

TRANSLATING IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS IN LITERARY PROSE: THE CASE OF HARPER LEE'S *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*

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ABSTRACT

Even though idioms constitute an essential part of language and are common in our daily communication, they are seen to possess uncommon linguistic characteristics and high degrees of linguistic and cultural specificities. Due to this, they pose various problems to native and non-native speakers of a language, as well as translators. The present study sought to identify the strategies adopted in translating these expressions found in Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* and to examine if there is any loss of meaning post-translation, referring to Tawfeeq Al-Asady's Arabic rendition of the prize-winning novel. In meeting the study's objectives, a sample of 80 idiomatic expressions were analyzed based on Baker's (2018) taxonomy and Nababan et al.'s (2012) model. A comparative-descriptive approach was applied; first, comparing the SL idiom with its TL counterpart to identify the strategy used and to assess for any loss of meaning, and then calculating the frequency of the strategies adopted. The findings reveal that four primary strategies were employed: paraphrasing, total equivalence, literal translation, and partial equivalence. The kappa value for interrater reliability is highly favorable at .86, denoting almost perfect agreement between the raters who were invited to assess the study's data for added validity. We are able to conclude that the idiomatic expressions were to a fair extent rendered effectively, with instances of loss of meaning observed. This study and its findings are of relevance to translators, educators, and scholars engaged in language and translation research.

Keywords: idiomatic expressions; translation strategies; meaning; Harper Lee; *To Kill a Mockingbird*

INTRODUCTION

Translation generally serves as a bridge that connects the target audience with the source audience using a different linguistic system. Literary translation in particular, besides bridging diverse cultures, acclimatizes target language (TL) readers to the different customs, thoughts, traditions and beliefs of a source language (SL) culture. Translation is a play of dynamics, between language, culture and identity. Also, due to its unique nature and the inevitable variations in the cultural environment between SL and TL communities, literary translation is seen as the most complex form of translation and one of the more significant ways for communication among nations. Furthermore, literary translation serves as a rewriting or recreation of a piece of literature from a specific culture, whereby the translator does not only serve as a mediator but also as the second author of that work, doubling the difficulty of the translation task. Newmark (1988) remarked: "it is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended" (p. 5). Newmark (2001) also viewed translation

as a “craft” (p. 7), in the attempt to replace a message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another.

Idiomatic expressions are part of everyday language and have a role to play in language comprehension. They cannot be understood based on what constitutes them. Rather, they ought to be comprehended as a whole unit. Baker (2018) considered idioms and fixed expressions as a different category under the multiword units. She stated that idiomatic expressions are categorized into five different groups as follows: colloquialism, proverbs, slang, allusion and phrasal verbs. This implies that it is challenging for translators to work with them, so a decent amount of awareness of both the SL and TL and their cultures are necessary for translators. In other words, apart from the ability to reconstruct these items, the translator is foremost required to be capable of identifying and understanding them before rendering them into the TL. Therefore, before delving into the translation process, the translator has to recognize an idiomatic expression and capture its meaning, and then only an accurate rendition can likely occur.

The present study investigates the strategies involved in dealing with the idiomatic expressions found in Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Tawfeeq Al-Asady’s Arabic translation of the literary work was utilized to form part of the corpus for analysis. The study’s direction is twofold: 1) to identify the (dominant) translation strategies used, and 2) to assess the extent to which the idioms’ meanings are preserved post-translation. It is worthy of note that to the best of our knowledge, Al-Asady’s work (henceforth *ATKM*) is the only available/accessible Arabic translation of *To Kill a Mockingbird* (henceforth *TKM*).

RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE

It is known that a translation is not perfect in identity in relation to the original. In other words, it is not possible to assert that a specific translation equals the original. However, it is possible to claim that a specific translation is approximately equivalent. As put forth by Newmark (1988), “there is no such thing as a perfect, ideal or ‘correct’ translation, a translator is always trying to extend his knowledge and improve his means of expression; he is always pursuing facts and words” (p. 6). In his study, ElMallah (2008) opined that translation can be achieved only within an approximate measure since it is ultimately the effort of an imperfect human being. In an attempt to identify potential translation strategies and difficulties (as well as solutions for them), Baker (2018) observed that strategies are not fixed, and neither are they ideal solutions:

“It is in fact virtually impossible, except in extreme cases, to draw a line between what counts as a good translation and what counts as a bad one. Every translation has points of strength and points of weakness, and every translation is open to improvement.” (p. 6)

This leads us to the issue of equivalence, which is rather fundamental as far as literary translation is concerned. This is because most literary translators aim to convey meaningful concepts for TL readers of the SL material. Baker (2018) noted that to reach this end, the translator is required to assess the meaning(s) of particular words and expressions in specific cultural and contextual situations.

Concerns regarding the methods, procedures or strategies of translating idiomatic expressions are of great significance in the field of translation. This is due to the fact that they

are mostly culture-specific and therefore pose difficulties in their rendition especially when the languages involved are very distinct, as in the case of English and Arabic. Newmark (2001) is of the view that the translator, as a craftsman, has to possess extensive knowledge of the foreign language that would allow him/her to determine how far s/he can deviate from linguistic norms. Relevant here is the oddness of idiomatic expressions, which Newmark (2001) sees as items that the translator has to “determine with an intuition backed by empirical knowledge the extent of the text’s grammatical and semantic oddness, which he must account for in a well-written ‘expressive’ text and may decide to normalize in a badly written ‘informative’ or ‘vocative’ text” (p. 17).

Ghazala (2003) highlighted that the focus in translation studies is on metaphor and metaphorical language translation, while idiom translation, specifically from English into Arabic, has not yet received due attention. This position is likewise held by Qassem and Vijayasarathi (2015). Similarly, Mustonen (2010) pointed out that the translation of idiomatic expressions has not garnered much attention in terms of being researched, in comparison to other linguistic areas. Since idioms are not only part of our daily communication but are also found abundantly in most literary works, it is both sensible and timely to accord more focus to this area in different contexts. The complexity of idiomatic expressions lies in the fact that they are mostly culture-dependent, which makes them especially interesting to study within the lens of translation (Mustonen, 2010).

Bassnett (2002) is of the view that little time has been spent on studying problems that are specific to literary prose as compared to poetry. According to her, this might be due to the inaccurate perception that it is easier to translate novels than poems because of their structures. Meanwhile, Obeidat and Mahadi (2020) noted in their work that their study was limited to the translation of idiomatic collocations in the Quran and recommended that this concept be extended to include different aspects. Additionally, Klaudy and Heltai (2020) specified that the study of cultural back-translation (which naturally concerns idiomatic expressions) is worthy of serious attention and further lines of inquiry are suggested.

Studies on idioms have been pursued from various aspects, focusing on particular types of idioms and using different corpora. However, a gap was identified in terms of the corpus involved; although the same novel (*TKM*) has been studied, its Arabic rendition remains unexplored. The present study is a response to the calls for further inquiry in this area of research, to expand the current knowledge base that we have, and to assist translators in the selection of more appropriate strategies when dealing with idiomatic expressions for better preservation of intended meanings. This empirical contribution is an effort to enrich the field of literary translation, and to help us estimate whether it can be conducted on an even larger scale in the future. This study is also essentially of significance to educators and students of translation studies, as well as researchers engaged in language and translation analyses.

RELATED LITERATURE

Idiomatic Expressions

Idioms are not considered a separate part of a language. In fact, they form an essential part of the vocabulary of each language. Seidl and McMordie (1983) emphasized that idioms are not mere colloquial expressions, but also appear in formal and slang styles, poetry, Shakespeare's language, and the Bible. They illustrate how idioms can take many different forms and structures, from regular to irregular, and to even incorrect grammatical structures. For instance, an idiom can have irregular form but clear meaning as in *do someone proud*. It can also possess regular form but unclear meaning like *cut no ice*, and it can possess irregular form with unclear meaning such as *go great guns*.

Many definitions have emerged from different scholars regarding the meaning of an idiom. For instance, Baker (2018) considered idioms and fixed expressions as a different category under the multiword units. She described idiomatic expressions as "frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and in the case of idioms, often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components" (p. 69). Seidl and McMordie (1983) explained: "we can say that an idiom is a number of words which, taken together, mean something different from the individual words of the idiom when they stand alone" (p. 4).

Richards and Schmidt (2002) concurred and defined an idiom as an expression which functions as a single unit and whose meaning often cannot be determined from each separate part (see also Zainal Abidin et al., 2020). For example, the expressions *beat around the bush* and *bite the bullet* cannot be understood from the meaning of each word separately.

Ghazala (2003) elaborated that idioms are metaphorical in nature and cannot be comprehended directly; these expressions should not be treated literally because the meaning of an idiom does not rest within individual words and is often also two-pronged – cultural and informal. To simplify complex categorizations, Ghazala also reclassified idioms into the following main types: full/pure idioms; semi-idioms; proverbs, popular sayings and semi-proverbial expressions; phrasal verbs; metaphorical catchphrases and popular expressions.

Such characteristics make the comprehension of an idiom difficult, and the process of translating it even more daunting. Due to their complex nature, idiomatic expressions pose difficulties for translators in offering a complete picture of their true essence. Yet, Poshi and Lacka (2016) believed that these items are translatable and what matters is the translator's approach in selecting apt strategies that can best facilitate the conveyance of the intended meanings. They also cautioned that the strategies of borrowing and literal translation may be employed, but only in isolated cases.

Problems of Translating Idiomatic Expressions

Aldanani (2019) asserted that a good literary translation offers its readers insights into foreign cultures; a translator has a choice, between familiarizing readers with foreign elements or domesticating these elements, which robs readers of new and informative experiences. Within this argument, it is perhaps more fitting to suggest that since language and culture interweave, and the translation process may essentially be considered a form of cultural communication, translators should be bilingually and biculturally competent – with the understanding that both

components are of equal importance, and that it is not a matter of choosing, or prioritizing, one over the other.

Al-Shawi and Mahadi (2012) presented a study on the problems of translating idioms from Arabic to English and vice versa. They discussed the factors that render the translation of idiomatic expressions difficult for translators; it is chiefly the disparities that exist between cultures that make the task difficult – since culture plays a significant role in idiom comprehension and interpretation, any translator will need to possess solid, relevant linguistic and cultural knowledge to successfully convey intended meanings. The difficulty lies in the fact that words having various connotations in one language may not always possess the same emotive associations in another language due to cultural diversity.

Fundamentally, apart from linguistic and stylistic differences between English and Arabic, the inherent sociocultural differences between the two languages can prove to be problematic. Al-Shawi and Mahadi (2012) stated:

“The difference between the SL and the TL, as well as the variation in their cultures make the process of translating a real challenge ... also the cultural and social differences between SL and TL. Among the problematic factors involved in translation is religion, social background and others. Hence, the bigger the gap between the SL and the TL, the more difficult the transfer of message from the former to the latter.” (p. 141)

They concluded that a translator’s linguistic and cultural knowledge can be helpful in many cases in terms of recognizing an idiom’s meaning, particularly idioms with non-literal meanings because these items demand not only linguistic accuracy but also the translator’s sensitivity to rhetorical hints.

According to Holi Ali and Al-Rushaidi (2016), one salient difficulty frequently reported in literature is the lack of equivalence in the TL as languages vary and they express meanings using different linguistic means. They also observed that English-Arabic translations are likely complex because English belongs to the Indo-European family while Arabic is a Semitic language. Oualif (2017) concurred and added that non-linguistic factors such as religion, geographical locations and differing ideologies may complicate the process of understanding and translating idiomatic expressions.

In his comprehensive work on the translatability of English and Arabic idioms, Awwad (1990) suggested that one of the major difficulties in tackling the rendition of idiomatic expressions is the misinterpretation of the original expression, especially when it carries both a literal and metaphorical sense. To illustrate, he provided an example in the form of the Arabic expression *فتح الباب* which literally translates into *he opened the door* while it idiomatically translates into *he established a precedent*; it is the translator’s burden to capture the intended meaning prior to rendering it into the TL. Within the context of cultural differences, Awwad cautioned that idioms carry a heavy culture-specific semantic load and proposed that translators resort to providing explanations of cultural concepts that are alien to TL audiences. Other scholars (e.g., Eftekhari, 2008; Al-Shawi & Mahadi, 2012) have similarly proposed the use of notes to benefit foreign language readership.

In terms of translational problems, Ghazala (2003) opined that translation ranges between ‘evasion’ and ‘invasion’ with the former being the tackling of idiomaticity by way of eliminating it for reasons of the translator’s incompetence or simplification to benefit TL readers. The latter denotes translating idiomaticity unabashedly to not only match the original

but also to supersede it if possible. Ghazala also observed other influencing variables including zero language equivalence and taboo avoidance. Baker (2018) similarly provided the probable reasons for translation problems:

- i. The idiom's lack of equivalence in the TL;
- ii. The SL expression may possess a similar TL expression, but they differ in the context of their usage;
- iii. The expression carries both the literal and idiomatic sense simultaneously; and
- iv. The difference in the way idioms occur in writing, in their context of use as well as their rate of occurrence between the SL and the TL.

Previous Studies

The issue of idiomatic expressions is not an unexplored area in language and translation research. Studies have been conducted on the complications that translators face and the strategies used to render these items. Since the translation of such culture-specific items is so complex, there is a need for further research to enrich the knowledge base that we have today in order to inform future directions of inquiry, and to improve the efficacy of translators and educators dealing with idiomatic expressions. The following is a brief survey of similar past studies, none of which involves Arabic renditions of the idiomatic expressions found in *TKM*.

Culture forms such a vital part of idioms that teaching the related cultural aspects has been shown to develop and improve translation efforts (Shormani, 2020). Arar and Gherbal (2016), in a study exploring the English-Arabic transfer of 15 idioms from Stephen King's novel *The Green Mile*, underscored the issue of cultural differences and semantic difficulties. They also noted that 14 of the 15 idioms were dealt with via the strategy of translating the idiom with a non-idiom, while omission was used once.

In a corpus-based study, Ahmadi (2017) attempted to identify the (dominant) strategies used in translating idioms from English into Persian. He made use of the novels *Lord of the Flies*, *Animal Farm* and *The Old Man and the Sea*, and analyzed 90 idioms in total. His overall findings indicated that all three translators preferred paraphrasing the most and the strategy of omission the least. Ahmadi also found Baker's (2018) taxonomy to be an applicable model for translating idiomatic expressions in novels. Meanwhile, Al-Assaf (2019) conducted a study on how the translator Omar Ameen translated the idioms in *Appointment with Death* by Agatha Christie. Her aim was to highlight the strategies adopted to overcome the problem of non-equivalence in the TL. The study was based on the strategies put forth by Baker (2018) and it was ascertained that Ameen most frequently employed these strategies: 1) using an idiom of similar meaning and form, and 2) using an idiom of similar meaning but different in form.

In his thesis, Adisetia (2013) studied the strategies used to translate idiomatic expressions as well as degrees of equivalence within the dimension of meaning. The novel *Chocolat* by Joanne Harris and its translated version (Indonesian) formed the corpus for analysis. Adisetia reported paraphrasing to be the most frequently used strategy and omission the least. As for meaning equivalence, almost 93% of the renditions attained intended meaning while the remaining were partial equivalents. Iskandar (2016) likewise analyzed Indonesian renditions of idiomatic expressions. The study utilized expressions from the movie *Big Hero 6* and dealt with types of idioms, translation strategies and accuracy. Paraphrasing again appeared to be the most applied strategy. As for accuracy, analyzed using Nababan et al.'s (2012) model, data indicated acceptable accuracy with minimal instances of inaccurate rendition.

Panou (2013) conducted a study on idiom translation in which she examined the strategies used in the reconstruction of idioms from English into Greek in the financial press. Based on Gottlieb's (1997) model, Panou proposed a new classification comprising inward and outward idioms. The study also revealed omission to be the most preferred strategy for both types. More interestingly, Panou concluded that "it could be assumed that the stronger the metaphorical gloss, the greater the chances for the expression to retain its idiomaticity in the target version" (p. 481).

Within the realm of *TKM*, Khosravi and Khatib (2012) based their study on 407 idiomatic expressions extracted from the novel as well as from *Of Mice and Men*. Persian renditions of the originals were used and analyses returned data indicating the use of all four of the strategies put forward by Baker (2018), with paraphrasing recording the highest occurrence. The combined occurrence of omission (11.7%) is noteworthy. The researchers also observed the possibility of the translators' insufficient knowledge or lack of command when it came to Persian idiomatic expressions. Along a similar vein, Hartono (2012) focused on *TKM* and studied the Indonesian translation of various expressions: idioms, metaphors, similes, personifications, and alliterations. Grounded in the holistic criticism approach, Hartono found the translated idioms to be accurate, natural and readable to a great extent. Nevertheless, most of the other expressions were inaccurate and unnatural, having been rendered via the use of direct methods like literal translation and borrowing.

METHOD

Design and Corpus

This study employed the comparative-descriptive approach relevant to translation research. We attempted to identify the translation strategies used as well as to determine the most preferred ones, and to assess the extent to which the meanings of the idiomatic expressions are preserved post-rendition.

The corpus comprises the electronic version of American author Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the electronic edition of Lebanon-born Tawfeeq Al-Asady's Arabic translation of *TKM* (لا تقتل عصفورا ساخرًا). Al-Asady is the first to translate *TKM* into Arabic and has translated other works including Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not* and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. Harper Lee won the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 for *TKM*; the novel was an instant success when it was first published in 1960, with primary themes of racial injustice, gender roles, and the destruction of innocence.

Procedures and Analysis

Saldanha and O'Brien (2013) explained that data at the level of individual, word or text are micro, in contrast to those collected from institutions, societies or organizations. The former are data types that can be utilized for language-related research, such as the study of translation strategies. For the present study, the data gathered are micro-level data.

From *TKM*, its idiomatic expressions were extracted and numbered according to turn of appearance. 80 expressions were then randomly selected and arranged systematically in a table together with their translated counterparts. The meaning of each expression was checked

via the use of dictionaries: *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* (1998), *NTC's Thematic Dictionary of American Idioms* (1998), *Oxford Dictionary of Idioms* (2004), *McGraw Hill's Dictionary of American Idioms* (2007).

Each rendition was analyzed based on how it was conveyed, keeping in mind its local and global contexts within the flow of the novel; Baker's (2018) taxonomy of translation strategies was employed to identify the strategies used for each idiomatic expression (see Figure 1). A quantitative approach was then taken to calculate for frequency of occurrence, to determine the most frequently used strategies.

In terms of assessing for meaning preservation (the translated items' extent of accuracy), Nababan et al.'s (2012) model was applied, in which the Scale for Quality Assessment is central. The scale covers the aspects of accuracy, acceptability and readability, and scoring is based on a three-point ordinal Likert scale. Back translation was also done to check for accuracy. In order to prevent research bias, two qualified raters were invited to assess a sample of the data and interrater reliability is accounted for. For ethical reasons, their identities remain confidential and only the following details can be provided:

Rater 1 Associate Professor of Translation and Head of English Department, Hadhramout University, Yemen; accredited translator.

Rater 2 Assistant Professor of English Language Literature, Criticism and Translation, Hadhramout University, Yemen.

For practical reasons, no more than two raters were involved as the assessment task is complex, tedious and time-consuming.

Baker's Taxonomy of Translation Strategies (1992)		
Equivalence at word level	Grammatical equivalence	Equivalence above word level
Word and lexical meaning	Grammatical categories	Collocations, idioms and fixed expressions
<i>Translation by: Superordinate, neutral, cultural substitution, loan words, paraphrase with related words, paraphrase with unrelated words, omission and illustration</i>	<i>Translation by: Addition or omission</i>	<i>Translation by: Using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but different in form, paraphrasing, omission and compensation</i>
Textual equivalence		Pragmatic equivalence
Thematic organization		Coherence and implicature
<i>Translation by: Voice change, change of verb, nominalization and extraposition</i>		<i>Translator's understanding of: Conventional meanings of structure and words, identification of references, cooperative principle and its maxims, context of utterance, background knowledge</i>

Figure 1: Baker's taxonomy of translation strategies (2018)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the 80 idiomatic expressions took approximately four weeks and the findings are as reported in this section.

Table 1: Frequency of strategies

Strategy	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Occurrence	14	10	40	14	2	80
Percentage of occurrence	17.5	12.5	50.0	17.5	2.5	100.0
1	Total equivalence					
2	Partial equivalence					
3	Paraphrasing					
4	Literal translation					
5	Unconventional					

As shown in Table 1, the strategy most adopted was *paraphrasing* with an occurrence of 40 times (50.0%). However, it is worth noting that some of the paraphrased expressions resulted in negative implications due to the inaccurate use of certain terms. Strategies 1 and 4, *total equivalence* and *literal translation* respectively, were adopted 14 times each (17.5%). Unfortunately, many of the literally translated expressions exhibit loss of meaning. As for the strategy of *partial equivalence*, it was employed 10 times (12.5%). Finally, only 2 (2.5%) of the 80 expressions were rendered using unconventional methods, which will be discussed in the later part of this section.

As highlighted by Newmark (1988), “translation is a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another” (p. 190). In other words, a translator needs expertise in applying strategies, methods, techniques and approaches in order to reach a product that mimics the SL message. And in the case of idiomatic expressions, precise strategies are required to render them correctly and effectively. The current study demonstrates *paraphrasing* as the dominant strategy, which mostly resulted in the successful rendering of intended meanings. This conforms to the findings of the majority of the research previously conducted. For example, in their study on the strategies used to translate idiomatic expressions from English into Persian, Khosravi and Khatib (2012) observed *paraphrasing* to be the most common strategy. In the case of studies that examined other novels, like Adisetia’s (2013) *Chocolat* study and Ahmadi’s (2017) three-novel endeavour, this strategy was also found to be the dominant strategy.

However, some of the paraphrased items in *ATKM* are deemed inaccurate because the use of certain words accorded each of them a misplaced negative implication. For example, *raising this holy racket* was rendered as *تصيح ذلك الصياح المقدس*, whereby the addition of the word *المقدس*, that literally corresponds to *holy*, is misleading and may cause confusion to TL readers. Loss of meaning due to *paraphrasing* is also apparent as seen in the case of *growing out of your pants*, which was translated as *بنطالك أصبح ضيقا عليك* which may mean *become fat* when the actual meaning of the idiom in English is *growing quickly*. Yet, it is observed that many of the paraphrased expressions conveyed the original, intended meanings (e.g., *not a soul* and *as sure as eggs*).

Secondly, Al-Asady adopted the strategies of *total equivalence* and *literal translation* equally. In essence, he found parallel idiomatic expressions in the TL and literally rendered the

expressions. Generally, the parallel expressions were accurately rendered and meaning was fully preserved, as in the case of *grain of sense* (rendered as: نرة من العقل) and *bottom of my heart* (rendered as: من أعماق قلبي). However, at least one idiomatic expression, which was translated using *total equivalence*, was tackled rather inappropriately; the expression *blind spots* was rendered as نقاط ضعف, but the TL idiom مواطن جهل is closer to the intended meaning of the SL expression.

Many of the idiomatic expressions rendered using *literal translation* resulted in loss of meaning. This discovery is similar to the findings of previous studies on idiomaticity and translation (e.g., Hartono, 2012). For instance, *feathers rose* was rendered as انتفض ريشي in which the intended meaning of the idiom (*getting upset or irritated*) was lost, as the translated version means *my feathers rose*. It is noted, however, that there are some literal renditions that did not result in loss of meaning such as *like a hand into a glove* which was translated as كما الكف في القفاز (*like hand in glove*).

The strategy of partial equivalence is the least used. Although it was only employed 10 times, the strategy was successfully adopted and we detected no loss of meaning. For example, *the damage was done* was translated as سبق السيف العذل which essentially means *it was too late*. Another example is *trying you out*, translated as تحاول اختبارك which means *trying to test you*. Both renditions also sound natural in the TL.

Worth noting here is that out of the 80 idiomatic expressions analyzed, 2 were rendered into the TL unconventionally:

- i. The expression *my hind foot* which denotes *harsh opposition or disbelief*, was translated using a rhetorical question (ما الجمال فيه؟). Here, Al-Asady managed to capture the intended meaning and by rendering it using a figurative device, also managed to infuse an aesthetic effect in the TL.
- ii. In handling the expression *running a still*, Al-Asady resorted to an explanatory expression: ترتكب شيئا سريا وإنما جيد التنظيم (*doing something secret but well-organized*). This rendition is not incorrect but cannot be deemed fully effective due to a lack of cultural transfer. This is unfortunate because an opportunity to offer readers a new insight into a foreign culture via translation (Aldanani, 2019) was not pursued. The SL expression is a culture-specific item which means *to commit something that is somewhat a crime*; a *still* is another word for *distillery*, a place in which alcohol is made and during the 1920s, prohibition made the manufacture and consumption of alcohol a crime in America.

Following this, we present two tables. Table 2 is a summary of the two raters' extent of agreement with regards to the accuracy of 66 of the 80 renditions. We consider 66 items to be a sufficient and representative sample, constituting slightly more than 80% of the total sample.

Table 3 reflects data regarding interrater reliability. Referring to Stemler (2004), the estimate of the amount of consensus between raters has implications for the integrity of a study's findings and should be demonstrated anew for each new study. Cohen's kappa coefficient, a statistical measure of interrater reliability, was utilized in the present study. It is a more robust measure than a mere percentage of agreement calculation. Cohen's kappa values are interpreted as follows:

- $\kappa: < 0$ [Less than chance agreement]
- $\kappa: .01-.20$ [Slight agreement]
- $\kappa: .21-.40$ [Fair agreement]
- $\kappa: .41-.60$ [Moderate agreement]

- κ : .61-.80 [Substantial agreement]
- κ : .81-.99 [Almost perfect agreement]

Table 2: Raters' agreement

	Accurate	Semi-accurate	Inaccurate	Total
Rater 1	43	15	8	66
Rater 2	45	14	7	66

Table 3: Interrater reliability

	Value (κ)
Measure of agreement (kappa)	.86

CONCLUSIONS

The present study utilized a corpus consisting of 80 idiomatic expressions from the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee and their translated counterparts by Tawfeeq Al-Asady. As previously discussed, different strategies can be employed to render idiomatic expressions despite the difficulties that a translator can expect to encounter when dealing with culture-specific items.

This study demonstrates *paraphrasing* to be the dominant strategy, or the strategy most preferred by Al-Asady, followed by *total equivalence* and *literal translation* in equal measure, and unconventional techniques – rhetorical question and explanatory expression – were used only minimally. On the whole, it is fair to conclude that Al-Asady was most successful in his usage of *partial equivalence*, and of *total equivalence* in general.

As for the strategy of *paraphrasing*, the translator was to a large extent successful in conveying the intended meaning of most the idiomatic expressions, despite being inaccurate in some cases. Lastly, the strategy of *literal translation* was applied as much as *total equivalence*, but while the latter generally preserved meaning, the former actually resulted in loss of meaning for many of the items rendered via this technique.

In sum, the strategies adopted by the translator are, to a fair extent, observed to be effective. This is also elucidated by interrater data. Al-Asady's renditions conveyed many of the intended meanings even though some idiomatic expressions were inaccurately rendered and loss of meaning was detected in certain cases. This could have been due to misinterpretations of the SL items, or a lack of knowledge with respect to the SL history and culture. Therefore, recognizing an idiomatic expression (or even names, as observed by Zahir and Haroon, 2018) and understanding its cultural backdrop or the implications behind, and circumstances surrounding, it will only serve to assist the translator in terms of accurate rendition as well as successful transfer of cultural knowledge where applicable.

When a translation process involves two very distinct languages and cultures, it is likely to be fraught with complexities. This is because translation can never be an act in isolation. A good translator must take into account many variables – accuracy, possible loss of meaning, lexical richness, syntactical effect, culture, and the reader's experience of the text. In essence, an effective translator is one who is multiskilled and able to strike a balance between

authenticity and comprehensibility, for one without the other simply renders the translation imprecise at best and meaningless at worst. As put forth by Chan (2003), with specific reference to idioms and fixed expressions, various skills are needed in dealing with these items to ensure the best possible renditions.

It is suggested that future studies extend the present one to include other translated works of *TKM*, so that richer comparisons can be made and more comprehensive conclusions can be drawn. Within the larger sphere of idiomaticity and translation, we recommend the inclusion of various text types, apart from novels. This will not only expand extant knowledge in the area but may also benefit other research endeavours, especially those dealing with intertextuality and the specificities of lexicalization. Finally, scholars may also elect to research idiomaticity and translation from the perspective of education and training.

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