

Baker's Most Frequently Used Strategies for Translating Idioms in Maḥfūz's Works: *Al-Thulāthīyah*, *Al-Liṣṣ wa-al-kilāb*, and *Mīrāmār*

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Abstract

The present paper investigates the strategies used for the translation of idiomatic expressions from Arabic into English in Maḥfūz's works: *Al-Thulāthīyah*, *Al-Liṣṣ wa-al-kilāb*, and *Mīrāmār*. The paper also examines how effectively the idioms are translated from Arabic into English, and suggests the most suitable strategies for conveying the idioms that the researcher views as inappropriately translated from Arabic into English. This research is based on Baker's strategies for translating idioms. These include: using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, translation by paraphrase, and translation by omission. The researcher tries to identify the most frequently used strategies and the significant differences among the uses of these strategies. Conducting a descriptive statistical analysis, it has been concluded that "using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form" and "paraphrase" were the most used strategies. Sometimes, the translators confronted some challenges in translating idioms either due to their misunderstanding of the idiom meaning or inability to find a proper equivalent in the target language. Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that, in addition to having enough knowledge in terms of the theoretical translation issues and the translation strategies suggested by different linguists, a translator should have a good command of the TL idiomatic expressions, and in the case of translating novels, ask for the assistance of a native TL reviewer to handle the challenging task of transferring the idioms into the TL.

Key words: idioms, idioms in Maḥfūz's novels, Baker's strategies for translating idioms

1. Introduction

Knowing a language always involves knowing the morphemes, simple words, compound words, and their meanings. Furthermore, it means comprehending fixed phrases, consisting of more than one word, with meanings that cannot be inferred from the meanings of the individual words. Even if we know the meaning of all the words in a phrase and understand the grammar completely, the whole meaning of the phrase may still be confusing. In all languages, there are many idioms, which present this kind of challenge. A phrase or a sentence of this type is said to be idiomatic when it looks like ordinary phrases in structure but tend to be frozen in form and do not readily enter into other combinations, or allow the word order to change. Idioms are pervasive features of a language. Arabic and English have many thousands of such idiomatic expressions, which are suitable for not only expressing a speaker's intentions in different situations, but also conveying the culture and the style of the author.

Idiomatic expressions play a key role in the construction of interpersonal meanings, in the formation of coherent text, and in the creation of stylistic effects. Translators, especially those who translate from a language that is foreign to them, may not always have a full understanding of the meaning of an idiom "since the true meaning of an idiom generally cannot be determined by a knowledge of its constituent parts" (Collis, 1994, p. 5).

2. Difficulties in Translation of Idioms

After recognizing and translating an idiom correctly, the next step is to decide how to translate it into the TL. The challenges related to translating an idiom are totally different from those related to interpreting it. At this point, the question is not whether a given idiom is transparent, opaque, or misleading. Opaque expressions may be easier to translate than a transparent ones.

Baker (1992) states that the key problems posed by idiomatic and fixed expressions for translators go to two main areas: The ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly; and the difficulties related to rendering the various aspects of meaning that an idiom or a fixed expression conveys into the TL (p. 65).

Furthermore, Baker mentions that the first difficulty that a translator comes across in being able to recognize that s/he is dealing with an idiomatic expression (1992, p.6). She explains that the more difficult an expression is to understand and the less sense it makes in a given context, the more likely a translator will recognize it as an idiom (ibid, p.65).

The main challenges related to translating idioms are summarized by Baker (1992, pp.68-71) as follows:

- (a) The idiom or fixed expression may have no equivalent in the TL.
- (b) The idiom or fixed expression may have a similar counterpart in the TL, however its context of use may be different; the two expressions may have different connotations or they may not be pragmatically transferable.
- (c) The idiom may be used in the ST in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time. Unless the TL idiom is consistent with the SL idiom both in form and in meaning, the play on idiom cannot be successfully reproduced in the TT.
- (d) The very convention of using idioms in written discourse, the contexts wherein they can be used and their frequency of use may be different in the source and target languages.

3. Objectives of the study

Idiomatic expressions are considered culture-specific elements. It is very important to know how professional translators render them. Many believe that idioms cannot be translated literally and can be substituted by a similar idiom in the target culture. Armellino (2003) argues that one of the most challenging tasks for all translators is rendering culture-bound elements. According to him, the reasons for such a challenge lies in the specific cultural context where the text originates or with the cultural context it aims to recreate.

Ghaffari (2001) pointed out that “without using idioms, the language becomes harsh and unattractive, hence it can be said the words are like a skeleton of the language and the idioms are like its soul. Therefore, incorrect translation of idioms leads to damaging the soul of the language” (p. 2).

Bearing in mind that idiom is a problematic item for translation, the objectives of the current paper are twofold:

1. Identifying Baker's most frequently used strategies (1992) in translating idioms in Maḥfūz's works: Al-Thulāthiyah, Al-Liṣṣ wa-al-kilāb, and Mīrāmār.
2. Investigating the less effectively rendered idioms into English and suggesting the idioms that could be used instead.

4. Theoretical Background

4.1 Functions of Idioms in Literary Texts

According to Marshall (1999, p. 201) "idiomatic, especially, time-bound and fashionable expressions are too numerous to be fully summarized." Many contexts need to be considered, in which the idiom is then subjected to shifts in meaning. Greciano (1991, p. 93) points out that the phraseological clarity is activated according to the text type because criteria relevant to the text type determine the choice of the idiom.

In the current paper, we approach idioms within the framework of literary texts; therefore, we believe it is important to mention their functions in this context. There are different ways in which the authors of literary texts deal with idioms. Stylistically, idioms are divided into colloquial and belletristic (Burger, 1997, p.234). By colloquial, we mean the linguistic style used for casual communication where idioms are normally employed in conversation along with other informal contexts. In contrast, belletristic refers to light and elegant literature, especially as having a purely aesthetic function. Many belletristic idioms have already penetrated into colloquial language. The summary of suggestions for employing idioms in literary texts provided by several scholars shall be discussed in the subsequent lines.

Burger (1997, p. 234) establishes four categories of using idioms in literary texts: the abstinent, the gentle-mediating, the extravagantly-hybrid and the playful. Vajíčková and Krame (1997) state that idioms are frequently used in various literary texts to perform mainly the following functions: characterizing, describing and judging people, actions and proceedings; describing relationships between people; characterizing texts in a special way (colloquially, coarse, regional, out-dated, youth language, etc.); recreating spoken language or "everyday communication"; conveying connotation, undertone and evaluation;

increasing the expressiveness and strengthening the utterances; being used as euphemisms to weaken the utterances; being vivid and memorable; representing an aid for the presentation of facts or arguments; clarifying behaviours, everyday situations, and human nature; appeasing, dramatizing and generalizing; and finally being a source of puns.

Fleischer (1997, pp.226-230) highlights several significant opportunities for using idiomatic constructions in a literary text. He asserts that like other linguistic means, idioms are used in the figurative language as a language portrait for personal characterization. Using idioms in dialogs is a central stylistic device by which the authors characterize their protagonists by means of language. Furthermore, idioms support imitation of spoken everyday communication. In addition, the variations of idioms are particularly suitable to remodel the outdated "scheme of naming" with the goal of achieving an artistic effect. As a final point, by playing with literal and idiomatic meaning, a special effect comes into being which can determine the artistic design of entire text passages.

Meister (1999, pp.111-119) mentions semantic and syntactic properties due to which idioms can be applied in literary texts in multi-faceted ways. This is the reason why she considers (1999, p.118) idioms an Achilles' heel of translation theory. Luger (n.d., p.95) points out that the translatability of idioms represents a special problem. Since it can be detected in the translations of literary texts, there is a wide range of partial similarities and differences between extensive functional equivalence and complete lack of correspondence. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned potential in their use, it is clear that translation solutions can serve only as a range of possible meanings.

Depending on the significance of the individual levels of communication, differently deep interpretations emerge". Therefore definitive and unambiguous translation of idiomatic expressions is not always possible. Idioms (both figurative and nonfigurative) have been approached in various ways in translation studies. These specific perspectives are explored in more detail in the following lines.

4.2 Characteristics of Idioms

Fernando (1996, p. 3) states three main characteristics of idioms, namely; institutionalization/conventionality, compositeness, and semantic opacity. By

institutionalization, Fernando refers to the fact that idiomatic expressions are conventionalized, well-established, and fixed in order to meet the criteria of being an idiom. *Compositeness*, in turn, refers to the fact that idioms are expressions of a multiword nature with a function similar to that of single-word idiomatic expressions.

Weinreich (1969) and Strässler (1982), agree with Fernando's point of view, stating that idioms are composed of at least two words. This characteristic is also underlined by Makkai (1972, p. 8), who describes an idiom as an expression of two or more words which includes "more than one minimal free form or word".

Fernando's third characteristic, *semantic opacity* can perhaps be regarded as the most commonly mentioned characteristic of idioms. This feature means that idiomatic expressions are regularly non-literal. This explains the reason why the meanings of the individual constituents of an idiomatic expression cannot give the meaning of the idiom as a whole. The same view is highlighted by Makkai (1972, p. 118), stating that the meaning of an idiomatic expression cannot be readily constructed from its components because they are used in a figurative and non-literal sense.

Baker (2011, p. 67) also states some specific characteristics of an idiom which should be taken into account by translators. According to Baker, idiomatic expressions have the following characteristics:

- (a) cannot accept change in the order of the words they are made of. (e.g. the idiom *the long and the short of it* cannot be **the short and the long of it*;
- (b) cannot accept a deletion of a word. For instance, the idiomatic expression *spill the beans* cannot be **spill beans*;
- (c) cannot accept addition of a word. For instance, *the long and the short of it* cannot be **the very long and short of it*; and the idiomatic expression *face the music* cannot be **face the classical music*;
- (d) cannot accept replacement of one word with another. For example, **the tall and the short of it*; **bury a hatchet*; and
- (e) cannot accept grammatical structure change. E.g., the idiom *face the music* cannot be **the music was faced*.

4.3 Types of Idioms in Arabic

Idiomaticity forms a linguistic phenomenon in the Arabic language, and this may be utilized more in the spoken language than the written form.

In Abu Saad's (1987) view, the Arab people use idioms to distinguish their language by applying stylistic approach, beautifying the language, and avoiding using words that may cause annoyance or embarrassment. Meanwhile, Kharma & Hajjaj (1989, p. 27) explain that Arabic is similar to English in this respect, and is rich in idioms. However, in Arabic the use of idioms varies with dialects, which may be different from the standard Arabic language. Moreover, Kharma & Hajjaj (1989) classify Arabic idioms into three types:

(a) The first type includes Arabic idiomatic expressions which are easy to comprehend as the meaning of the whole phrase is not far from the total sum of its components. Examples for such type of idiomatic expressions, قلب الهجوم which means centre forward as used in football games, the idiom من صميم القلب meaning from the bottom of the heart, the idiom مائل للعيان which means visible, هاتف القلب meaning inner voice, the idiom ينسج على منواله which means to imitate someone, and the idiomatic expression ينتقل الى جوار ربه meaning to die, pass away (Kharma & Hajjaj 1989, p. 74).

(b) The second category includes idioms which, like most idiomatic expressions, are hard to comprehend especially for the non-Arabic native speakers. Examples for such categories of idioms introduced by Kharma & Hajjaj (1989, p. 74) include; يتنفس الصعداء meaning with great difficulty, بشقّ الأنفس which means to breathe a sigh of relief, the idiom قلبًا وقلبا meaning with heart and soul, the idiomatic expression يقلب له ظهر المجن means give someone the cold shoulder, عن ظهر قلب which means to learn by heart, and the idiom يلقى الحبل على الغارب meaning to give free reign.

(c) The third includes Arabic idioms which are very difficult to comprehend because they are very culture-bound. Kharma & Hajjaj (1989, p. 75) provide the following examples for such type of Arabic idioms على نفسها جنت براقش which means it was her own fault (that she hurt herself), وافق شن طبقة meaning the married couple are very suited to each other, the idiomatic expression تجري الرياح بما لا تشتهي السفن meaning you cannot always have what you want, سكنت ريحه meaning it expired or become absolute, and دارت رحى الحرب which means the war broke out.

The above idioms have been described by Kharma & Hajjaj (1989) as quite difficult to comprehend, because they are culture-bound idiomatic expressions and that, according to them, these idioms are classified as such due to the fact that each has a social, political or theoretical narrative behind it. Therefore, their proposed meaning cannot be understood unless one is aware of the narrative and moral behind them.

4.4 Types of Idioms in English

Great efforts have been made by theorists to classify idiomatic expressions in English. English linguists have categorized idioms into different types according to their: (1) grammatical function, such as idioms that serve as a particular part of speech or that which function as verb-adverb; (2) the portrayal of an emotion or a concept, such as the idiomatic expression *tell someone a tall tale* would be classified as a lie; (3) the *image* reflected by idioms like the case with an idiom using the imagery of a body part *she lost her head* (Lattey, 1986, p.24). The diversity of idiom classification introduced in this section says a great deal about the vastness of the concept and the rather far-reaching scope of idiomaticity.

Makkai (1972, p.117) classifies idiomatic expressions into two categories, encoding and decoding. Makkai concentrates on those of decoding and groups them into two types, lexemic and sememic types of idioms. Makkai presents six sub-classes for lexemic idioms. Firstly, *phrasal verb idioms* which are combinations of a verb and an adverb, such as the expressions *put up* and *give in* (1972, p.135). Secondly, he recognizes *turnure idioms*, which differ from phrasal verbs, consisting of a minimum of three lexicons and have a compulsory *it* in a fixed position between the verb and the adverb. For instance, *have it out (with)* and *have it in for* (1972, p.148). The third category, according to Makkai, involves *irreversible binomials*, which are formulae “consisting of parts A and B joined by a finite set of links. The order of these expressions is fixed; hence, it cannot usually be reversed. For instance, *dollars and cents*, *here and there* and *head over heels* (1972, p.155).

Makkai's fourth category of lexemic idioms has been described as *phrasal compound idioms*, which refer to expressions such as *houseboy* or *lukewarm*

(1972, p.164). *Incorporating verb idioms*, on the other hand, include expressions such as *eavesdrop*, *baby-sit*, and *sight-see* (1972, p.168). Finally, *pseudo-idioms* include all lexemic idioms, one of which constitutes a cranberry morph¹ (1972, p. 169). In addition, Makkai's sememic types of idioms also contain several sub-classes. (1) *First base idioms* originate in cultural institutions such as American baseball, e.g. the phrase *never to get to the first base* (1972, p. 172). (2) *Idioms of institutionalized politeness*, on the other hand, refer to expressions such as *May I...?* or *would you mind..?* (1972, p. 172). (3) He distinguishes *idioms of institutionalized detachment or indirectness*, including expressions such as *it seems that...* (1972, p. 173). (4) While *idioms of proposals encoded as questions* are expressions used to indicate an offer or a proposal in the form of a question, e.g. *How about a drink*, or *Would you care to see our new baby?* (1972, p. 174). (5) *Idioms of institutionalized greeting*, which include expressions such as *how do you do?* and *so long!* (1972, p.175). (6) *Proverbial idioms with a moral* are, rather self-explanatory; proverbs with a moral, for instance the expression *Don't count your chickens before they're hatched* (1972, p.176). (7) *Familiar quotations* include common sayings such as *there's beggary in the love that can be reckoned* (1972, p.177). (8) *Institutionalized understatements*, on the other hand, aim to decrease the impoliteness of a direct statement such as *I wasn't too crazy about it* or *he wasn't exactly my cup of tea* (1972, p. 178). The final sub-class of sememic idioms includes *institutionalized hyperbole idioms*, which are overstatements making use of highly exaggerated word choices to describe a situation (1972, p.178). For instance, the expressions *He won't even lift a finger* to describe laziness or *cold as a witch's tit* to describe coldness, are examples of institutionalized hyperbole idioms.

Although Makkai's classification referred to above might seem relatively broad, there are scholars who have come up with even more extensive classification systems. For instance, Healey (1968, p. 29), specifies as many as twenty one different idiomatic categories. Moreover, Hockett (1958, p. 310) classifies six kinds of idioms: proper names, substitutes, abbreviations, figures of speech, slang, and English phrasal compounds.

¹ In morphology, a *cranberry morpheme* is a morpheme (that is, a word element, like the *cran-* of *cranberry*) that occurs in only one word. Also called a *unique morph(eme)*, *blocked morpheme*, and *leftover morpheme*.

4.5 Fernando's Types of Idioms

Fernando points out that three sub-groups of idiomatic expressions can be formed, although she also states that it was difficult to make a clear distinction of the three groups, and both the restricted and the unrestricted collocation. An overlap has been noticed between semi-idioms and restricted collocations. The three sub-groups are as follows:

(a) *Pure idioms*: according to Fernando (1996), pure idioms can be described as a kind of conventionalized non-literal multiword expressions. The meaning of such idioms cannot be decoded by combining the meanings of their individual parts. For instance, the idiomatic expression *spill the beans* is explained by Fernando as a pure idiom, because it means to tell somebody something that should be kept secret or private; a meaning not related to the meaning of beans.

(b) *Semi idioms*: according to Fernando, these idiomatic expressions, have at least one component with a literal meaning and another with a non-literal meaning. For instance, the idiomatic expression *foot the bill* meaning pay the bill has one non-literal element and another literal one. In this idiom the non-literal element is *foot* as here it means pay, while *bill* is the literal element in the expression (1996, p. 67).

(c) *Literal idioms*: these kinds of idioms are semantically less complex than the other two, and therefore easier to understand, even if one is not familiar with these expressions. However, these idiomatic expressions do qualify as idioms because they are either completely invariant or allow only restricted variation. For example, idioms such as *on foot* and *on the contrary* are, from the semantic point of view, less complex than the pure and semi idioms, and hence easy to comprehend by an individual even if he or she is not familiar with the expression as a whole (Fernando 1996). It should be noted that such types of idioms do qualify as idiomatic expression, since they are entirely invariant or allow just restricted variation.

4.6 Strategies for Translating Idioms

The history of translation has witnessed a number of strategies as introduced by scholars. Bassnett & Lefevere (1998, p. 4) point out that various

text types require various translation strategies. Some texts are primarily designed to convey information, and it stands to reason that translations of such texts should convey that information as accurate as possible. In addition, there are texts that are primarily designed to entertain. Such texts have to be translated in a relevantly different manner. This is so because texts that are primarily designed to convey information may also entertain the readers, if only to ensure that the information will be conveyed in the most painless manner possible (1998, p. 4). The third type of texts is that which tries to persuade, and the fourth type consists of those texts that are recognized as belonging to the “cultural capital” of a given culture (1998, p. 5).

Newmark (1988, pp. 45-47) explains different translation methods and procedures, including:

(a) Word-for-word translation, and literal translation:

In both types of translation, the translators need to follow the same order of the words or the word structures as in the original and the use of the word is more generic and non-contextual.

(b) Faithful translation:

This type of translation requires the translators to follow precisely the meaning of the word in its context.

(c) Adaptation:

When the aesthetics of the translation is emphasized, it is referred to as adaptation.

(d) Semantic translation:

Semantic translation takes place when the structures of grammar of the target language are maintained.

(e) Free translation:

comedy plays or poetry are usually translated using free translation as it focuses on reproducing the intended message of the original text with all the other aspects like form, style or content being of less importance.

(f) Communicative translation:

This strategy involves maintaining the contextual as well as the language aspects of the original text in its translation. The text being translated should give the same thing as the original and this should be understandable by the readers as well (Newmark, 1988, pp. 45-47).

Séguinot (1989) identifies three different types of global strategies applied by translators. These strategies include:

- (a) Uninterrupted translation for a period of time;
- (b) Instant correction of apparent errors; and
- (c) Postponing correction of errors related to quality or style to the revision.

Moreover, Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) classify two main strategies to be applied in translation. The first strategy is described as direct and it includes literal translation, calque and borrowing. The second one is the oblique translation which encompasses modulation, equivalence, transposition and adaptation.

Gottlieb (1997) presents various viewpoints by Eckhard Roos (1981) on the subject of translating idioms. Eckhard's viewpoints include:

- (a) Matching of SL and TL idioms, which are done in two ways:
 - 1- Similarity at word level – Congruence
 - 2- Differing at word level- Equivalence
- (b) Matching of SL idioms by different TL lexemes which includes:
 - 1- Matching of individual words;
 - 2- Formula in the matching of non-metaphorical multi-words; and
 - 3- Free form of the encyclopaedic renderings.

Moreover, Newmark (1988) states that for a translation to be successful it should have the following features:

- 1- It should make sense.
- 2- It should seem natural when read, written in common language, and also the use of ordinary grammar and vocabulary constituting various idioms, registers and other stylistic features decided by the setting related to the text, the writer, the topic as well as the readers of the text (Newmark, 1988).

Sornsuwannarsi (2010) similarly identifies four translation strategies which may be applied in translating idioms. Her strategies include:

- 1- Free translation;
- 2- Equivalent translation;
- 3- Omission; and
- 4- Literal translation

Leppihalme (1997, p. 24) states that translation strategies are applied when a translation difficulty occurs and the translator wishes to solve the problem to produce a good translation. He explains that a particular translation strategy may be chosen either consciously, with the translator carrying out a series of

operations judging various linguistic, contextual and cultural factors, or intuitively. The latter alternative again may either represent a blueprint developed by an experienced translator for use in a certain type of situation, or may result from an inexperienced translator's lack of alternatives. Reasons for adopting a particular strategy also vary. For instance, a translator may select omission responsibly after rejecting all substituting strategies, or irresponsibly, to keep him/her away from the difficulty of looking up something he or she does not know. Applying strategies does not, therefore, necessarily result in optimal solutions. A translator choosing from a range of strategies sometimes chooses well, and at other times unwisely.

Wilss (1982, p. 145) describes translation strategy as a “rather diffused concept”. He deals with it quite briefly, using the term to refer to the common transfer perspective or transfer concept for a special text.

4.7 Baker's Strategies of Translating Idioms

Baker (1992, p. 72-78) pointed out the following strategies for translating idioms:

(1) Using an idiom of similar meaning and form

This strategy involves using an idiom in the TL which conveys roughly the same meaning as that of the source-language idiom and, in addition, consists of equivalent lexical items. Such kind of match can only occasionally be achieved.

(2) Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form

It could be possible to find an idiom or fixed expression in the target language which has a meaning similar to that of the source idiom or expression, but which consists of different lexical items.

(3) Translation by paraphrase

This is so far the most common strategy of translating idioms when a match cannot be found in the TL or when it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic language in the TT due to differences in stylistic preferences of the source and target languages.

(4) Translation by omission

Similarly as the case with single words, an idiom may sometimes be omitted altogether in the TT. It could be because it has no close match in the TL, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons.

5. Review of Literature

Several studies have been conducted on idioms and strategies of translating them. Among these studies, a study by Amina (2010) which investigated the strategies of translating Arabic idioms into English. The researcher studied translation procedures used by students of translation to render idiomatic expressions. In her study, the researcher applied Baker's (1992) strategies for translating idioms. The researcher found that the students tend to use the strategy of paraphrase more than other strategies. Amina further determined that the frequency of applying this type of translation strategy was around 59%.

Similarly, a study by Mezmaz (2010) investigated the difficulties that MA Applied Linguistics students face in transferring Arabic idiomatic expressions into English and vice versa. The researcher highlighted the procedures applied by the said students to get expressions equivalent to the TT.

After analyzing the data, obtained from testing, including ten Arabic idiomatic expressions and twelve English ones (to be translated into English and Arabic), the researcher found that the students faced considerable problems in finding an idiomatic expression with a meaning close or appropriate to that of the TT. In his findings, Mezmaz explained that students experienced considerable difficulty in understanding the appropriate meaning of the idiomatic expressions they were given and that they had low familiarity with such expressions in both languages. Moreover the researcher found that the students had limited ability in terms of interpreting unfamiliar idiomatic expressions due to the fact that the meaning of such kind of expressions cannot be understood from the meaning of their individual constituents.

The researcher pointed out that the social context plays a significant role in making the figurative interpretation of idioms easier in both Arabic and English, thus providing accurate answers. Mezmaz pointed out that the students failed to apply the correct strategy that could have aided them in getting the appropriate answers. The findings also demonstrated that the students managed to translate idioms of a transparent, and semi-transparent nature, while they were confused in translating idiomatic expressions of opaque as well as semi-opaque nature. Mezmaz concluded that strategies of cultural substitutions and paraphrase were sometimes used by the students, but in an inappropriate way.

Furthermore, Abu-Ssaydeh (2004) reported strategies for translating idioms from English into Arabic. In his study, the researcher analyzed the Arabic translation of 53 English idioms. He found that paraphrase was widely used among Arabic translators in rendering English idioms into their native tongue, while the strategy of literal translation came second, followed by omission. The researcher found that the strategy of compensation was of less importance. He stated that the failure of translators to conceptualize the meaning of a source language idiom lead them to apply the wrong strategy of literal translation.

An MA thesis by Mustonen (2010) investigated the types of strategies a translator uses to translate English idioms into Finnish. The research sheds light on what happens to the idioms in the Finnish translation. It was found that the translator of the English novel used three main strategies: translating an idiom with an idiom, translating an idiom with a non-idiom, and a literal translation of an idiom. The researcher found that the preferred strategy used by the translator was translating the source text idiom with a non-target text idiomatic term. The study revealed that 51% pure idioms and semi-idioms in English were translated into none Finnish idioms. Moreover, the study found that 47% pure idioms and semi-idioms in English could be transferred with corresponding Finnish idioms. However, the study showed that idioms translated by applying the literal strategy were not understandable by the target language reader, the case which means that this strategy failed.

Furthermore, a study by Strakšienė (2009) discussed the strategies of translating idioms and highlighted the difficulties that translators face when translating idioms from English into Lithuanian. To examine strategies of translating idioms, the researcher used two books by Agatha Christie, analyzing each novel separately to compare the translation of idioms into Lithuanian. The study showed that the Lithuanian language lacks equivalent idioms from those found in the two English books. It was concluded that the strategy of paraphrase was the most preferred one in translating idioms from English into Lithuanian to address the problem of non-equivalence.

6. About The Author and the Novels

6.1 The Author

Najīb Maḥfūz is an Egyptian novelist who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1988. He wrote over 50 novels, around 350 short stories, dozens of movie scripts, and five plays over a 70-year career. The majority of his novels and plays were made into Egyptian and foreign movies.

6.2 The Novels

Al-Thulāthīyah depicts the image of three generations (from 1917 until 1944) of a family governed by a tyrannical patriarch, namely, Al-Sayyid Ahmad Abdul-Jawwad, who rules his wife with a strict hand while leading a secret life of self-indulgence. *Bayn Al-qaṣrayn* presents us with his gentle and oppressed wife, Amina, his two daughters, Aisha and Khadija, and his three sons- Fahmy, the tragic and idealistic, Yasin, the dissolute hedonist, and Kamal, the soul-searching intellectual. In *Qaṣr al-shawq*, Al-Sayyid Ahmad's rebellious children struggle to overcome his domination while the world around them opens to the currents of modernity and political and domestic turmoil caused by the 1920s. *Al-Sukkarīyah* brings Maḥfūz's vivid image of an evolving Egypt to a dramatic climax as one of Al-Sayyid Ahmad's grandsons becomes a Communist, the second becomes a Muslim fundamentalist, while the third becomes a lover of a powerful politician.

Al-Liṣṣ wa-al-kilāb is one of Maḥfūz's most celebrated works. The novel tackles the theme of existentialism using stream-of-consciousness and surrealist techniques. It charts the life of Said Mahran, a thief recently released from jail with an intent on taking his revenge from the people who put him there. The novel was published in 1961, and Said's despair reflects disappointment in the revolution and the new order in Egypt as Said is not only a thief but a kind of revolutionary anarchist.

Mīrāmār tackles the life of the residents in the pension, its Greek mistress Mariana, and her servant. Najīb Maḥfūz brings four different narrators to tell the story, each from his own perspective of how a beautiful peasant girl, working as a maid in the Miramar Pension unintentionally turns the establishment upside down. Although victimized, she alone is a noble character.

The selected works by Mahfouz span significant years of his career as a novelist, and are particularly rich in symbols, similes, metaphors, as well as in idiomatic expressions. They are among the most investigated, studied and

analyzed novels in his oeuvre. The novels are replete with figures of speech, and are abundant in idiomatic expressions, the fact which makes them fit for the analysis in this paper.

7. Methodology

The researcher chose Maḥfūz's works: Al-Thulāthīyah, Al-Liṣṣ wa-al-kilāb, and Mīrāmār since they are rich in idiomatic expressions. Such expressions might seem very natural to Egyptians in particular and to Arabic speakers in general since meanings of these expressions are known to them and easy to comprehend. Nevertheless, the problem arises when the translators try to translate such expressions into English. After reading the SL and TL versions, 50 idiomatic expressions in Arabic and their translations in English were extracted. Then the researcher chose 10 examples out of the 50 examples, which involve translational difficulties. The Arabic examples will be studied along with their English translation. Gains and loss made in the translation will be pointed out.

8. Data analysis and discussion

In the process of data analysis, three Arabic novels and their English translations were selected as the corpus of study. The analysis has been carried out on 50 idiomatic expressions extracted randomly from these three novels. The researcher will first provide two separate tables. The first will show the 50 idioms and the used strategies for each idiom, and the second will represent the frequency of the used strategies with percentage. Afterwards, the researcher will illustrate some idioms that seem to be problematic in some cases.

Table 1
Idioms and Applied Strategies

Sr.	Arabic idiom	English translation	Applied strategy
1.	من المهد إلى اللحد (الكلاب، ص ٨٣)	From cradle to the grave (The Thief and the Dogs, p.59)	Using an idiom of similar meaning and
2.	الذراع اليمنى (بين القصرين، ص ١٥)	The right arm (Palace Walk, p.19)	

3.	عذر أقبح من ذنب (بين القصرين، ص٣٦)	An excuse is worse than a sin (Palace walk, p.44)		
4.	المصادفة العمياء (بين القصرين، ص٨٣)	The blind coincidence (Palace Walk, p.83)		
5.	عاجلاً أو آجلاً (قصر الشوق، ص٣٤١)	Sooner or later (Palace of Desire, p.660)		
6.	ينقلب رأساً على عقب (السكرية، ص٨٣٥)	Turned head over heels (Sugar Street, p.1034)		
7.	رجل الساعة (اللس والكلاب، ص٧٩)	The man of the hour (The Thief and the Dogs, p.55)		
8.	المس الخشب (ميرامار، ص٩)	Touch wood (Miramar, p.5)		
9.	على الرف (ميرامار، ص٢٠٠)	On the shelf (Miramar, p.136)		
10.	حفرت لي حفرة (السكرية، ص٨٢٢)	You have gotten me into hot water (Sugar Street, p1007)		Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form
11.	قُرّة عينها (بين القصرين، ص٦)	Apples of her eye (Palace Walk, p.9)		
12.	لحمًا طريًا (بين القصرين، ص٥)	Tender sprouts (Palace walk, p.7)		
13.	الند للند (بين القصرين، ص٣٥)	On an equal footing. (Palace Walk, p.43)		
14.	طويلة اللسان (بين القصرين، ص١١٣)	Sharp tongue (Palace Walk, p.136)		
15.	لت وعجن (بين القصرين، ص٣٤١)	Beat around the bush (Palace Walk, p.246)		
16.	رهن إشارته (بين القصرين، ص٢٥١)	To be at his beck and call (Palace Walk, p.302)		
17.	على العين والرأس (بين القصرين، ص٢٥١)	With all my heart (Palace Walk, p.303)		
18.	أخذت الشر وراحت (بين القصرين، ص٣٨٢)	She left. God riddance (Palace Walk, p.462)		
19.	أصابت مقتلاً (بين القصرين، ص٤٠٦)	She had drawn blood (Palace Walk, p.489)		
20.	في غمضة عين (بين القصرين، ص٤١٤)	In an instant (Palace Walk, p.499)		
21.	مدججين بالسلاح (بين القصرين، ص٤١٦)	Armed to the teeth, (Palace Walk, p.501)		

22.	لعب في عبي الفأر (قصر الشوق، ص١٠٨)	Smell a rat (Palace of Desire, p.646)		
23.	تأخذني في دوكة (قصر الشوق، ص١٠٨)	Take me in (Palace of Desire, p.646)		
24.	سأقيم في كنفه (قصر الشوق، ص١١٠)	Live under his wings (Palace of Desire, p.648)		
25.	حفرت لي حفرة (السكرية، ص٨٢٢)	You have gotten me into hot water (Sugar Street, p1007)		
26.	كشف عن وجهه (السكرية، ص٨٧٦)	Has shown his true colors (Sugar Street, 1119)		
27.	تشد حيلك (السكرية، ص٨٩١)	Pull yourself together (Sugar Street, 1148)		
28.	لا تخلقوا من الحبة قبة (السكرية، ص٩٢٤)	Don't turn an anthill into mountain (Sugar Street, 1217)		
29.	عن ظهر قلب (اللس والكلاب، ص٢٩)	By heart (The Thief and the Dogs, p.20)		
30.	تقاء لنا خيرًا (اللس والكلاب، ص٤٤)	Keeping our fingers crossed (The Thief and the Dogs, p.30)		
31.	في لمح البصر (ميرامار، ص٣٦)	In the blink of an eye (Miramar, p.21)		
32.	يلعب من وراء ظهري (ميرامار، ص٤٩)	Going on behind my back (Miramar, p.30)		
33.	من بعض ما عندكم (بين القصرين، ص٥٠)	It's just like yours (Palace Walk, p.60)		Translation by paraphrase
34.	أكثر من الهم على القلب (بين القصرين، ص٧٧)	Much harder on the heart (Palace Walk, p.83)		
35.	أخذتك لحم وتركتك عظم (بين القصرين، ص٨٤)	She took you when your flesh was firm and left you nothing but bones (Palace Walk, p.103)		
36.	القبل والقال (بين القصرين، ص٨٣)	What people say (Palace Walk, p.103)		
37.	بالرفاء والبنين (بين القصرين، ص٩٣)	A happy marriage and many sons, p.113)		

38.	تعبك راحة (بين القصرين، ص ١٦١)	Wearing ourselves out for you is relaxing (Palace Walk, p.193)		
39.	الثالثة هي الثابتة (بين القصرين، ص ٢٤٥)	It's the third that lasts (Place Walk, p.295)		
40.	ما باليد حيلة (بين القصرين، ص ٤٠٦)	There's nothing that can be done about it (Palace Walk, p.490)		
41.	عيني عليك باردة (قصر الشوق، ص ٤٠)	I don't envy you (Palace of Desire, p.574)		
42.	في وادٍ وهو في وادٍ (قصر الشوق، ص ٧٨)	A mountain separating him from Fouad (Palace of Desire, p.615)		
43.	فهمت الفولة (قصر الشوق، ص ١٠٨)	I understand the trick (Palace of Desire, p.646)		
44.	ما كل مرة تسلم الجرة (قصر الشوق، ص ٣٩٤)	The ending won't always be so happy (Palace of Desire, p.940)		
45.	في فوهة المدفع (السكرية، ص ٨٣٠)	A potential target (Sugar Street, p.1025)		
46.	العين لا تغلو عن الحاجب (السكرية، ص ٨٩٤)	Children are only as good as their parents (Sugar Street, p.1155)		
47.	فجست النبض (السكرية، ص ٩٢٤)	Exploring my prospects (Sugar Street, p.1219)		
48.	- البوليس لا يعجبه شئ - لا يعجبه العجب، <u>ولا الصيام في رجب</u> (اللس والكلاب، ص ٨٦)	- nothing impress the police - Absolutely nothing (The Thief and the Dogs, p.61)		Translation by omission
49.	قلبك أبيض، أما أنا فلا أحب أصحاب المصانع (اللس والكلاب، ص ٧٧)	Don't trouble me about it; I don't like the owners of factories (P. 146).		
50.	عليّ وعلى أعدائي (ميرامار، ص ٧)	NA		

Based on Table 1, it has been found that there are 9 idioms fall under the strategy of using an idiom of similar meaning and form, 23 idioms under the strategy of using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, 15 idioms under the strategy of paraphrase, and 3 idioms under the strategy of omission.

Table 2
Percentage of each strategy

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Using an idiom of similar meaning and form	9	18%
Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form	23	46%
Translation by paraphrase	15	30%
Translation by omission	3	6%
Total	50	100%

Figure 1: Total Percentage

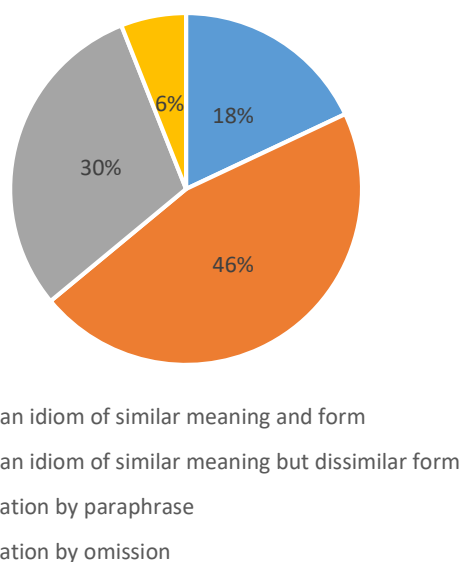


Figure 1. shows that the strategy of translating an idiom by an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form constitutes the higher percentage with 52%. Then comes the strategy of paraphrase recording 30%. The strategy of using an idiom of similar meaning and form records 18% of the total percentage while translation by omission records 6% only. The results reflect the translators' keenness to keep the true and complete meaning of idioms through finding the appropriate idioms. This is established by the fact that the strategy of translating an idiom by an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form has the higher percentage. The majority of the extracted idioms has been rendered effectively in the TL. However, in some cases, the translators faced some challenges with some idioms and misused the appropriate technique. To illustrate more, let us consider the below-mentioned examples:

Example 1:

ST: ينقلب رأساً على عقب (السكرية، ص. ٨٣٥)

TT: Turned head over heels (Sugar Street, p.1034)

Using the strategy of translating an idiom by an idiom of similar meaning and form, this idiomatic expression "انقلب رأساً على عقب" is translated into "turned head over heel" which refers to something else in the TL. "انقلب رأساً على عقب", meaning "**upside down**", is similar to the English idiom only in form but differs in meaning, because in the TL "head over heel" means "very much in love", which is far from the meaning of the Arabic idiom in the ST which is to cause large changes and confusion in a person's life. Therefore, the literal translation of this idiom is problematic here, and literal translation should have been avoided. The researcher suggests to translate this idiom into "turned upside down" which falls under the strategy of using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form.

Example 2:

ST: قلبك أبيض، أما أنا فلا أحب أصحاب المصانع (اللص والكلاب، ص. ٧٧)

TT: Don't trouble me about it; I don't like the owners of factories (P. 146).

In the above example, we have the Arabic idiom "قلبك أبيض" omitted in the TL. "قلبك أبيض" has been rendered instead into "don't not trouble me about it". By doing so, the translator omitted the connotation of the white color which is

a symbol of purity in the Arabic culture. When we say to somebody that s/he has a “white heart”, it simply means that the person has a “kind heart”. The researcher suggests this idiom to be translated into “you have a kind heart” using the strategy of paraphrase.

Example 3:

ST: العين لا تعلو عن الحاجب (السكرية، ص ٨٩٤)

TT: Children are only as good as their parents (Sugar Street, p.1155)

The idiom "العين لا تعلو عن الحاجب" was mistranslated into children are only as good as their parents using paraphrasing strategy. This deviates the original idiom from its intended meaning. So, it is suggested to be either borrowed from SL as follows: the eye does not get over the eyebrow or to be translated using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form as follows: Head and shoulders above, which means at a much higher level, or they cannot hold a candle to you, which means not equal to you; when two persons or things are compared, the first one is clearly inferior to the second one.

Example 4:

ST: جمال فلاحى باستدارة الوجه الخمرى (اللس والكلاب، ص. ١١١)

TT: A country girl's beauty, especially her dark round face (P. 174).

In this example, the color idiomatic expression, الوجه الخمرى, was mistranslated into “dark face” using the strategy of paraphrase. The translator should have paraphrased it into a “brown red/tanned face” as it is the color of most Egyptian and Arab people.

Example 5:

ST: خسر الجلد والسقط (ص. ٩٥٦)

TT: Lost everything (Sugar street, p.1284)

In this example, the translator paraphrased the idiom and thus, it lost its figurative touch. The researcher here suggests to translate it, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, into the following idiom: “costs an arm and leg”. The idiom ‘costs an arm and leg’ is used to describe anything that is considered to be extremely expensive or excessively pricey.

Example 6:

ST: ما كل مرة تسلم الجرة (قصر الشوق، ص. ٣٩٤)

TT: The ending won't always be so happy.

The above-mentioned idiom falls under the strategy of paraphrase. The translator here used this strategy may be because he failed to find an equivalent idiom in SL. However, the researcher here suggests to use this idiomatic expression: "the pitcher goes often to the well but is broken at last" which falls under the strategy of using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form.

Example 7:

ST: الرجال أكثر من الهم على القلب (بين القصرين، ص. ٧٧)

TT: Men are much harder on the heart (Palace Walk, p.83)

The translator here failed to understand the correct meaning of the idiom. He understood it as men are crueler than women. This is not the intended meaning here. The above-mentioned idiom means that there are many other excellent or more suitable people, things, opportunities, or possibilities in the world that one may find. The researcher here suggests this idiom to be translated into "there are plenty more fish in the sea" falling under the strategy of using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form.

Example 8:

ST: دمك خفيف (ميرامار، ص. ١١٩)

TT: You don't underrate yourself (Miramar, p.65)

This idiom was mistranslated using the strategy of paraphrase. The translator did not render the correct meaning of this idiom which is to have a sense of humor. Instead, he interpreted the idiom into don't underestimate yourself. It is suggested to paraphrase this idiom into: you're funny.

Example 9:

ST: وقع في شر عمله (ميرامار، ص. ٢٠٣)

TT: They got him (Miramar, p.138)

The translator here used the strategy of paraphrase in translating this idiom. However, the original message of the novelist was not rendered as it is in the TL, i.e, the message of this idiom is distorted. The novelist here wants to tell

the reader that he got his punishment and he is the only person responsible for his downfall or ruin. In this regard, we suggest to use the strategy of using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form by using this idiom: dug his own grave.

Example 10:

ST: من بعض ما عندكم (بين القصرين ، ص. ٥٠)

TT: It's just like yours (Palace Walk, p.60)

The idiom here is correctly paraphrased but the figurative flavor of the SL idiom was missed in the TL. For this reason, the researcher suggests to use the strategy of using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form in rendering such an idiom. Both idioms: “pot calling the kettle black” and “it takes one to know one” are fit to be used for the person who expresses criticism and has similar faults to the person being criticized.

It is worth noting here that most of the less effectively rendered idioms fall under the strategy of paraphrase. This recommends that idioms should be regarded and handled with great care during the translation process and also recommends that the strategy of paraphrase should be the last choice in translating idioms.

9. Conclusion

Translation is a challenging task necessary for transferring the concepts and meanings from one language into another. However, some concepts in one language are problematic for the translator to convey into another language. Among these concepts, idioms have a great position specifically within novels. Little work has been done on this subject and the researcher tried to do an all-inclusive study on the translation of idioms in some Mahfouz's works. But, there shall be much work to be done in future.

The present research is an attempt to investigate the strategies used in Arabic into English translation of idioms and idiomatic expressions in novels. As discussed earlier, the researcher tended to work on the idioms which are troublesome in the process of translation. The research applied Baker's strategies for translation of idioms including 4 strategies which were mentioned before.

The research shows that the most frequent strategy used for translating idioms is translating an idiom by an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form. This proves that the translators possess a good cultural background concerning the idiomatic expressions they faced. Then comes the strategy of paraphrasing which reflects the reluctant sense among translators in finding an equivalent idiom in the TL. This caused some problems in delivering the original message from the SL to TL.

Henceforth, because of the high frequency of idioms in Arabic novels, translators need to equip themselves with idioms in English, so that the reader does not sense any abnormality in the text, since as found in many occasions in the corpus, many examples of paraphrasing idioms either violate the maxims or fail to raise the original illocutionary meaning.

The results of the research are very useful for novice translators who can adopt more suitable approaches for translating idioms. In fact, strategies used by experienced translators in this regard can guide them through their work of rendering Arabic texts into English.

Furthermore, translation teachers can use the outcomes of the study to teach translation strategies in their classes in a more practical way. Language learners can also take advantage of the research in order to know Arabic and English idioms much better. They can compare and contrast Arabic idioms with their English counterparts to become familiar with different cultural aspects of the societies.

During the research what attracted the attention of the researcher was the fact that some parts of the source novels were omitted by the translators. Based on this and other findings of the study, the following suggestions can be made for those who are eager to investigate this area:

- a) What are the reasons behind omitting parts of the foreign books translated into English, particularly novels?
- b) What are the effects of genre and style of writing of the translator or the original author in translating novels?

This study addressed translation of idioms in novels. Other researches can tackle other linguistic issues such as slangs, collocations, proverbs, and so on.

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استراتيجيات بيكر الأكثر استخدامًا في ترجمة التعبيرات الاصطلاحية في بعض من أعمال نجيب محفوظ: الثلاثية، واللص والكلاب، وميرامار.

الملخص

يتناول البحث الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في ترجمة التعبيرات الاصطلاحية من العربية إلى الإنجليزية في بعض من أعمال نجيب محفوظ: الثلاثية واللص والكلاب وميرامار. يعتمد هذا البحث على استراتيجيات بيكر لترجمة التعبيرات الاصطلاحية. وتشمل هذه الاستراتيجيات: استخدام مصطلح تعبيرى يحمل نفس المعنى والتركيبة، واستخدام مصطلح تعبيرى يحمل نفس المعنى ويختلف في التركيبة، والترجمة عن طريق إعادة صياغة المصطلح، والترجمة عن طريق حذف المصطلح التعبيري. يحاول الباحث تحديد الاستراتيجيات الأكثر استخدامًا والاختلافات الكبيرة بين استخدامات هذه الاستراتيجيات. من خلال إجراء تحليل إحصائي وصفي، تم استنتاج أن "استخدام مصطلح تعبيرى يحمل نفس المعنى ويختلف في التركيبة" و "إعادة الصياغة" كانتا من أكثر الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة. استنادًا إلى نتائج هذا البحث، يوصى أنه بالإضافة إلى امتلاك المعرفة الكافية فيما يتعلق بمشكلات الترجمة النظرية واستراتيجيات الترجمة التي اقترحها اللغويون المختلفون، يجب أن يتمتع المترجم بإلمام جيد بالتعبيرات الاصطلاحية في اللغة المستهدفة، وفي حالة ترجمة الروايات، الاستفادة من الإبداع المطلوب للتعامل مع المهمة الصعبة المتمثلة في نقل التعبيرات إلى اللغة المستهدفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيات ترجمة التعبيرات الاصطلاحية، ترجمة التعبيرات الاصطلاحية في روايات محفوظ، ارتباط التعبيرات الاصطلاحية بالثقافة، استراتيجيات بيكر الأربع