model extrapolated to specific languages or even specific genres. For instance, Strakšien (2009) applied the strategies in translating idioms between English and Lithuanian; Shojaei (2012) applied the strategies as a model for translating Persian proverbs; El-Farahaty (2015) refers to the strategies as a model for translating Arabic fixed legal terms, and so on. The approach taken in the present paper is different not only in that the strategies will be applied in translating idioms across several languages but also in the fact that the validity of the strategies as a model will be critically scrutinised.

When rendering idioms, translators are first and for most concerned to find an identical idiom counterpart in the TL. However, according to Baker (2011: 75-76), translating idioms is not only the matter of finding a direct equivalent, because a set of other factors also come into play, such as: "the significance of the specific lexical items which constitute the idiom" and "the appropriateness or inappropriateness of using idiomatic language in a given register in the target language". She (2011: 76) concludes that, in all cases, the context in which an idiom is rendered determines which strategy is acceptable or unacceptable. The following is the list of her observed translation strategies, which will be applied in rendering idioms across the chosen languages.

1.1 Using an idiom of similar meaning and form

This is the first strategy for translating idioms, which involves the replacement of an SL idiom by a TL idiom which has roughly the same meaning and linguistic form. This sounds an ideal translation solution that translators opt for as a first attempt when rendering idioms. However, as Baker (2011: 76) points out, "this kind of match can only occasionally be achieved". To exemplify the strategy, consider the English idiom *lion's share,* which has idiom counterparts with exact meaning and form across the languages in question, as demonstrated in Table 1 below:

Example 1

English	*lion's share*
Arabic	حصة الأسد
French	part du lion
Kurdish	پشکی شێر
Persian	سهم شیر
Turkish	aslan payı

Table 1. Translation of the idiom *lion's share* across a set of chosen languages.

Likewise, the idiom *two sides of the same coin* has direct counterparts with similar meaning and form in the languages considered, as shown in Table 2 below. In fact, there is a slight difference in the Turkish translation *aynı paranın iki yüzü* ['two sides of the same money'], but the difference is insignificant to the overall meaning and form of the idiom.

Example 2

English	*two sides of the same coin*
Arabic	وجهان لعملة واحدة
French	sont les deux faces d'une même médaille
Kurdish	دوو ڕووی یەك دراو
Persian	دو روی یك سكه
Turkish	aynı paranın iki yüzü

Table 2. Translation of the idiom *two sides of the same coin* across a set of chosen languages.

As stated above, it is only rarely possible to find an exact idiom counterpart across different languages and cultures. It is almost impossible to find a set of several idioms that are identical in terms of semantics and structure across a set of, say, six languages. The more limited the range of language pairs involved, the wider the possibility of finding semantically and structurally similar idiom counterparts.

It is worth mentioning that replacing SL idioms by TL idioms of similar meaning and form is a kind of 'calque', a translation procedure defined as "a special kind of borrowing whereby a language borrows an expression form of another, but then translates literally each of its elements" (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995: 32). Translation by calque suggests that idioms were originally born to a specific language and culture, and they would later be literally reproduced in other languages and used frequently enough to sound natural and familiar to readers of the target language and culture, as if they were originated in that language and culture. Consider the idiom *lion's share* (Example 1 above), which is referred to in *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* as an expression that "alludes to Aesop's fable about a lion, who got all of a kill because its fellow hunters, an ass, fox, and wolf, were afraid to claim" (Ammer, 2013: 272). Since, Aesop was a Greek fabulist, one can argue that the idiom originally emerged in Greek and then transferred to English, French and other languages through calque translation.

1.2 Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form

When rendering idioms from one language into another, translators ideally look for idiom counterparts with similar meaning and form, i.e. they opt for the first strategy. However, if it was impossible to find direct equivalents in terms of content and form, translators would naturally go for the second strategy, i.e. looking for an idiom of similar meaning but different form. This is not only a common strategy for translating idioms, but also the most interesting one. When it comes to this strategy, different languages use different metaphorical symbols to convey the same message. Consider the English idiom *when pigs fly*, which can be translated by idiom counterparts of similar meaning but dissimilar metaphorical symbols across the chosen languages, as shown in Table 3 below.

Example 3

English	*when pigs fly*
Arabic	لما يبيض الديك ('when roosters lay eggs')
French	la semaine des quatre jeudis ('when a week has two Thursdays')
Kurdish	كه شەممه له مانگ بڕا ('when a month has no Saturday')
Persian	وقت گل ني ('when it is time of flowers')
Turkish	kırmızı kar yağınca ('when snow turns red')

Table 3. Translation of the idiom *when pigs fly* across a set of chosen languages.

Interestingly, despite being linguistically and culturally incongruent, Kurdish and French use calendric reference, albeit in different ways, to express the massage.

Likewise, the idiom *it's all Greek to me* has semantically similar but formally different equivalents across the languages concerned, as presented in Table 4 below. The essential meaning of the idiom is that one has no idea at all about what he/she is being told. To express this message, Kurdish and Persian seem to be different from the other languages under examination. Kurdish uses the idea of 'counting walnuts to someone', as if saying 'it is all numbers without making much sense'. Persian, on the other hand, uses an idiom counterpart that is equivalent to the English idiom *I can't get my head around it*. The rest of the languages in question use the idea of language knowledge to express the

message, yet each one uses a different language as a metaphorical symbol. It is unclear whether the choice of the language is something random or motivated by sociocultural factors. One wonders whether Greek is the most difficult language to English speakers, Chinese to Arab speakers, and Hebrew to the French.

Example 4

English	*it's all Greek to me*
Arabic	يتحدث باللغة الصينية ('as if speaking in Chinese language')
French	c'est de l'hébreu pour moi ('it's Hebrew to me')
Kurdish	دەڵێی گوێزم بۆ دەژمێری ('as if counting walnuts to me')
Persian	من از اين چيزها سر در نمي آورم ('I can't get my head around it')
Turkish	anladımsa Arap olayım ('as if I understand Arabic')

Table 4. Translation of the idiom *it's all Greek to me* across a set of chosen languages.

2.3 Borrowing the source language idiom

Baker (2011: 79) claims that "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 in their original form in some contexts". Logically speaking, the direct borrowing of single words (such as: *coup, pizza, parliament, etc.*) and brand

names (such as: *British Petroleum*, *General Motors*, *Thomson Reuters*, etc.) is quite normal. However, borrowing entire idioms, fixed expressions and/or proverbs in tact is virtually impossible. It is axiomatic that source language idioms cannot be borrowed into the TL verbatim. In the first edition of her book, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation* (1992), Baker does not mention such a strategy. It is only in her second edition (2011) that this ungrounded strategy is incorporated. To exemplify the strategy, Baker (ibid. 79) has depended on a single example, *Out of this World,* which she has taken from a promotional leaflet (Figure 1 below). In truth, the expression does not function as an idiom in this context, but it rather functions as the brand name of a space gallery. The fact that the expression is indicated with initial uppercase letters suffices to prove that it is used as a brand name and not as a normal idiom. After all, this is an *ad hoc* and problematic example that cannot account for a realistic strategy for translating idioms. It is highly unlikely that a translation scholar or researcher is able to come up with a set of idioms, between any language pair, that can be normally rendered by verbatim borrowing. Therefore, the incorporation of this category in Baker's (2011) strategies for translating idioms and fixed expressions is redundant and utterly unnecessary.

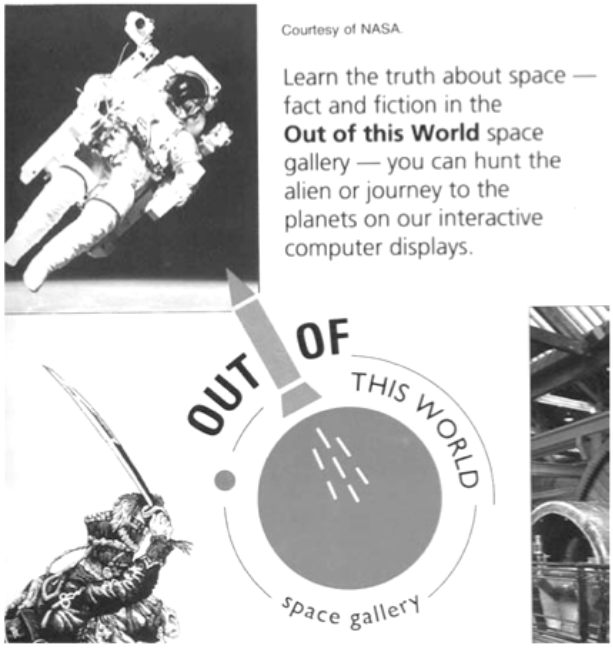

Figure 1. The idiom *Out of this World* in a promotional leaflet (Baker, 2011: 79).

1.4 Translation by paraphrase

If it was impossible to implement the first strategy (i.e. using an idiom of similar meaning and form) as well as the second strategy (i.e. using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form), translators would normally attempt to translate idioms by paraphrase. In this strategy an idiom will be replaced by non-idiomatic, plain language. Rasul (2015: 58) contends that paraphrase "is usually used to avoid a literal translation that would sound unnatural or result in translation loss". It is perhaps at this juncture that Larson's (1998: 126) claim is valid, who warns that "the real danger comes in translating an idiom literally, since the result will usually be nonsense on the receptor language." Speaking of the paraphrase strategy, Baker (2011: 80) asserts that:

> This is by far the most common way of translating idioms when a match cannot be found in the target language or when it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic language in the target text because of differences in stylistic preferences of the source and target languages.

Paraphrase as a translation solution is perceived to have both advantages and disadvantages. For instance, Chesterman (1997: 104) expresses his concerns about using paraphrase, stating that it "results in a TT version that can be described as loose, free, in some contexts even undertranslated". Likewise, Delisle et al. (1999: 167) view paraphrase as something disadvantageous, claiming that "whenever a translator uses paraphrase, there is a danger that elements of information not contained in the source text will be introduced into the target text". Nevertheless, paraphrase is an essential translation solution among Baker's (2011) strategies for translating idioms and fixed expressions. Moreover, Chesterman (1997: 104) concludes that paraphrase is a typical translation strategy used for translating idioms that lack counterparts in the target language. In effect, "paraphrase is an indispensable translation procedure, commonly used by professional translators" (Rasul, 2015: 59).

The English culture-specific idiom *feel under the weather* is a fascinating example that can be normally rendered by paraphrase, i.e. translation by sense, as demonstrated in Table 5 below. The idiom is glossed as 'slightly unwell or ill' in most monolingual English dictionaries (cf. *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English* (2011: 1636) and *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2008: 715). Across the languages considered, the paraphrase invariably involves the literal translation of the gloss of the idiom. Lack of counterpart for the idiom in question may be

due to the fact that the English idiom is culturally specific. In English, the reflection of weather remarks in the language is phenomenal. "English weather is intrinsically fascinating" and it is reflected in English conversations (Fox, 2004: 25).

Example 5

English	*I feel under the weather*
Arabic	اشعر بالمرض ('I feel ill')
French	ne pas se sentir en forme ('I do not feel well')
Kurdish	کەمێك ناساغم ('I am a little unwell')
Persian	ناخوش احوالم ('I am unwell')
Turkish	biraz hastayim hissediyorum ('I feel a little ill')

Table 5. Translation of the idiom *feel under weather* across a set of chosen languages

In similar vein, the English idiom *break a leg!* can be best translated by paraphrase. The idiom is culturally specific, which "can actually be traced back to British theatres in the 1920s" (Harrison, 2016). Regarding the meaning of the idiom, Harrison (ibid.) speculates that:

> The choice of 'break a leg' may have come about as part of a theatre in-joke, where apprentice actors would jokingly tell established actors that they hoped they'd break a leg to give them a shot at performing.

The idiom normally calls for paraphrase when translated into any of the languages concerned. And the paraphrase usually revolves round the literal meaning of the idiom, i.e. wishing someone 'good luck', as demonstrated in Table 6 below.

Example 6

English	*break a leg!*
Arabic	حظا سعيدا ('good luck!')
French	bonne chance! ('good luck!')
Kurdish	بەختێکی باش ('good luck!')
Persian	موفق باشد ('be successful')
Turkish	İyi şanslar! ('good luck!')

Table 6. Translation of the idiom *break a leg!* across a set of chosen languages.

1.5 Translation by omission of a play on idiom

According to Baker (2011: 84), "this strategy involves rendering only the literal

meaning of an idiom in a context that allows for a concrete reading of an otherwise playful use of language". To exemplify the strategy, Baker (ibid. 84-85) refers to the idiom *on a plate* in the promotional leaflet title *Centuries of craftsmanship on a plate*. She (ibid. 84) points out that the English idiom implies both "the idiomatic meaning of the expression as well as the concrete meaning of plate". The idiom is translated into Japanese, and its idiomatic meaning is compromised in the translation process. The Japanese translation is literally glossed as "the craft of famous people has been continually poured for centuries into a single plate" (ibid. 84). This category of Baker's strategies for translating idioms and fixed expressions is again problematic. Some idioms naturally involve a play on words, a phenomenon that poses translation difficulties since languages differ in the way they form idioms. However, it is practically hard, if not impossible, to reproduce a play on idiom in a specific target language, let alone a set of languages, which is the subject of this paper. Baker (ibid. 72) herself admits that "unless the target-language idiom corresponds to the source-language idiom both in form and in meaning, the play on idiom cannot be successfully reproduced in the target text". It can be strongly argued that this strategy is a form of paraphrase, and can be safely incorporated in the paraphrase strategy. After all, paraphrase essentially involves rendering the literal meaning at the expense of idiomatic or stylistic expressiveness.

1.6 Translation by omission of entire idiom

Omission is generally viewed as a negative and dispreferred translation technique. Notwithstanding that, several translation scholars have considered omission a practical and useful translation strategy (cf. Baker, 1992/2011: 42-43; Toury, 1995: 82; Chesterman, 1997: 109-110; Dickins et al*.,* 2002/2017: 20 and Dimitriu, 2004: 163-174). Baker (2011: 85) claims that "as with single words, an idiom may sometimes be omitted altogether in the target text". She (ibid. 85) points out that an idiom can be omitted when "it has no close match in the target language, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons". Likewise, Rasul (2016: 410) states that:

> …sometimes translators […] omit idioms simply because they do not have counterparts in the TL or it is difficult to work out their meanings. This can be rightly criticised, because by omitting an idiom, although translators can avoid producing a nonsensical translation, the meaning of

the message may be compromised.

As far as English-Kurdish translation is concerned, Rasul (2015) observes that the idiom *you can never say never*, in the former KRG Prime Minister's interview with the Washington Post was omitted when translated into Kurdish by the Kurdish media outlet *Xendan*:

Example 7

> "**You can never say never**, and every Kurd deep down yearns for independence," said Barham Salih, prime minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).
>
> د. بەرهەم صالح، سەرۆکی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان بە ڕۆژنامەکەی ڕاگەیاند: "هەموو کوردێك بەقوڵی ئاواتی سەربەخۆییە".
>
> ('Dr. Barham Salih, prime minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, told the newspaper: "every Kurd deeply yearns for independence".')

The omission of the idiom can be rightfully criticised; apart from its semantic and stylistic expressiveness, the idiom functions here as a linkage to join the idea to what is mentioned before. So, the omission has lead to translation loss in semantic, stylistic and cohesive aspects of the text. It is true that the idiom does not have an idiom counterpart in Kurdish, whether it be of similar or dissimilar form, but it could be well translated by paraphrase as: هەرگیز ناتوانی بەڕەهایی قسەبکەیت ('you can never speak in absolute terms').

With regard to English-Arabic translation, Baker (2011: 85) refers to an example from *A Hero from Zero* (Example 8 below), in which the idiom *for good measure* is omitted altogether. However, she does not refer to any possible reasons necessitating the omission.

Example 8

> It was bitter, but funny, to see that Professor Smith had doubled his own salary before recommending the offer from Fayed, and added a pre-dated bonus **for good measure**.

وكان من المؤسف، بل ومن المضحك، أن يتمكن البروفسور سميث من مضاعفة راتبه مرتين قبل أن يتقدم بتوصيته لقبول عرض فايد، وأن يضيف الى ذلك مكافأة يتحدد سلفا موعد حصوله عليها.

('was regrettable, even funny, that Professor Smith had been able to double his salary twice before offering his recommendation to accept Fayed's offer, and that he added to this a bonus, the date of which had been previously decided on.')

Likewise, Shojaei (2012: 1228) refers to an interesting example of idiom omission in translation from Persian into English (Example 9 below), in which the idiom بیا و ببین (literally meaning 'come and see') is omitted.

Example 9

دیروز تو بازار یك دعوایی شده بود كه بیا و ببین.

Yesterday there was a severe quarrel in bazaar.

Shojaei's example is somehow different from what we have designated as a wholesale omission of idioms. In the example above, the meaning of idiom cannot be deduced from the context, it is thus compensated for by adding the word *severe* in the translation.

As an example of translation of proverbs between French and English, consider the English translation of the French book title *Comparaison n'est pas raison: La crise de la littérature comparée*, in which the proverbial expression *comparaison n'est pas raison* is omitted in the English translation:

Example 10

Comparaison n'est pas raison: La crise de la littérature comparée

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Palumbo-Liu (2011: 46) speculates the reason for omitting the proverb from the title, stating that: "[p]erhaps it was too objectionable, odd, insufficiently descriptive, not as catchily "timely" as a "crisis"".

2. Discussion of translation of idioms across languages

As a result of the application of the strategies and the analysis above, it can be argued that the three most valid strategies for translating idioms put forward by Baker (1992/2011) are: (i) 'using an idiom of similar meaning and form', (ii) 'using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form', and (iii) 'translation by paraphrase'. The strategy of 'translation by omission of entire idiom' can also be viewed valid, provided that there is a legitimate reason for the omission. For example, when the omission is used to avoid a lengthy explanation and the meaning of the idiom is deducible from the co-text or context.

The two remaining strategies of 'borrowing the source language idiom' and 'translation by omission of a play on idiom' can be deemed to be of less practical use. There is nothing wrong with the fact that Baker has presented these two observed cases of idiom translation in authentic translations. However, her interpretation and categorisation of the cases are not quite convincing. It is questionable whether her example of 'borrowing the source language idiom', i.e. *Out of this World*, can be considered an idiom in the first place, while its function in the promotional leaflet is that of a brand name. The translation strategy applied in this case is in fact borrowing the brand name into the TL verbatim. With regard to the second case, *centuries of craftsmanship on a plate*, which Baker claims is translated by 'omission of a play on idiom', the idiom is actually translated by the paraphrase strategy. Replacing an idiomatic expression by a non-idiomatic one is essentially the property of paraphrase. The fact that Baker depends on a single instance to exemplify each of these two so-called strategies further enhances the argument that they do not stand as two strategies on their own.

It is fascinating to note that the four strategies deemed to be valid here are the ones that Baker refers to in the first edition of her influential book, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation* (1992). And the other two strategies that we dismiss here are incorporated in her second edition (2011). In other words, the

present paper approves of the four strategies put forward in Baker's first edition and argues that they can be synthesised to make a valid and practical model of strategies for translating idioms.

For the model to be a complete one, another strategy can be added, namely; 'using an idiom of similar meaning and partially similar form'. Despite being around as an actual strategy, Baker makes no mention of such as strategy, neither do other translation scholars or researchers. This proposed strategy involves the replacement of an SL idiom by a TL idiom that has similar meaning and partially similar form. Therefore, the strategy locates somewhere between Baker's first two strategies. Consider the translation of the English proverb *making a mountain out of a molehill* (Example 11 below) across the languages under investigation.

Example 11

English	*making a mountain out of a molehill*
Arabic	جعل من الحبّة قُبّة ('making a dome out of a grain')
French	faire d'une mouche un éléphant ('making an elephant out of a fly')
Kurdish	مێش دەکات بە گامێش ('making a buffalo out of a fly')
Persian	از کاه کوهی ساختن ('making a mountain out of hay')
Turkish	pireyi deve yapma ('making a camel out of a flea')

Table 7. Translation of the proverb *making a mountain out of a molehill* across a set of chosen languages

Needless to say the translations here are semantically the same; the proverbs

are used to describe a situation in which something is disproportionately exaggerated. In terms of form, however, they are not completely similar or dissimilar. While the basic formal structure is roughly similar across the languages in question, the image used to establish the exaggeration is different in each language. Therefore, the proverbs are only partially similar (or dissimilar) in terms of form. Examples of this nature are plentiful, despite the fact that such a strategy is missing in Baker's set of strategies for translating idioms and fixed expressions.

Given the whole strategies discussed above, it can be argued that there is a narrow chance to find idioms of similar meaning and form across languages. Idioms are marked by differences across different languages and cultures, whether this be a complete or partial difference. And when an idiom has a semantically and structurally similar counterpart, one can argue that the idiom originally emerged in a language and then transferred to other languages by means of calque translation, i.e. a literal and standardised translation of fixed expressions. This is the phenomenon behind the idea of universality of idioms - the idea that suggests idioms are more or less similar across languages. However, this phenomenon is possible only occasionally, especially when dealing with certain individual cases, as shown in Examples 1 and 2 above.

That fact that some idioms do not have idiom counterparts of similar meaning and form - thus have to be translated by counterparts of similar meaning and dissimilar form (as in Examples 3 and 4) - indictates that sometimes the message conveyed by an idiom can be reproduced in another language but only by means of different linguistic forms. Therefore, while the message can be deemed something universal, questions arise as to whether idioms in themselves are a universal phenomnon.

Furthermore, the fact that some idioms should be translated by paraphrase (as in Examples 5 and 6) because they do not have idiomatic counterparts, and some have to be omitted for the same reason (as in Examples 7, 8, 9 and 10), is indicative that idioms are linguistically and culturally specific. In other words, if idioms are a universal phenomenon, they ought to have idiom correspondents of some sort across different languages, whether they be fully or partially homogeneous.

3. Conclusion

This paper first set out to examine whether Baker's strategies can be taken as a valid and practical model for translating idioms/proverbs across languages. Baker initially suggested a set of four practical translation strategies for rendering idioms and fixed expressions in the first edition of her seminal book - *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation* (1992). These are the strategies of 'using an idiom of similar meaning and form', 'using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form', 'translation by paraphrase' and 'translation by omission of entire idiom'. The first three strategies are indispensable; they are of practical use in any act of idiom translation. The fourth one can also be acceptable in some contexts, where there is a legitimate reason for the omission. For example, when an alternative translation procedure does not work and the meaning of the idiom can be deduced from the context. It can be argued that these four translation strategies make for a composite model of translation strategies for rendering idioms/proverbs. For the composite model to be a complete one, a fifth strategy can be suggested, which is the strategy of 'using an idiom of similar meaning and partially similar form'. This is the contribution of this paper to the model, which is a commonly used strategy that locates somewhere between the two strategies of 'using an idiom of similar meaning and form' and 'using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form' suggested by Baker.

In the second edition of her book, Baker (2011) unnecessarily expanded the strategies and incorporated the two quasi strategies of 'borrowing the source language idiom' and 'translation by omission of a play on idiom'. These can be said to be of less practical use. The former is a rather *ad hoc* strategy that is extremely rare to occur, and the latter can be safely subsumed under the paraphrase strategy.

The paper also set out to ascertain whether idioms can be treated in translation as culture-specific elements or a universal phenomenon across languages. The analysis and discussion above showed that idioms carry characteristics peculiar to the language and culture in which they have emerged. The fact that in most cases literal translation does not work verifies this claim. Therefore, when translating idioms, translators should not restrict themselves to the literal meaning or formal aspects, but rather opt for idiom counterparts that are natural and familiar in the TL culture, regardless of the form.

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