

# Translation Problems Encounters by Students of English in the Faculty of Arts/ the University of Jordan

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## Abstract

This study aims at investigating some of the problems that students at the Department of English Language and Literature in the University of Jordan might face when translating Arabic texts into English. These problems included: translating culture-bound expressions, translating fixed expressions such as collocations and idioms, and translating emotive expressions. Moreover, the study aims at finding out some suggested solutions to overcome these problems.

The population of the study consists of all the students (42) in the fourth level at the Department of English Language and Literature. The sample of the study is selected through using the systematic random sample. The tool of the study (the translation test) is distributed among students using odd numbers (1, 3, 5, 7, 9...etc) until 20 students got the translation test, i.e., the sample consists of 20 students.

The translation test consists of four sections. It is constructed according to the problems of the study. Each problem is represented by giving four items. Each item is given along with four translation choices. Besides, a space is left for the students to give their own translation if they do not agree with the suggested translations.

The study concluded that the students face problems when translating from Arabic into English, especially in the problems the study proposed. The study came up with some suggested solutions which the students might resort to when facing these problems.

## Introduction:

Taking into consideration that no two languages are similar even if originating from the same language family, the translation act can never be described as identical. Rather, it is an act of approximation and compromise. This fact is emphasized by many translation scholars, for instance Nida (2000:126) puts it concisely:

The total impact of a translation may be reasonably close

to the original, but there can be no identity in detail.

The efficient translator who transfers the source language (henceforth SL) text into the target language (henceforth TL) adequately is similar to an artist who could transfer an imaginative view into an outstanding picture drawn by his colors. Thus, translator should be creatively bilingual and bicultural, i.e., he should have a comprehensive knowledge about the SL and the TL cultures.

Any translator should be acquainted with the three types of equivalent: formal equivalent, ideational equivalent and functional equivalent. Farghal and Shunnaq (1999:4-6) talk about the issue of equivalence and these three types of equivalent. They define each type and provide examples as follows:

1- Formal equivalence seeks to capture the form

of the SL expression, for instance, the sentence the treaty has remained dead letter since then can be translated using formal equivalent as *وقد بقيت المعاهدة حرفاً ميتاً منذ ذلك الوقت*.

2- Ideational equivalent aims at conveying the communicative sense of the SL expression independently of function and form. In this type of equivalent, the translator seeks to capture the meaning of the SL expression regardless of functional and formal equivalents, for instance, the same example above can be translated as: *وقد بقيت المعاهدة غير مفعلة منذ ذلك الوقت*.

3- Functional equivalent seeks to capture the function of the SL expression by translating it into a TL expression that performs the same function independently of form of the SL expression. For instance, the same example above can be translated as: *وقد بقيت المعاهدة حبراً على ورق*.

Faiq (2004:1) defines culture as the totality of attitudes towards the world, towards events, other cultures and peoples and the manners in which the attitudes are mediated.

In translation, the translator cannot separate culture from the translation process because every community has its own culture that makes it distinct from the other communities. Thus, the translator may face problems when translating culture-bound expressions because languages are culturally divergent.

Newmark (1988: 95) argues that literal translation is not adequate when translating

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culture-bound expressions because it might distort the meaning of the SL expressions. He adds that descriptive-functional equivalent can be more appropriate to deal with such expressions. Moreover, Newmark (ibid) suggests that the translator, when translating cultural elements, can use a relatively culture-free generic term or a classifier plus the various additions in different culture. For instance, "iced tea" might sound alien to Arab people who are accustomed of drinking hot tea. Iced tea represents something belongs to foreign culture and thus, the translator might opt for translating it generally just as "شاي". He might add other classifiers such as شاي مثلج مضاف إليه بعض الليمون. Culture-bound expressions include religious or social concepts, types of drinks, foods and dresses, among others. For instance, the word صلاة cannot be translated easily unless we resort to paraphrasing it as: the prayers Muslims do at night when he wishes Allah's help in any affair.

Fixed expression may constitute a problem when translating them from the SL into the TL. This is because their meanings cannot be derived from the meanings of the single words these expressions consist of. These expressions include collocations, idioms, and proverbs among others. According to Yousif (2006:53), the difficulty in translating collocations results from two reasons: difficulty of generalization and variability of collocation. On one hand, this difficulty is due to the fact that some words collocate with one word, for instance, in Arabic, the verb يرتكب can collocate with خطأ and جريمة and in English they are the same; commit a crime/mistake. However, we say in English commit a sin which can be translated into يرتكب ذنبا not يقترب ذنبا. On the other hand, it is due to that one Arabic collocation may have two different collocations in English, for instance, يرتكب خطأ can be translated either as commit a mistake or make a mistake.

Idioms are another type of fixed expressions and the meanings of their constituents cannot in most cases help in giving the whole idea the idiom talks about. Ghazaala (1995:231) defines the idiom as "a fixed phrase whose form is unchangeable, and whose meaning is always the same, inflexible, metaphorical and indirect". Moreover he talks about three different types of idioms: direct idioms, indirect idioms, and phrasal verbs. Direct idioms are the easiest type to translate because direct literal translation is

possible in most cases, however, they should be understood indirectly. This is because their meaning is metaphoric, for instance, قتل جاره ببرودة دم which can be translated as He killed his neighbor in cold blood. Indirect idioms, on the other hand, are problematic because the students cannot understand their meanings directly and literal translation is not appropriate for it might be strange, nonsensical and funny. For instance, بقي البريء فريسة للشك لبعض الوقت can be translated into English as the innocent man remained under a cloud for sometime. As for phrasal verbs, they are a combination of a verb + an adverb/preposition, or both an adverb and a preposition (such as come up with). They have a special idiomatic meaning that cannot be understood from the separate meanings of the verb and the adverb/preposition taken together. For instance, stop beating about the bush can be translated idiomatically as: توقف عن اللف والدوران. When addressing the issue of emotiveness in languages, Arabic is, by nature, considered more emotive than English. This may pose a problem when translating emotive Arabic texts into English. According to Farghal and Shunnaq (1999), there are two types of meaning: referential and emotive. The referential meaning is the dictionary meaning while the emotive meaning emerges from the emotional associations which are suggested by lexical items. For instance, قميص أبيض in Arabic can be translated as white shirt while ثورة بيضاء cannot be translated as white revolution but peaceful/bloodless revolution.

#### **Definition of Terms:**

**Culture-bound expressions:** They are expressions which reflect the culture of a certain community. They include items of food, dress, and religion, among others.

**Fixed expressions:** They are expressions that one cannot interpret their meanings through interpreting the meanings of their constituents. They are also called idiomatic.

**Emotive Expressions:** They are expressions charged with connotative expressed meanings which differ in intensity according to the context in which they appear.

**Adequate translation:** It is that translation that conveys almost the intended meaning in a certain context. It is characterized with naturalness and felt idiomatic on the part of the TL audience.

#### **Statement of the Problem:**

Since Arabic and English differ in many respects, it is highly expected that students of

English would face problems when translating many expressions such as culture-bound expressions, fixed expressions, and emotive expressions, among others. The present study comes to shed some light on these problems in light of the responses of B.A students in English Department at University of Jordan.

#### **Purpose and Question of the Study:**

The present study aims at investigating the extent to which BA English students at University of Jordan are able to give adequate and appropriate translation of certain expressions: culture-bound, fixed (collocations/idioms), and emotive expressions. The following questions will guide the Discussion and the analysis of the study:

1. To what extent can students give an adequate and appropriate translation for culture-bound expressions?
2. To what extent can students give an adequate and appropriate translation for fixed expressions?
3. To what extent can students give adequate and appropriate translation for emotive expressions?

#### **Significance of the Study**

This study is very important for students who face problems in translation from Arabic into English. It is hoped that this study will help translation students to avoid making mistakes while translating Arabic texts into English. Besides, it might help them to find good solutions for the problems they face while translating by exploring some of the differences between English and Arabic language in syntax, style, culture, etc.

#### **Limitation**

There are many problems that face English students when translating from Arabic into English. This study is confined to translating only words and expressions that come under three categories: culture-bound, fixed and emotive expressions. Other dilemmatic expressions such as those coming under the umbrella of pragmatics or syntax will be out of the scope of this study. In principle, this study is restricted to investigating B.A English students' achievements on a translation test in the University of Jordan to figure out the difficulties that arises from translating the three types of expressions in question.

#### **Review of Related Literature**

Among the translation problems faced by English students are translating culture-bound expressions, fixed expressions and emotive expressions.

Bahameed (2007) discusses hindrances in Arabic-English intercultural translation. He argues that differences among cultures represent an area of difficulty. This difficulty depends on whether the languages involved are culturally close or remote. For instance the word owl البومة in Arabic culture represents pessimism while in English culture it is a symbol of wisdom and grace. In such cases, Bahameed (ibid) argues that the translator has either to incorporate additional material in the TL expression or resort to explanatory footnotes to compensate for the missing connotations in the TL.

Another example mentioned by Bahameed (ibid) is the word التهجيد which is an Islamic concept missed in Christianity. To translate this concept, the translator might face difficulty because it has no equivalent in the TL. He might then resort to paraphrasing and explaining what it means in Islam.

Yousif (2006:53) defines Collocations as "the habitual co-occurrence of individual lexical items". In other words, certain lexical items tend to collocate with certain lexical items in a certain context. Moreover, Yousif (ibid) identifies three common types of collocations where the noun constitutes the main part in the collocation as follows:

1. Adjective + noun such as تضخم جامح: runaway inflation
2. Noun + noun such as مقلة العين: eyeball
3. Verb + object such as يحرز نصرا: score a victory

There are two domains of fixed expressions: cultural specificity and usage. Usage refers to naturalness and typicality. Both Arabic and English have their own cultural specificity and usage. Thus, some lexical items tend to co-occur with other lexical items in certain context. For instance, we say in Arabic قهوة ثقيلة but we cannot translate it into English as heavy coffee, rather into strong coffee. (Yousif, 2006:86).

Shunnaq (1993: 37-8) investigates the problem of emotiveness in Arabic-English translation. He distinguishes three types of lexical items pertaining to Arabic-English translation namely, SL items that have a straightforward TL equivalents, SL items that have only partial equivalents and SL items that have no TL equivalents. Emotive expressions belong to the second and the third categories. Besides, Shunnaq (ibid) suggests that the translator has to try his best to preserve the meaning of Arabic emotive expressions by resorting to

paraphrasing, footnoting, exemplification, glossing, among others.

**Methods and Procedures:**

Below are the procedures the researcher followed to conduct her study.

**Sample and Population of Study**

The population includes forty two B.A students in English Department at the University of Jordan. Twenty participants were selected by using systematic random sample technique. They are selected according to their numbers, i.e., 1,3,5,7,9,11,13,15,17,19,21,23,25,27,29,etc.

**Data Collection:**

To construct the tool of the study, the translation test, the researcher collects data from three resources: How to Translate by Yousif (2006), Translation as Problems and Solutions (1994) by Ghazaala and Translation with Reference to Arabic and English by Farghal and Shunnaq (1999). The test consists of three sections according to the problems of translation the study investigated, i.e., culture-bound expression, fixed expression (collocation and idioms) and emotive expression. Each section consists of four items. Every item in every section is given four translation choices except for the last section, emotiveness, where every item is given only two choices. The adequate translation is spotted from the previous-mentioned references while the other suggestions were the researcher's.

Besides, a space is left for the students to provide their own translation for every item in the test if they do not agree with the choices given.

**Validity and Reliability of the Translation Test :**

To validate and get appraisal for the tool of her study, the researcher gives the translation test to

two professors at Yarmouk University; one is majored in translation, Dr. Al-Shunnaq at Translation Department and the other, Dr. Steitya is majored in Arabic and contrastive linguistics of Arabic and English.

To get reliable results of the findings, the researcher pilots the translation test among six B.A English students so as to clarify if there is any vagueness or unclear items that may need modification.

**Data Analysis:**

Guided by the proposed questions of the study, the researcher analyzed the answers of the students in light of the data collected concerning the adequate translation of the items of the translation test. Moreover, the frequencies and percentages of students' answers were calculated and presented in tables and charts to illustrate the findings clearly. These tables are followed by a thorough discussion for each question.

**Discussion and Analysis:**

Translation is considered as a cross-culture activity that helps in bridging the gaps between communities. Consequently, the translator should know how to translate adequately. This task might be achieved through using appropriate strategies that help in producing natural and acceptable translation in the TL.

Below are the tables that present the students' answers along with percentages in each item. Every table is aligned with a chart that illustrates the ratio for each item in each section.

**Firstly: Culture-bound Expression**

Table (1) presents the ratio and the answers of students with respect to the items in the section of culture-bound expressions.

**Table (1) Frequencies and Percentages of Students answers for Section 1**

Items		Translation Choices					
		Ans. A	Ans. b	Ans. c	Ans. d	Ans. e	Total
Item 1	Frequencies	0	0	4	16	0	20
	Percentages	0	0	20	80	0	100
Item 2	Frequencies	1	1	15	2	1	20
	Percentages	5	5	75	10	5	100
Item 3	Frequencies	6	9	2	2	1	20
	Percentages	30	45	10	10	5	100
Item 4	Frequencies	3	0	0	17	0	20
	Percentages	15	0	0	85	0	100

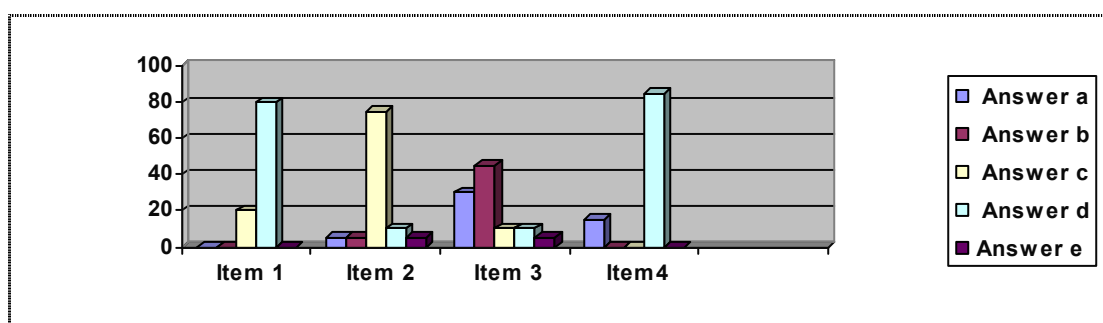


Chart (1) Raito of Students' Answers Concerning Culture-bound Expressions

When translating from one language into another, one cannot isolate the translation process from culture. Consequently, the translator should be acquainted with the cultures of the SL and the TL.

Since Arabic and English are culturally divergent, Arab students might face problems when translating culture-bound expressions from Arabic into English. These expressions include religious and social concepts (foods, drinks, dresses...etc), among others. Below is the discussion of the four items the translation test has targeted.

#### 1. زكاة

The Arabic word زكاة in Islam represents a religious concept which is absent in English culture and religion. The word **charity** in Christianity means money given to help people who are poor, sick etc. (see Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English: 2005). Thus, translating the concept زكاة into English constitutes a cultural problem for the TL lacks the equivalent of this concept. To tackle the translation of such concept and other similar ones, the translator may resort to the strategy of transference (see Newmark, 1988, Yousif, 2006) where the translator transliterates the SL expression using TL sounds. Besides, he might provide a paraphrasing to explain it for the TL recipients. None of the students has chosen the first choice, poor alms or the third, taxes. Four students translated this culture item as charity while sixteen students translated it adequately as zakaat (it is a must in Islam refers to a particular sum of money the rich give to the poor per year when their money reaches a certain extent). This implies the students' awareness of the differences between English's charity and Arabic's Zakaat which is a unique concept in Islam.

#### 2. كل يغني على ليله

The majority of the students (15) translated this expressions as everyone is busy with his own matters while 2 students translated it adequately as everyone sings for his Lila (Lila is a cultural name in Arabic literature used to refer to someone's beloved. One student translated it as everyone sings for his Juliet and another one as everyone sings for his Lila. One of the students gave his own translation: everyone acts the way he prefers which represents ideational equivalent, and thus it is acceptable. In fact, the name Lila is a well-known cultural name in Arabic literature. It is used to refer to the name of someone's beloved. In Arabic, we say the expression in question to say that someone is interested in his own matters and do not care of the others. Most of the students translated this expression ideationally and missed the culture value of the name Lila. Thus, they have to explain the reference of this name in Arabic literature to make the TL audience acquaint with it. So transliteration along with paraphrasing is the most adequate strategy to deal with cultural expression as the above one. (Yousif, 2006:62-3)

#### 3. قهوة سادة

Six students translated this cultural item adequately as coffee without sugar while nine of them translated it as black coffee. Two students translated it as strong coffee, and two students as bitter coffee. There is a nice suggested translation given by one of the students which is Arabian coffee. However, even in Arab countries, people do prepare coffee differently. For instance, the coffee in Jordan is strong (having a taste of coffee that you notice it easily) while in Yemen and Saudi Arabia, ginger and cardamom are added to coffee. The word سادة in Arabic culture is used to refer to blank ordinary things, for instance, to refer to an ordinary shirt without decoration, we say قميص سادة. The same thing can be applied to drinks to say that there

are no additions in them, especially sugar. Therefore, the ideational equivalent, coffee without sugar is the most adequate because all the other choices have different meanings. Black coffee means coffee without milk, strong coffee means coffee having a lot of taste because we put a lot of the substance of coffee in it. As for bitter coffee, the adjective bitter does not collocate with the noun coffee. (See Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English: 2005)

4. دشداشه

Three students translated this item as loose-fitting dress and the majority (17 students) translated it adequately as dishdaashah (loose-

filling, long, usually white-colored dress. It is worn in Arabic countries, especially the Gulf. Since this cultural item of dress is missed in the TL culture, the students need to transliterate it

first then provide a paraphrasing to describe it in order to make the TL recipients acquaint with it. None of the students have chosen the alternative answers: a big dress and a wide dress. This might imply their good level of judging the adequate translation, especially that the majority translated it properly.

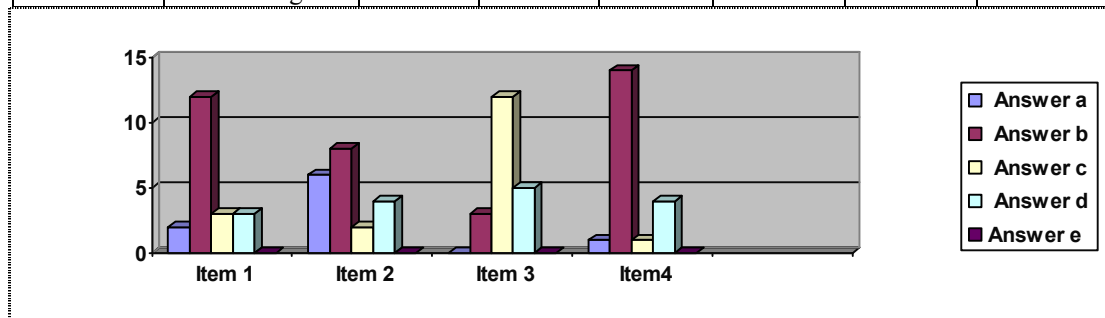
**Secondly: Fixed Expressions:**

Fixed expressions are considered problematic to translate because their meanings cannot be expected from the meanings of their constituents. Consequently, the students should be aware of that literal translation is not appropriate in most cases. Besides, they have to be acquainted with the TL fixed expression as to translate them naturally.

Table (2) presents the ratio and the answers of students with respect to the items in the section of fixed expressions/collocation.

**Table (2) Frequencies and Percentages of Students' Answers for Section2Collocations**

Items		Translation Choices					Total
		Ans. a	Ans. b	Ans. c	Ans. d	Ans. e	
Item 1	Frequencies	2	12	3	3	0	20
	Percentages	10	60	15	15	0	100
Item 2	Frequencies	6	8	2	4	0	20
	Percentages	30	40	10	20	0	100
Item 3	Frequencies	0	3	12	5	0	20
	Percentages	0	15	60	25	0	100
Item 4	Frequencies	1	14	1	4	0	20
	Percentages	5	70	5	20	0	100



**Chart (2) Ratio of Students' Answers Concerning Collocation**

The difficulty of translating collocations emerges from the fact that what might collocate in Arabic, may not collocate in English. Below are the four items of collocations which the students questioned about along with their responses.

1. ثقة عمياء

Only two students translated this collocation adequately as blind confidence which, though literal, is the functional equivalent in English (see Ghazaala, 1995). This indicates that literal translation is sometimes adequate but only in rare case. Other students' responses were different; the majority (12 students) translated

this collocation as complete trust, 3 students translated it as trustfulness, and other three students translated it as endless trust. All these translations are to some extent acceptable but not like the first translation which is considered being natural to the TL recipients who are familiar with its meaning in their language.

2. يقوم بزيارة

Only eight students translated this collocation adequately as pay a visit while six of them translated it literally as visit someone. One student translated it as attend someone's house and four students translated it as call on someone. The most adequate translation of this collocation is to pay a visit which is considered as a functional equivalent. Other choices give the meaning but they are less natural than the functional equivalent. However, the choice call on someone comes in the second level after pay a visit because it is idiomatic (Ghazaala, 1995).

3. سكرات الموت

The majority of the students (12) translated this item as last breath while five of them translated it as death agonies. Only three students translate this collocation adequately as throes of death

which is the English functional equivalent (Ghazaala, 1995). Other choices have different meanings. Agony of death and death agonies almost have the same meaning; very severe pain before death. As for last breath, it means the breath at the moment of dying (see Longman Dictionary, 2004). None of the students give his own suggested translation.

4. جوهر الشيء

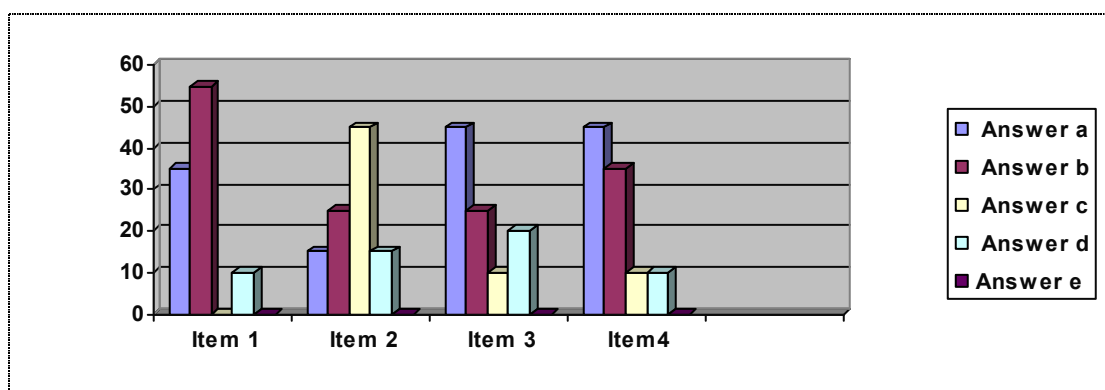
One student translated this collocation as inner of the matter while the majority of the students (14) translated it as the essence of the matter. Only four students translated it adequately as the heart of the matter. One student translated this collocation as depth of the matter. According to Ghazaala (1995), the most adequate English functional equivalent of the above collocation is the heart of the matter. Other choices are possible but not as natural as the functional one. 15 students translated this collocation correctly.

**Idioms:**

Table (3) presents the ratio and the answers of students with respect to the items in the section of fixed expressions/idioms.

**Table (3) Frequencies and Percentages of Students' Answers for Section 2/Idioms**

Items		Translation Choices					Total
		Ans. a	Ans. b	Ans. c	Ans. d	Ans. e	
Item 1	Frequencies	7	11	0	2	0	20
	Percentages	35	55	0	10	0	100
Item 2	Frequencies	3	5	9	3	0	20
	Percentages	15	25	45	15	0	100
Item 3	Frequencies	9	5	2	4	0	20
	Percentages	45	25	10	20		100
Item 4	Frequencies	9	7	2	2	0	20
	Percentages	45	35	10	10	0	100



**Chart (3) Ratio of Students' Answers Concerning Idioms**

Like collocations, idioms are difficult to translate because we cannot guess their meanings from the meanings of their constituents. Thus, they need to be translated appropriately in the TL. If the students translate them literally, idioms might sound odd and unnatural in the TL. Below are the discussion of the idioms and the responses of the students.

1. الأقرابون أولى بالمعروف

2. Seven students translated this idiom as relatives are the first deservers of your care while a large number (11) of them translated it adequately and idiomatically as charity begins at home. As for the choice to give charity, begin at your, none of the students have chosen it. However, two of the students translated it as let your charity begin at home then move out. According to Yousif (2006), the functional equivalent of this Arabic idiom in English is charity begins at home. Other choices can give the idea, i.e., ideational equivalent; however, they are not as natural as the functional equivalent. 13 students translated this idiom adequately.

3. لايفل الحديد إلا الحديد

While three of them translated it as iron is not cut but by iron, only five students gave the adequate translation for this idiom which is diamonds cut diamonds (see Yousif, 2006:96). Besides, a large number (9) of them translated this idiom as treat matters by their own equivalents. The other students (3) translated it as prepare strong weapons to deal with strong enemies. The first choice (a) is literal and not appropriate in English while the second choice is functional and natural in English. The third choice, which is ideational, is acceptable when it becomes difficult to find

the functional equivalent. As for the last choice, it goes far from the meaning of the SL expression and it is less adequate.

4. يلقي له الحبل على الغارب

Nine students translated this idiom as to let him behave his own way while five of them translated it as to treat him as just as he wishes. Only two students translated it adequately as to give one his head. The other students (4) translated it as to make it easy for him move his own way. According to Yousif (2006:96), the most functional equivalent of this idiom which would be received naturally by TL audience is to give one his head. This translation might look for the first time odd if it is translated literally, however, it is exactly what English people say in such context. The first choice which is ideational is acceptable when failing to find the functional equivalent. Other choices go far from the intended meaning.

5. فرق تسد

Nine students translated this idiom as split and rule while seven students translated it adequately as divide and rule. Two students translated it as many borders make it easy to rule, and the other two students translated it as distribute and rule. According to Yousif (2006:96), the most adequate translation of this idiom is divide and rule. Though it comes in the structure of a formal equivalent and might sound literal, it is the most functional. Other choices which are ideational can be acceptable if the translator is unable to find the equivalent in the TL.

**Thirdly: Emotive Expressions:**

Table (4) presents the ratio and the answers of students with respect to the items in the section of Emotive Expressions.

**Table (4) Frequencies and Percentages of Students' Answers for Section 3**

Items		Translation Choices			
		Ans. a	Ans. b	Ans. c	Total
Item 1	Frequencies	3	15	2	20
	Percentages	15	75	10	100
Item 2	Frequencies	2	18	0	20
	Percentages	10	90	0	100
Item 3	Frequencies	11	9	0	20
	Percentages	55	45	0	100
Item 4	Frequencies	5	14	1	20
	Percentages	25	70	5	100
Item 5	Frequencies	9	11	0	20
	Percentages	45	55	0	100



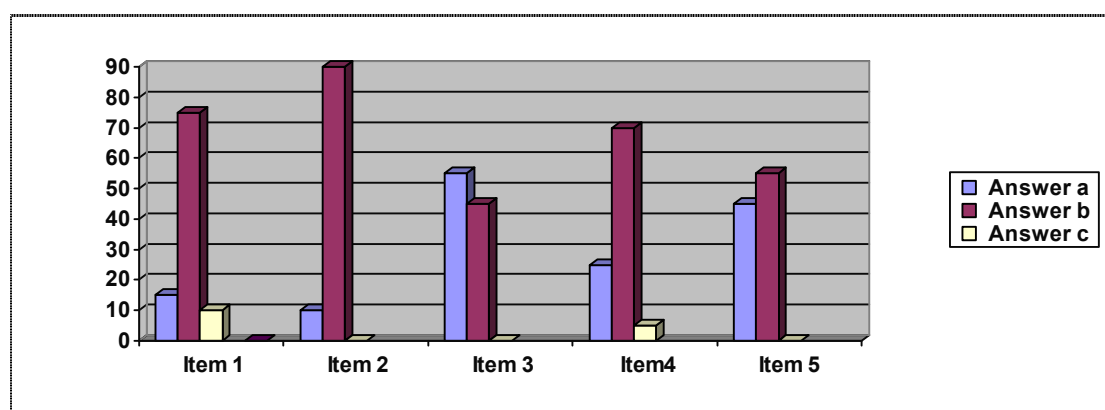


Chart (4) Raito of Students' Answers Concerning Emotive Expressions

Because Arabic and English are different in Emotiveness, the students might translate Arabic emotive expressions inadequately into English. Below is the discussion of the questionnaire expressions concerning this issue?

1. عدت إلى وطني وبني شوق عظيم

Three students translated this emotive expression as I backed to my country with great desire while the majority (15) of students translated it as I backed home with endless yearning. Two students suggest other translations; I backed home with a pack of nostalgia and I backed home with great desire. According to Shunnaq (1993:39), the word وطني is very emotive while the word country is neutral, and hence it is not adequate translation of it. It signifies how someone so related to his homeland, family and people. Thus, the word home is more adequate. As for شوق عظيم it is very emotive than great desire therefore, it needs to be intensified as endless yearning for the word yearning implies not only desire but a great one (see Longman Dictionary 2006) as indicated by the Arabic expression.

2. إنني لأعشق هذه الأرض

Two students translated this emotive expression as I loved this land while the majority (18) translated it as I love adoringly this land. Shunnaq (1993:56) asserts that the lexical items: العشق, الغرام and الحب are usually translated into one lexical item (love), however, each of which differs in the intensity of love. Thus, the word عشق in Arabic express more than the word love expresses. Yousif (2006:59) Therefore, adding an adverb such as adoringly might mitigate the loss in meaning resulted from differences in emotiveness between the SL and the TL expressions.

3. عندما يعاتبني صديقي أعرف مدى معزتي عنده

Five students translated this expression as when my friend blames me I know how much he loves me while the majority (14) of students translated it as my friend sentimental blaming is a sign of his sincere affection towards me. Ba-Jubair (2009:14) claims that the verb يعاتب cannot be translated into English as blame for it connote positive meaning which is not found in the word blame. When adding the adjective sentimental to the verb blame, it might be better than translating it as blame. This is to compensate for the connotation in the word يعاتب. The word معزة is also very emotive and the word love is not an adequate translation of it. It needs to be intensified by adding another lexical item to the word love. Sincere affection might be a better translation of معزة.

4. هي تقطن حناياي ودمي

Five students translated the expression as she lived in my deep heart and blood while the majority (14) of the students translated it as she dwells in the depth of my heart and within my blood. There is one student who gave his own suggested translation: she is dear to me. The word تقطن is very emotive and it connotes sticking to the land someone lives in. Therefore, translating it as live is not adequate. The word dwell is literary (see Longman Dictionary, 2005) and very expressive and it might be a better translation of the word يقطن. The expression: هي تقطن حناياي ودمي is very emotive and the TL expression, heart and blood, is not adequate. Consequently, adding the phrase depth of might compensate the loss of emotiveness. Most of the students translated this expression adequately.

5. لقد أفجعها الخبر

Nine students translated this expression as the news has broken her heart while eleven students

translated this expression as the news has shocked her in the depth. The word فاجعة (catastrophe) is very expressive in Arabic and the verb أفجعها connotes many feelings: fear, pain, frustration, etc. Thus, has broken her heart is not adequate translation for this verb. The other choice, shocked her in the depth might be more adequate than the first one.

Based on what has been discussed so far, it is a matter of fact to pronounce a judgment that students by all means have experienced difficulties to come up with the adequate translation for the items of the translation test in all the three areas the study tackled: culture-bound, fixed, and emotive expressions. However, some students' choices of adequate translations for the items reveal their awareness and good level in translation.

#### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

After discussing translation problems that students at the Department of

English language and Literature at the University of Jordan, the study comes up with the following conclusions and recommendations:

Most of the translation students experience problems when translating expressions such as: culture-bound expressions, fixed expressions and emotive expressions due to the following reasons:

1. Poor knowledge of the TL culture
2. Poor knowledge of translation strategies that might help the students in overcoming the problems which might face them when translating these expressions
3. Unclear understanding of the intended meaning of the SL expression

**To overcome such problems, the study suggests the following solutions:**

1. Through understanding of the SL and the TL cultures
2. Knowing about different translation strategies
3. Full understanding of the intended meaning of the message

#### **Specific solutions for the problems of the study:**

##### **1. Culture-bound Expressions**

The best strategy to translate these expression is to find their equivalent firstly in the TL, for instance خبز وزيت might be a cultural equivalent to bread and butter. If failing to find the equivalent in the TL, especially with very specific cultural expressions, it might be better if they are transliterated and paraphrased as done when dealing with the name Lila above.

##### **2. Fixed Expressions**

This expression should be translated with cautions because literal translation might destroy the meaning and make it funny. However, literal translation might work but in rare cases. The best way to translate them by finding their equivalents in the TL. This might be done through checking dictionaries or asking professors and native speakers. If failing to find their equivalents, the ideational equivalent might be acceptable. However, literal equivalent is rare to be accepted.

##### **3. Emotive Expressions**

Since it is difficult to come with a complete equivalent to the SL emotive expression, compensation might be helpful. Compensation might be through adding an adverb, an adjective or a phrase to the SL expression. This addition might help in mitigating the loss in meaning resulted from differences between the SL and the TL in emotiveness.

#### **Recommendations:**

Before translating any text, the students should be aware of the cultures of the SL and the TL. Besides, they should be familiar with translation strategies that help them in overcoming translation problems.

This study dealt with only problems of translating three kinds of expressions; culture-bound expressions, fixed expressions and emotive expressions. Therefore, investigating other problems such as syntactic problems (gender and number, tenses, etc) is recommended.

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## Translation Test

**Dear participants:**

You are kindly requested to answer the following questionnaire about three major translation problems from Arabic into English.

Firstly: Culture-bound Expressions:

Q.1. Choose the best translation for the following expressions: (circle the best choice)

a. زكاة

a- Poor alms

b- Charity

c- Taxes

d- Zakaat (it is a must in Islam refers to a particular sum of money the rich give to the poor per year when their money reaches a certain extent)

e- Other suggestion .....

2- كل يغني على ليله

a- Everyone sings for his Lila.

b- Everyone sings for his Juliet.

c- Everyone is busy with his own matters.

d- Everyone sings for his own Lila. (Lila is a cultural name in Arabic literature used to refer to someone's beloved)

e- Other suggestion.....

3- قهوة سادة

a- Coffee without sugar

b- Black coffee

c- Strong coffee

d- Bitter coffee

e- Other suggestion.....

4- دشداشه

a- Loose-fitting dress

b- A big dress

c- A wide dress

d- Dishdaashah (loose-fitting, long, usually white-colored dress. It is worn in Arab countries, especially in the Gulf )

e- Other suggestion.....

Secondly: Fixed Expressions

Q.2. Choose the best translation for the following expressions (Circle the best choice)

A- Collocations

1- ثقة عمياء

a- Blind confidence

b- Complete trust

c- Trustfulness

d- Endless trust

e- Other suggestion.....

b. يقوم بزيارة

a- Visit someone

b- Pay a visit

c- Attend someone's house

d- Call on someone

e- Other suggestion.....

c. سكرات الموت

a- Agony of death

b- Throes of death

c- The last Breath

d- Death agonies

e- Other suggestion .....

4- جوهر الشيء

a-The inner of the matter

b-The essence of the matter

c-The depth of the matter

d-The heart of the matter

e- Other suggestion.....

B- Idioms

1- الأقربون أولى بالمعروف

a- Relatives are the first deservers of one's care.

b- Charity begins at home.

c- To give charity, begin at your own home

d- Let your charity begin at home then move out.

e- Other suggestion.....

2- لا يفل الحديد إلا الحديد

a- Iron is not cut but by iron.

b- Diamonds cut diamonds.

c- Treat matters by their own equivalents.

d- Prepare strong weapons to deal with strong enemies

e- Other suggestion.....

3- يترك له الحبل على الغارب

a- To let him behave his own way.

b- To treat him just as he wishes.

c- To give one his head.

d- To make it easy for him move his own way.

e- Other suggestion .....

4- فرق تسد

a- Split and rule!

b- Divide and rule!

c- Many borders make it easy to rule.

d- Distribute and rule.

e- Other suggestion .....

Thirdly: Emotive Expressions

Q.3. Choose the best translation of the underlined following expressions. (Circle the best choice)

1- عدت إلى وطني وبي شوق عظيم

a- I backed to my country with great desire.

b- I backed home with endless yearning.

c- Other suggestion.....

2- إنني لأعشق هذه الأرض

a- I loved his land.

b- I love adoringly this land.

c- Other suggestion.....

3- عندما يعاتبني صديقي اعرف مدى معزتي عنده

a- When my friend blames me I know how much he loves me.

b- My friend sentimental blame is a sign of his sincere affection towards me.

c- Other suggestion.....

4- هي تقطن حناياي ودمي

a- She lived in my deep heart and blood.

b- She dwells in the depth of my heart and within my blood.

c- Other suggestion.....

5- لقد أفجعتها الخبر

a- The news has broken her heart.

b- The news has shocked her in the depth.

c- Other suggestion.....

Thanks for your cooperation

The researcher

## مشكلات الترجمة التي يواجهها طلاب اللغة الانجليزية من كلية الآداب – الجامعة الاردنية

نجلاء عبدالله عتيق

### المخلص

استهدفت هذه الدراسة بحث بعض المشكلات التي قد يواجهها طلاب الترجمة عند ترجمة النصوص العربية إلى الإنجليزية. وقد شملت هذه المشكلات: ترجمة المصطلحات الثقافية و ترجمة التعبيرات الثابتة كالمتلازمات اللفظية و التعابير الاصطلاحية و ترجمة التعابير الإيحائية. كما استهدفت الدراسة أيضاً إيجاد بعض الحلول المناسبة لمعالجة هذه المشكلات. تكون مجتمع الدراسة من جميع طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية بالمستوى الرابع بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية والاداب بالجامعة الأردنية . وقد اختيرت عينة الدراسة من هذا المجتمع باستخدام العينة العشوائية المنتظمة، حيث وزعت أداة البحث (اختبار الترجمة) على الطلاب بحسب مقاعدهم باختيار الأرقام الفردية 1، 3، 5، 7 إلخ. حتى اكتملت عينة الدراسة (20 طالباً). وتكونت الاستبانة من ثلاثة محاور طبقاً للمشكلات التي ناقشتها الدراسة. وتكون كل محور من أربعة عناصر و وضعت لكل عنصر أربع ترجمات بالإضافة إلى إعطائهم الفرصة لاقتراح ترجمة أخرى عند عدم ملاءمة الترجمات المقترحة من وجهة نظرهم للعنصر المراد ترجمته. وقد توصلت الدراسة إلى أن طلاب الترجمة يواجهون مشكلات في الترجمة من العربية إلى الإنجليزية وبخاصة المشكلات التي افترضتها الدراسة. وقد اقترحت الدراسة بعض الحلول التي يمكن للطلاب اللجوء إليها عند مواجهتهم إحدى هذه المشاكل.