Non-Equivalence at Idiomatic and Expressional Level and the Strategies to Deal With: English Translation into Persian in *Animal Farm* by George Orwell

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Abstract

This paper makes an effort to investigate the obstacles in nonequivalence at the idiomatic and expressional level and then presents some certain factors to face such difficulties in Animal Farm novel (1945) by George Orwell and its translation by Amir Amirshahi (1969). The researchers in the current study try by analyzing six certain strategies as using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning and form, similar meaning but dissimilar form, borrowing the source language, translation by paraphrase, translation by the omission of a play on idiomatic expression and translation by the omission of entire idiomatic expression (Baker, 2011). Moreover, the present research is a descriptive, non-judgmental, comparative and corpus-based analysis of English-Persian parallel study. The findings demonstrate the fact that the practical ways in the translation of idiomatic expressions presented by Baker (2011) are applicable, and the most useable strategy is using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form at 35.96%.

Keywords: Idiomatic expression, Non-equivalence, Culture specific-Items (CSI), Receptor language, Source Language (SL)

Introduction

Because the translation is a bridge between two different languages and two different cultures, translators' main objective is to convey the same message as it was written originally. The crucial step to a good translation is understanding the exact author's intention in the source text. Moreover, due to the cultural differences, each language has some values raped by regional, religious, geographical, or different ideologies. This is very imperative because, to be able to translate idioms and expressions, the given items' clarification in the target language is essential.

It is worthy to point out idiomatic expressions play a pivotal role in daily conversation and took place among numerous languages around the world. The detection of idiomatic expressions is hard to comprehend; hence, translators face some obstacles in translation. Further, the process of translating idiomatic expressions as conveying the message from one language into another language might be a hard task. Cultural specific items are one of the main factors in this regard. Cumulatively, the made gap should be filled by translators and they should use the best strategies for conveying the message from the original text without changing the meaning into the receptor language.

Oxford Advanced Leaner's Dictionary (2010) defines idiomatic expressions "as a group of certain items whose meaning is different from the meanings of the" single words in the context (p. 771). Moreover, it was added that idiomatic expressions are the factors "people say, write or do to show their opinions, feelings and ideas" (p. 537). According to Langlotz (2006), idiomatic expressions have been described as conventional multi-word units that meaning is opaque and structurally is fixed (as cited in Adiel and Ahmed, 2016). Further, Crystal (1991) pointed that an idiomatic expression is a term used in grammar and lexicology which points to the order of words that are syntactically and semantically limited (p. 170).

Palmer (1976), in his book Semantic, A New Outline, has claimed an idiom semantically like a single word but it does not function like one. However, an idiom may grammatically consist of more than one word. Therefore, the meaning of idioms cannot be perceived from the meaning of the words that composed it (p. 98). Based on McMordiew (1983), it is possible to claim that idiomatic expressions are several words which, in the case of standing together, mean something various from the singular words when they are used lonely (p. 4).

According to Baker (1992), idiomatic expressions are frozen items of a language that allow little or no difference in form and often carry meanings that cannot be interpreted lonely (p. 63). Moreover, Moon (1998) has pointed out, inlay or general use, idioms and expressions have two main meanings: first, idioms and expressions are a special means of conveying something in the language as art, musical factors and other items which characterize a person or even a group of people. In addition (and less o more common in English), idiomatic expressions are a phrasal lexeme or special lexical collocation peculiar to a language (p. 3).

Moreover, idioms have a significant role in the infrastructure of the relationship among people. However, translators may not have a correct understanding of the meaning of an idiomatic expression. That is why Collis (1994) pointed out that; the exact message of an idiomatic expression totally cannot be distinguished by the information of their constituent parts (p. 5). However, what made idiomatic expressions important are contextual aspects and the creation of stylistic effects. Also, Fernando (1996) points out that the bipolar nature of idiomaticity in the balance between reutilized expression and linguistic creativity" (as cited in Khosravi and Khatib, 2012).

Furthermore, another important factor in translating idiomatic expressions is that they have their functions in languages. They may perform in different discourse within the text or interactions. In this case, Fernando (1996) classified three main characters performed by idiomatic expressions: 'ideational, interpersonal and relational' (as cited in Strakšienė, 2009). The very first one indicates content that consists of an action (e.g., pull an invisible string). The second one fulfills interactional functions (e.g., I beg your pardon). And final function concentrates on cohesion and coherence of discourse; however, this function integrates information, either (e.g., in addition).

Hypothesis of the Presented Study

In light of the study which has been presented in the introduction which has been mentioned above, the current research presents the following hypothesis:

- Idiom's translation from the English language into the Persian language is very difficult to do and even challenging.
- Translating idiomatic expressions into Persian will feature some main translation practical ways.
- Baker's (2011) translation strategies above idiomatic expressions are practical in this regard.

Research Questions in the Presented Study

This paper is based on two main questions:
- To what extent does non-equivalence affect the translation of idiomatic expression, and 2 how translator overcame the obstacles at an idiomatic and expressional level in Animal Farm novel (1945) by George Orwell.

Instruments and Materials
Statement of the Problem

Undoubtedly, lacking the suitable equivalence at an idiomatic and expressional level has gained more attention in the past. Variety in the definition

of idiomatic expressions and their classifications demonstrates that used strategies are different and convey a certain message in the translation. However, CSI faces translators to another problem. Subsequently, this part of the translation will get translators willful to study more deeply in the SL.

The Importance of the Paper

The significance of this research primarily lies in the strategies to cope with non-equivalence at the idiomatic and expressional levels. Further, this paper makes an effort to study the difficulties in translating at this level from the English language into Persian. In addition, the researchers tried to investigate the practical strategies dealing with such factors.

Method of the Study

The present study is a corpus-based paper with a library views to the investigation of the strategies employed in the translation of idiomatic expressions. As a result, for contrastively analyzing the novel and becoming aware of applied strategies in translating idioms and expressions, the researchers put Animal Farm novel (1945) by George Orwell and its translation by Amir Amirshahi (1969) under scrutiny.

Furthermore, to gather the data and analyze them, the researchers followed three main strategies: At the first stage, the researchers read the novel and its translation (as a corpus of the study). Second, transcribing the English utterances and comparing them with the Persian counterparts was another certain step. And finally, classifying the utilized strategies on the aforementioned framework according to Baker (2011).

Translation of Idiomatic Expressions: Strategies

There are two certain types above idiomatic and expressional level. The first one refers to the universal view which grammatical aspect has a significant role and the second one refers to the cultural perspective of a language. Of course, due to the main features of any culture, culture-specific or lexical-specific items are difficult to understand. This originates in the fact that such cultural restrictions make problems for non-native speakers and especially translators. Besides, a translator is obliged to distinguish these

items as idioms and expressions, but context should be considered in his translation. Therefore, he is supposed to adopt the best strategy to convey the message from SL into TL.

In the following, there are six certain strategies based on Baker (2011, pp. 76-86) that were used by Amir Amirshahi (1969) in translating idioms and expressions in Animal Farm novel (1945) by George Orwell:

Using Idiomatic Expressions of Similar Meaning and Form

Through this practical way, translators fall under the classification of the same semantic and syntactic point of view in both languages. Baker (2011) states that this practical technique concentrates on taking advantage of idiomatic expressions in the receptor language which transfers roughly the similar meaning as that of the source-language idiomatic expressions and also consists of equivalent lexical counterparts (p. 77). It is important to point out that this strategy is rarely achieved because languages differ in any single concept.

e.g. Dancing from side to side (p. 2)

تلو تلو خوران (ص. 1) ←——————————

Using an Idiomatic Expressions of Similar Meaning but Dissimilar Form

In this case, the meaning of the target idiomatic expression is the same as the source one; although, the differences are more obvious at the lexical level. Hence, what is taken from this strategy is seeking the semantic equivalence to convey the message in the right way. Baker (2011) claimed that finding an idiomatic expression in the target language which has a meaning similar to that of the source language idiomatic expression is possible but which includes different grammatical and wordy items (p. 78).

e.g., Word had gone round. (p. 2)

دهان به دهان گشته بود. (ص. 1) ←——————————

Borrowing the Source Language Idiom or Expression

There are two significant factors as the differences in textual pragmatic and the views which relate to ideological aspects among languages, that keep the translation of idiomatic expressions harder. Even

though transferring the message is one of the main challenges and is widely expected by TL readers, a translator should fill the gap between SL and TL by borrowing idiomatic expressions. Baker (2011) points out that using loan words is a common strategy in dealing with CSI …., this factor is not strange for idiomatic expressions' translation is to be borrowed in their original form in some contexts (p. 79).

e.g.: Meeting (p. 25)

میتینگ (ص. 23)

Translation of Idiomatic Expression by Paraphrase

The paraphrase is one of the alternative ways of expressing idiomatic expressions in the same content. Moreover, paraphrase has a pivotal role in a wide range of natural languages processing tasks, such as summarization. Therefore, it is useful to make clear any perplexing issue in this regard. Furthermore, Baker (2011) claimed that this is by far the most common practical way of translating idiomatic expressions when an equivalence 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 SL and the target one (p.80).

e.g., Mr. Jones was safely out of the way (p. 2)

خطر آقای جونز در میان نباشد (ص. 1)

Translation by the Omission of a Play on Idiomatic Expression

It is worthy to point out to transfer the message from the source language into the target language. It is worthy to point out allowance to translate idiomatic expression literary is one of the techniques which is usable. It is one of the critical factors when no choice to be selected as the equivalence in the SL. Hence, based on this strategy, a translator makes an effort to convey the message without any deletion. In addition, Baker (2011) strongly remarked in her book that this certain strategy includes rendering only the literal meaning of an idiomatic expression in a context that permits for a concrete reading of otherwise playful use of language (p. 84).

e.g.: Lose an hour's sleep in order to hear what he had to say (p. 2)

ساعتی از خواب خود را وقف شنیدن حرف های او و می کردند. (ص.1)

Translation by the Omission of Entire Idiomatic Expression

Baker (2011) proposed that an idiomatic expression may be deleted altogether in the receptor language. She added this might happen because it has no exact equivalence in the target language, its meaning cannot be easily interpreted, or for stylistic reasons (p. 85). Moreover, Pinnavaia (2002) stated that some idioms or expressions could not normally admit any type of variation. However, others can accept variations both of lexical kind… and of grammatical kind… (p. 53).

Results of the Study

This section part of the study focuses on the numerical and quantitative analysis of the designated corpus. In addition, the researchers tried to reflect the frequency and the percentage. The descriptive table was presented for every strategy used in the study. Hence, Table 1 shows the frequency and the percentage of six main practical strategies in the translated novel.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of Six Certain Strategies in the Translated Novel

	Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1	Using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning and form	28	24.56%
2	Using an idiomatic expression of similar meaning but dissimilar form	41	35.96%
3	Borrowing the source language idiomatic expression	7	6.14%
4	Translation of idiomatic expression by paraphrase	29	25.43%
5	Translation by omission of a play on idiomatic expression	7	6.14%
6	Translation by omission of entire idiomatic expression	2	1.77%

The data analysis revealed that the translator had applied six above-mentioned strategies to transfer the message from the SL into the TL. As shown in the table, using idiomatic expressions of similar

meanings but dissimilar forms include the main section, i.e., 35.96% of strategies in this research. Furthermore, statistical results indicate that the translator focused firstly on the aforementioned strategy. It is worthy to note that lacking appropriate idiomatic and expressional counterparts with a similar form in the TL made the translator employ this strategy.

Subsequently, an idiomatic expression of similar meaning and form was used in 24.56% of addressed strategies. Because the source language and the receptor one are different in some structural aspects, the above-mentioned strategy is used less than the previous one. Further, this strategy did not have a stable position in the whole corpus. It indicates the hierarchy of using this strategy completely consists of some special conditions such as intimacy among characters.

Moreover, borrowing the source language and translation by omitting a play on idiomatic expressions formed just 6.14% each. The number of these strategies traced in the corpus was few. There were two main reasons; one of them is lacking appropriate idiomatic expressions in the source language, which could not be matched into the TL and another is the untranslatability in the content of information.

In another stage, the translation of idiomatic expressions by paraphrase is 25.43% in this corpus. This case often occurs because languages around the world are different in the usage of idioms and expressions. Hence, the translator paraphrased the given items from the SL into the TL. This originates in the fact that cultural aspects as another significant factor indirectly affected the translation.

In the final stage, translation by the omission of entire idiomatic expression formed 1.77% of entire strategies in this study. It is worthy to point out that despite some similarities in concepts and ideas between the SL and the TL, the most obvious point of difference appears through the lack of CSI in the TL, which leads to the complexity in the translation. As a result, the translator omitted them.

To clarify the subject, Figure 1 is presented below shows the precise frequency of each strategy in the corpus.
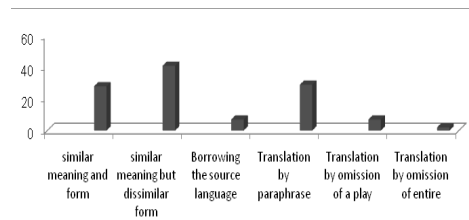

Figure 1: Frequency of Six Certain Strategies in the Translated Novel

Conclusion

It is shown that all strategies proposed by Baker (2011) were applicable in the English-Persian translation. The obtained findings of the analysis of practical strategies demonstrate that the most used strategy with a distinguishable high rate of usage is using idiomatic expressions of similar meaning but dissimilar form at 35.96%. Furthermore, the translation of idiomatic expressions by paraphrase has received the next highest frequency at 25.43%. In another stage, an idiomatic expression of similar meaning and form was used in 24.56% of addressed strategies in the translated novel. It is worthy to note that borrowing the source language and translation by the deletion of a play on idiomatic expressions formed just 6.14% each. Finally, translation by the omission of entire idiomatic expression includes 1.77% of the entire research. In addition, analyses showed that the used strategies were not classified in the same balance among the six addressed strategies.

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