

STRATEGIES FOR TRANSLATING PROVERBS FROM ENGLISH INTO ARABIC

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore strategies used by Jordanian novice translators when rendering proverbs from English into Arabic. To achieve this goal, the researchers selected a purposive sample that consisted of twenty Jordanian novice translators. Those participants are holders of either BA or MA degrees in English but did not have work experience in translation. A translation test was used as an instrument for the purpose of collecting data. The test comprised ten English proverbs based on Speake's (2008) categorization of proverbs, i.e. everyday-experience, traditional wisdom, and folklore. Additionally, informal interviews were carried out with four university scholars. The study revealed that the translation strategies manipulated when rendering proverbs from English into Arabic were (1) cultural equivalent; (2) literal; (3) paraphrasing, and (4) glossing.

Keywords: Translation, Strategies, Proverbs, English, Arabic, Jordan

INTRODUCTION

Translation is an essential operation that enables people all over the world to share information, news, culture, literature, and sciences among others. It is a process of rendering the original text and all of its features or aspects semantically, culturally, and pragmatically, into another language.

Proverbs are crucial components of people's speech because they are fixed expressions that have meanings which cover all aspects of life. They may carry themes related to religion, God, family, marriage, men and women, education, health, friendship, money, animals, neighborhood, experiences, wisdom, poverty and, wealth. Proverbs have distinguished features, for instance, the structure of proverbs is not like any simple sentence that everyone is familiar with. They have their own structure, pattern and style. Mieder (2004, P.6) identifies the common structure of English proverbs as follows: "Better X than Y" such as "*Better to be a live dog than a dead lion*"; "Like X, like Y" as " Like father, like son"; "No X without Y" as " No smoke without fire"; "One X doesn't make a Y" as "The cowl doesn't make the monk"; "If X, then Y" as " If it were not for hope, the heart would break"; short proverbs with a length about seven words such as " A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush"; "longer proverbs that break the previous features like paradoxical Bible proverbs such as " It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God". In addition, there are proverbs which carry some cultural aspects in the source language (SL) that can't be found in the target culture.

Translating proverbs requires knowledge in both languages, their cultures and knowledge in strategies that are suitable for rendering the intended meaning as well. Strategies are necessary because they usually enable translators to overcome difficulties that they might encounter in the process of translation. To the best knowledge of the researchers' research that investigates strategies used in translating proverbs in Jordan is scanty. It was the main cause why the researchers decided to explore the problems that bachelor's degree holders

and master's degree holders, who are novice in translation, encounter while translating proverbs from Arabic into English. The study may help translators, students, readers, writers, researchers, translation critics, and other people interested in this field. It is expected to fill a gap in the literature.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many scholars in different parts of the world have elaborated on strategies used in translating proverbs theoretically i.e. (Newmark, 1988), (Baker, 1992), (Gaber, 2005) and empirically i.e. (Badawi, 2008), (Balfaqeh, 2009), (Farahani and Ghasemi, 2012) and (Al-Shawi & Mahadi, 2012).

Newmark (1988) claims that there is a difference between translation procedures and translation methods. He explains that translation procedures deal with translating sentences and smaller units but translation methods deal with entire texts. He suggests the following various translation procedures:

- 1- Transference which is entirely similar to borrowing as proposed by (Gaber, 2005) such as translating the Arabic proverb "رجع بخفي حنين" into "He came back with Hunain's shoes".
- 2- Naturalization which involves the adaptation of the SL word to the normal pronunciation pursued by the usual morphology of the TL and what is also called arabisation or adaptation such as translating the proverb "To send owls to Athens" into "يرسل البوم إلى أثينا".
- 3- Cultural equivalent which involves rendering the SL cultural word into its equivalent in the TL. This idea is similar to "using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form" as it is proposed by (Baker, 1992) such as the proverb "Everything has its proper time and place" which is translated into (لكل مقام مقال).
- 4- Functional equivalent in which the translator uses a culture-neutral word that gives the intended meaning. "Hello" and السلام عليكم as mentioned by (Gaber, 2005).
- 5- Descriptive equivalent in which the translator gives a description in different words to clarify the meaning. It is similar to Gaber's (2005) paraphrasing technique such as translating the proverb "The wolf may lose his teeth, but never his nature" into:
"الشخص اللئيم الغادر يظل على طبعه حتى وإن كبر سنه و وهنت قوته".
- 6- Recognized translation: this involves the use of the commonly approved translation such as translating the proverb "The way to Babylon will never bring you to Jerusalem" into:
" الطريق إلى بابل لن يوصلك إلى القدس "
- 7- Notes, additions, glosses: this involves adding extra information which is needed in cultural, technical and linguistic words. It is similar to Gaber's (2005) glossing. For instance, the proverb "إذا حضر الماء بطل التيمم" is translated into " If the water is available you don't need *Al-Tayammum" and Al-Tayammum is explained in a footnote as follows " clean one's face, hands, legs, etc with sand or earth in case there is no water for washing before praying in Islam".
- 8- Couplets, triplets, quadruplets: this occurs when the translator uses a combination of two, three or four procedures. For instance, the proverb "Babylon will never bring you to Jerusalem" is translated into Arabic as it is mentioned previously by using the recognized translation and the words Babylon and Jerusalem are explained in notes.

Baker (1992) suggests strategies that help translators when translating idioms and they are helpful to translate proverbs. These strategies are:

Using an Idiom of Similar Meaning and Form

In this strategy, the translator uses a target language idiom that has a meaning and lexical items similar to the source language. For instance, the proverb (beware of a silent dog and still water) is translated into: (احذر المرء الصامت و المياه الراكدة)

Using an Idiom of Similar Meaning but Dissimilar Form

In this strategy, the translator uses a TL idiom that has a similar meaning but different lexical form. For instance, the proverb (a light purse is a heavy curse) is translated into (الفقر جريمة).

Translation by Paraphrase

This strategy is used when there is no target language equivalent matching the source text idiom or the style of the target text differs from the source text. For instance, the proverb (Barkis* is willing) is translated into (العين بصيرة و اليد قصيرة). *Barkis is a fictional character, a cart driver in the novel David Copperfield by Charles Dickens. He declares his intention to marry Peggotty. He says to David: "Tell her, "Barkis is willing".

Translation by Omission

In this strategy, the translator deletes the whole idiom because there is no target language idiom matching the source language one closely. Therefore, translators tend to paraphrase the meaning as clearly and accurately as possible.

Gaber (2005) proposes many techniques for translating culturally-bound expressions. These techniques include cultural equivalence in which culturally-bound words are translated into the target language cultural words such as translating "charity begins at home" into its Arabic equivalent "الأقربون أولى بالمعروف". Second, functional translation in which the translator uses the TL word or phrase which has the same function of the source text such as translating "hungry bellies have no ears" into "الجوع كافر". Third, paraphrasing where the translator explains the meaning of a source language word or phrase such as translating "a man can do no more than he can" into "لا يكلف الله نفسا إلا وسعها". Four, glossing in which extra information is added in a footnote to explain an idea such as translating "أغزل من امرئ القيس" into "more flirty than "Imru' al-Qais" and the translator adds a footnote explaining that Imru' al-Qais is an Arabic poet famous for his love poems. Five, borrowing in which the (SL) word becomes part of the target language such as translating "امرئ القيس" in the previous proverb into Imru' al-Qais.

Empirically, Badawi (2008) investigated EFL Saudi prospective teachers' ability to translate culture-bound expressions including metaphors, proverbs, idioms and collocations and their translation strategy awareness. A test of 20 items, each contains one culture-bound expression, was given to (43) EFL prospective teachers whose age was ranging from 21 to 23 years old at the University of Tabuk who were performing their final term exams of the second semester of the academic year 2007/2008. Moreover, a questionnaire consisted of 15 translation strategies was given to the participants during their formal examination sessions of the second semester of the academic year 2007/2008 to decide the frequency of the strategies they used in translating the test items CBTT. The study revealed that EFL perspective teachers' translation strategy awareness is very poor as reflected by the frequency of their responses on the translation awareness questionnaire. Literal translation and guessing strategies were prevalent among EFL Saudi perspective teachers.

Balfaqeeh (2009) conducted a study which investigated translation strategies (i.e. domesticated or foreignized strategies) which are more acceptable from the point of view of Arab readers. Some idioms and culturally-bound expressions were collected from different idioms books and culturally-bound expressions. Qualitative and quantitative methods were followed in this study. Eleven-question interviews were conducted in two phases. The first phase consisted of five females and one male while the second phase consisted of six pair-in-depth interviews with three males and three females. Moreover, a questionnaire built upon the completion of the data (twelve for idioms, ten for culturally-bound expressions, and four for culture and deletion) was given to 121 persons who live in Jeddah and Riyadh to choose the best translated expression from several choices. After that, the data were analyzed quantitatively. The results showed that domesticated translation strategies are more acceptable to Arab readers who appreciate translating idioms and cultural expressions by using Arabic equivalents, and sometimes by literal translation and deletion.

Farahani and Ghasemi (2012) explored the strategies which were applied in translating idioms and proverbs from English into Persian and identified the most frequently used strategies. Nine proverbs translated from English into Persian from the novel 'The Adventures of Pinocchio' were explored and analyzed to find the most frequent strategies and to see whether the translation of proverbs was idiomatic and natural. The study revealed the following strategies: firstly, the proverb could be replaced with an equivalent local proverb (66.66%); secondly, the nonfigurative meaning of the proverb could be stated straightforwardly (22.22%); thirdly, the words following the proverb could be introduced as the meaning of the proverb (11.11%). Consequently, it was showed that the translator translated the proverbs in an idiomatic and natural way.

Al-Shawi and Mahadi (2012) investigated the strategies which could help in overcoming the problems of translating idioms from Arabic into English and vice versa. Collected idioms from live sources such as (TV, radios programs, movies and directly from daily interaction) and written sources such as (newspapers, magazines, novels books and dictionaries) were analyzed to view the difficulties of translating them and to suggest strategies that could overcome these difficulties. The study revealed that there are many strategies for translating idioms like using a parallel idiom in the TL that has roughly the same meaning as that of SL; using similar meaning but dissimilar form by finding an idiom in the TL that has the same meaning to that of SL but consists of different lexical items; paraphrasing the idiom; using notes and consulting informants by asking a person who teaches those idioms if an idiom is not understood.

To sum up, it is clear that the majority of the former studies dealt with translated proverbs or idioms to find out the strategies of their translations. These reviewed studies paved the way and helped the researchers to prepare material for the next step.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling procedures

The Population of this study consisted of students who hold B.A degrees or M.A in translation who are seeking jobs in translation. A sample of 20 Jordanian novice translators (males and females) were chosen purposively to take the translation test composed of 10 English proverbs. Another sample of four academic and professional translators was selected to participate in the interviews.

The demographic data and general background of the respondents include gender, age, nationality, work experience, and languages. The sample included 8 males and 12 females whose age range between 23 and above. All of them were Jordanian. No one of them has

experience in translation; however, some of them are English teachers and speaks both Arabic and English.

Instruments of the study

This study used a mixed design in gathering and scrutinizing the needed data. The study adopted the qualitative and quantitative approaches (a test and open-ended interviews) in presenting the findings of the research.

The translation test

The researchers designed a test to investigate the strategies that novice translators used while translating proverbs. The test consisted of 10 English proverbs selected from English resources to be translated into Arabic. The proverbs were chosen according to Speake's (2008) categories of proverbs (abstract statement, everyday-experience, traditional wisdom, and folklore) and they covered many themes as it proposed by (Stanely, 2009). The test was made to fulfill the needs of this study which was pretested before it was administrated.

Interviews

The researchers interviewed four academic scholars who were asked about the proper strategies that are used in translating proverbs. The four interviewees were university professors who had experience in teaching translation and linguistics in Jordanian universities.

RESULTS

Results of the translation test

Table 1. Frequencies and percentages of strategies employed in translating proverbs

Sr. No.	Proverb	Cultural equivalent %	Literal %	Paraphrasing %	borrowing & glossing %
1	One man's meat is another man's poison.	65	35	0	0
2	Jack of all trades and master of none.	80	10	0	10
3	The end justifies the means.	100	0	0	0
4	When the fox preaches, beware of your geese	0	30	70	0
5	All work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy.	65	0	35	0
6	March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers.	40	60	0	0
7	Clergymen's sons always turn out badly.	20	65	15	0
8	You cannot teach an old dog new tricks.	30	50	20	0
9	Homer sometimes nods.	75	20	0	5
10	The Master's eye makes the horse fat.	25	75	0	0
Total number of proverbs for 20 translators (200)		50	34.5	14	1.5

Cultural equivalent

It emerges as the most prominent strategy accounting for 50% of the translators' responses. Although by using cultural equivalent the proverb appears in the dissimilar form, it gives the TL meaning that shares the same meaning in SL culture.

The heavy use of functional translation and TL equivalent was attributed to two factors: Arab culture has proverbs similar to English culture and translators have been exposed to these proverbs. For example, the proverbs "the end justifies the means", "Homer sometimes nods", "Jack of all trades and master of none" and "all work and no play make Jack a dull boy" have similar proverbs in the TL culture that matches the SL meanings.

Literal translation

The second most adopted strategy in translating proverbs was the literal translation which accounted for 34.5%. This strategy relies on the SL where the translator transfers all the words into the TL without taking into account the contextual and cultural aspects. This leads to a meaningless translation that sounds silly or strange. This was the third strategy employed by the translators in translating proverbs, accounting for 18%.

In translating the proverb "March winds and April showers bring forth April flowers", 55% of the translators translated it literally such as:

"أزهار مارس و أمطار ابريل تزهو زهور مايو".

They failed to recognize that it means "sometimes unpleasant things are required to bring good things". Moreover, the proverb "The master's eye makes the horse fat" was translated into:

"عين السيد تجعل الحصان بدينا" و "السيد يرى الحصان السمين" و "نظرة السيد تجعل الحصان أسمن".

They failed to recognize that this proverb means "The eye of the master makes the horse fatty".

Paraphrasing

The third adopted strategy in translating proverbs was paraphrasing which accounted for 14%. In this strategy, translators produced alternative translation versions by explaining the meaning without changing the original one.

Translators resorted to paraphrasing in rendering the proverb "When the fox preaches, beware of your geese" where 50% employed this strategy and the received translations like:

"احذر من المنافق حين يعظك" و " انتبه لنفسك إذا لبس الثعلب يوما لباس الواعظين" و " يجب على الناس أن يحذروا إذا وعظهم مخادع كالثعلب." و "إذا صاحبت محتالا فاحترس إلى نفسك" و "إذا أصبح المحتال واعظا انتبه لنفسك".

Borrowing and glossing

This strategy, which accounted only for 1.5%, was the least used one in translating proverbs. The reason for using this strategy was the translators' lack of knowledge in the SL culture. Five per cent of the respondents translated the proverb "Homer sometimes nods" by using the quadruplets as proposed by (Newmark, 1988) because the translator used a combination of two procedures; the proverb was translated by using the glossing strategy into " حتى هوميروس " يخطئ أحيانا" and the word Homer was also explained in a footnote. Moreover, the recognized translation which was proposed by (Newmark, 1988) was used because the Arabized name (هوموريس) is the known equivalent of (Homer). Moreover, in translating the proverb "Jack of all trades and master of none", 10% borrowed the proper name (Jack) as it is and translated it into (جاك).

Results of the interview question

The first interviewee, a professor specialized in translation and linguistics, responded by saying "the only strategy a translator may resort to while translating proverbs is the functional translation". The translator has to give the equivalent in the TL and a bilingual dictionary of proverbs should be consulted because the single words that compose the proverb won't benefit.

The second interviewee, an applied linguist, said that SL proverb could be translated by giving the TL equivalent because it eases the understanding of the proverb and makes the SL proverb closer to the TL. He added that the correct paraphrase is useful and handy when the proverb has no equivalent in the TL because it helps in understanding the theme of the proverb.

The third interviewee, specialized in translation, reported that the functional equivalence or the dynamic equivalence which was coined by Nida is the best strategy for translating proverbs because it gives the thought expressed in the source text by using equivalent expressions from a contemporary language. She also added that using footnotes is helpful in translating proverbs because they contain culturally-bound words that can't be understood in the other culture unless they are explained in footnotes.

The fourth interviewee, specialized in literature, indicated that the best strategy for translating proverbs is to use a TL proverb that matches the meaning of the SL proverb because proverbs express culture. Then, he added that the structure of the proverb is not too easy to understand, so one of the best ways to translate it properly is to use a dictionary of proverbs.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main translation strategies which are used by the novice translators are the cultural equivalent, literal translation, paraphrasing, and borrowing and glossing.

The first strategy adopted by the translators is cultural equivalent which has accounted for 50% of the total responses. This strategy is the highest used one not because of the knowledge of the translators' knowledge in translation strategies and techniques but because there are SL proverbs which have equivalent ones in the TL culture in the form and meaning. The proverb "the end justifies the means" is a good example. This result agrees with (Farahani and Ghasemi, 2012) who find out that the dominant strategy for translating proverbs is replacing it with an equivalent local proverb.

The second strategy adopted by the novice translators is the literal translation which accounts for 34.5%. Some translators resort to this strategy because they lack knowledge in the TL culture. Some translators are not aware of translation strategies and techniques that can help them in using the best strategy when an obstacle encounters them. This result agrees with (Badawi, 2008) who finds out that the lack of awareness in translation strategies makes them resort to literal translation and guessing strategies which are usually prevailing among Saudi prospective EFL teachers.

The third strategy adopted by the novice translators in translating proverbs is the paraphrasing strategy which accounts for 14%. This strategy is used because of the translator's limited knowledge in the TL. They cannot give a TL proverb that matches the SL one and this is clear in the proverb "when the fox preaches, beware of your geese." This result agrees with (Baker, 1992) who suggests that paraphrasing is one of the strategies that helps translators when translating idioms if there is no target language equivalent that matches the source text idiom. This result also agrees with (Gaber, 2005) who proposes "paraphrasing" as a technique for translating culturally-bound expressions. Similarly, it agrees with (Al-Shawi

& Mahadi, 2012) who finds out that paraphrasing is one of the strategies that can help in overcoming the problems of translating idioms.

The fourth strategy adopted by the novice translators is borrowing and glossing which accounts for 1.5%. This strategy is useful when translating proverbs that contain cultural aspects. However, there is a little use of this strategy by the translators because it requires a good knowledge in the TL culture. So, because of the lack of awareness in the TL culture, translators should search for the needed information or data. This result agrees with (Gaber, 2005) who proposes borrowing and glossing as a good technique for translating culturally-bound expressions.

After investigating the strategies used while translating proverbs, it is clear that Jordanian novice translators used the following strategies: cultural equivalent; literal translation; paraphrasing and the borrowing and glossing technique.

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