Investigating Students’ Cultural Problems in Translating English Idioms into Arabic
The Case Study of Third Year Students at Larbi Ben M’hidi University-Oum El Bouaghi

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language Sciences and Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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DEDICATION

Above all, I thank Allah, the almighty for having given me the strength and patience to undertake and complete this work glory and praise for him.

My work is dedicated to:

The person who had always encouraged me, and offered me her precious advice and guidance; my beloved grandmother who overwhelmed me with her tenderness and care.

To all my friends who stood by my side in hard and good times

To my best and adorable friends Mona, Noussa and Khawla

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Abstract

The present study is a linguistic investigation of cultural difficulties in translation. It deals with the difficulties of finding the appropriate equivalent when translating English idioms into Arabic. The aim of this study is to examine the cultural problems, that third year students at Larbi Ben M’hidi University-Oum El Bouaghi face while translating English idioms. And to suggest solutions and identify strategies that may help to minimize these difficulties. In this respect, a test made up of twenty English idioms is given to third year students to be translated. The results of the study show that in addition to some semantic problems where students can not recognize the meaning of the constituent words of the idiom, the main difficulty lies in identifying the cultural context or background of the target language idiom in the process of translating idioms from English into Arabic. Furthermore, the findings show that knowing the origin or being aware of the variation of the context of use helps a lot of students of English to guess the suitable meaning of idioms. They also reveal that, literal translation is the most used strategy among students whereas the application of other translation strategies is limited, the thing that leads to the emergence of difficulties of translation, in addition to the inability of students to find the appropriate equivalent because of their poor repertoire.
List of abbreviation and symbols

S.C: Source Culture
S.L: Source Language
T.C: Target Culture
T.L: Target Language
*: Grammatically wrong
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Appendix

Résumé
Statement of the Problem

Language is a mean of communication between different societies. And in order to communicate effectively, one needs to know the language of a specific community, to grasp its grammar, vocabulary, culture and how to translate the meaning from the target language (TL) into the source language (SL) etc. But if the TL and SL belong to different cultures the gap between them is more likely to be deeper, hence learners tend to find more difficulties generally in learning and more specifically in the translation process. That is why scholars seek to facilitate the translation procedure by suggesting various strategies for learners, in order to assist them in overcoming lexical, grammatical and cultural difficulties. This latter took the lion’s share, since it is related to a wide and profound concept which is “culture”. Cultural problems do appear commonly and more frequently when translating proverbs, metaphors and idioms, which are considered as the most important cultural heritage of a given society. The latest of these, i.e. idioms, have attracted our attention to fulfill this study. According to Ball (1968:1) an idiom is “the use of familiar words in unfamiliar sense”. So even if the translator knows the meaning of every single word in the idiomatic expression, he may not be able to get the right meaning unless he possesses a cultural background about the target language. In this work we shed light on these cultural problems that learners face when translating idioms and how can they overcome them.

Aim of the study

The main aim of this research paper is investigating the cultural problems encountered by EFL learners when translating idioms from English into Arabic. However, the secondary aims are to find out the reason behind their occurrence, and finding out the paramount strategy to surmount these difficulties.

Research question

This research is supposed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the cultural problems that EFL learners face when translating English idioms into Arabic?
2. Why do cultural problems appear in the translation process of idioms?
3. What are the best strategies to follow in order to surmount these cultural problems?

Research hypothesis
We hypothesize that EFL learners face cultural difficulties in translating English idioms into Arabic. And the reason behind the occurrence of these problems can be outlined in three major causes; the application of literal translation regardless to cultural context, in addition to the incompetency of the translators because of their poor repertoire or background about the target language. Furthermore, the gap between western cultures (English language) and oriental cultures (Arabic language) paves the way for cultural problems to occur frequently in the translation process.

**Research methodology**

The objective of this study is to find out the problems that culture causes for translators, and in order to achieve this objective, a descriptive study will be carried out. A translation test is submitted to the participants where they translate a list of idiom (20 idiomatic expressions), and then the results of this work are analyzed to find out the difficulties they face during the translation process. The target population is third year students in the English department at Larbi Ben M’hidi University (approximately 142 students). The population is chosen because it is believed that the participants have the required competence and cultural background as well as the knowledge about translation techniques rather than the lower years, besides the upper years which were not initiated to the translation field. The sample of the study is 30% of the pre-mentioned population.

**Structure of the dissertation**

This study covers two chapters. The first chapter is the theoretical part of the research, which is divided into three sections for the description of the main variables; section one tackles the definition of idioms, their types and classification, as well as their importance and how to translate them. The second section provides an insight about translation its types, strategies and its status in Algeria. The third one draws the relationship between culture, idioms and translation. While the second chapter is the practical part of the study covers the instrument of the research, description and analysis of the test as well as the results and the recommendation of the study.
Section one

Idioms: An overview

Introduction:

This section attempts to provide a definition of idioms as a special kind of language, investigating their origin and stating the characteristics that describe them in addition to its classifications and importance. Furthermore, the section will deal with how idioms are translated.

1. Definition of Idioms

The word idiom or idiomatic comes from Greek idioma (special feature or special property, a peculiarity) and from idios (one’s own) which means “peculiar” or “individual”. In a First Dictionary of linguistic and phonetics, Crystal (1980) defines an idiom as: “A term in grammar and lexicography to refer to a sequence of words which is semantically and often syntactically restricted, so that they function as a single unit “. (p. 179). In other words the meaning of the idiomatic expression cannot be produced by putting together the meaning of each single word. Furthermore, the structure of the words does not allow any context variability. For example the idiomatic expression ‘to shed crocodile tears’ does not permit any changing or word substitution like saying : *to shed cat or bird tears, Or * the crocodile tears are being shed. Idioms are illogical and few of them follow the rules of grammar.

Linguists and scholars who are specialized in different branches provide different definitions for idioms:

- Jarvie (1993) writes: “An idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot easily be worked out from the words it contains. Idioms have the potential to cause foreign learners of a language to some difficulty.”(p. 148) So nonnative speakers find some difficulties in understanding idioms since their meaning cannot always be deduced from its constituent words and they are inspired from the native speakers’ culture, which foreign learners luck the knowledge about.
• Baker (1992) states that idiomatic expressions are “frozen patterns of language, which allow little or no variation often carry meaning which cannot be deduced from their individual components.” (p. 148).
• Palmer (1990) claims that an idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meaning of its parts.
• Palmer (1976) defines idioms as “collocations of a special kind whose meaning is often opaque” (p. 98). He (ibid. 98) also claims that idioms have plenty of syntactic, semantic and grammatical restrictions. Accordingly, idioms can be said to be semantically single units. They should not be analysed into their individual words.
• Moon (1994) considers that idioms contribute to discourse beyond their semantic and syntactic levels through their paradigmatic properties which are important in interaction that is why idioms are used in everyday life to express habits, thoughts traditions.
• Jackson and Amvela (2000) “an idiom may be defined as a phrase the meaning of which cannot be predicted from the individual meanings of the morphemes it comprises” (p. 6)
• Collins (1995) defines idioms differently, for him an idiom is “a special kind of phrase, a group of words which have a different meaning when used together from the one it would have if the meaning of each word were taken individually”. Idioms are typical metaphorical (figurative, non-literal): they are effectively metaphors which have become fixed or fossilized (unchangeable).
• Fernando (1997, p.1-30) defines idioms as “conventionalized multiword expressions [...] individual units whose components cannot be varied only within definable limits [...] nor are the words of an idiom usually re-combinable”. She distinguishes three features of idioms:
  a. **Compositeness**: which means that idioms are multiword expressions and the shortest length is a two word-word compound structure and the longest is a complex clause with more than two subordinate clauses.
  b. **Institutionalization**: idioms are the product of social interaction expressions. People express their experiences, wisdom in the form of idioms.
  c. **Semantic opacity**: figurativeness and non-literalness of idioms.

2. **Origins of idioms**

Digging deeply in the roots of idioms, we find that they originated from literary masterpieces, the Bible, Greek and Roman mythologies, historic events, ancient fables, anecdotes, customs, seafaring, agriculture, daily life animal, habitual behaviours etc. that is
why they are so hard to understand. Translators believe that the best way to understand idioms well is by realizing them through the background of traditional culture, thought patterns, geography, religion...

2.1. The bible:

English idioms carry rich religious elements since they belong to countries that have Christianity and Hebraism as their cultural background. It is a firm concept of western peoples that god created people; they think that god is omnipotent and sacred. God, Christ, devil, Adam, for example:

a. ‘Much cry and little wool’: a proverbial saying expressive of contempt or derision for one who promises great things but never fulfils the promises. (originally the proverb ran, ‘great cry and little wool, as the devil said when he sheared the hogs’; and it appears in this form in the ancient mystery of David and Abigail, in which Nabal is represented as shearing his sleep and the devil imitates the act by shearing a hog.

b. ‘Turn the other cheek’: to take no action against the person who has hurt or harmed one, to allow him to do it again. (Do not resist the one who is evil, but if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. (New Testament)) E.g. the murder has made me change my mind about capital punishment. We should bring back hanging, it is time to stop turning the other cheek.

2.2. Literary masterpieces:

Western literary masterpieces are full of classic words, sentences that attract people greatly. They are shaped to evolve the hidden meaning. For example:

a. ‘Man Friday’: a faithful and willing attendant, ready to turn his hand to anything. (The young savage found by Robinson Crusoe on Friday, and kept as his servant and companion on the desert island.)

b. ‘To the manner born means’: ‘be born to do’. (Hamlet)

c. ‘All that glitters is not gold’: originated from William Shakespeare’s the merchant of Venice. Suitors have come from around the world to try for Portia’s heart. The prince has to solve a puzzle of choosing the right casket out of three. The prince of morocco chooses the golden casket, and inside it he found this idiom. He has chosen the wrong one, he thought that the golden one is the most valuable one but not everything that is apparently good-looking is precious.

2.3. Greek and Roman mythologies:
Mythologies are ancient stories that are based on popular beliefs or that explain natural or historical events because the people of the primeval society were scared of the nature and wished for a nice future.

a. ‘Pandora’s Box’: a prolific source of troubles (in Greek mythology a box containing all the evil of mankind and given by Zeus to the mythological Pandora, who opened it against the command of Zeus, thus all the evil flew forth and they have ever since continued to afflict the world, only hope remained in the bottom; something that produces many unforeseen difficulties).

b. ‘Beware of Greeks bearing gifts’: beware of anyone offering something; they may have an ulterior motive. From the Greek myth by Virgil in his masterpiece ‘the Aeneid who immortalized his phrase ‘I fear Greeks even bearing gifts’ like the Trojan horse.

2.4. Historic affairs:

Idioms that derives from historical events, such as;

a. ‘Meet one’s waterloo’: be finally and crushingly defeated in a contest, especially after a period of success (waterloo is a place where Napoleon was ultimately beaten by wellington and blucher in 1815).

2.5. Anecdotes:

Some idioms are originated from ancient stories and tales.

b. ‘Man for all seasons’: the person who is erudite and adaptable.

c. ‘Mickey Mouse’: small, insignificant, or worthless person. (From the name of a mouse-like cartoon character created by Walt Disney 1901-1966, US cartoonist).

2.6. Customs:

a. ‘Indian life’: one after the other, singly. (The American Indians, when they go on an expedition, march one by one. the one behind carefully steps in the footprints of the one before and the last man of the file is supposed to obliterate the footprints. Thus, neither the track nor the number of invaders can be traced).

b. ‘A father in one’s cap’: an honor; something to be proud of. (The allusion is to the very general custom in Asia and among the American Indians of adding a feather to the headgear for every enemy slain.)

2.7. The animal habitual behavior:

a. ‘As wide as owls’: very clever. (the owl was given to Minerva for her symbol)

b. ‘Bury one’s head in the sand’: refuse to take any notice of difficulty; refuse to admit that something is a problem and hope that it will get better by itself
2.8. Seafaring:

a. ‘To sail under false colors’: to act hypocritically; to try to attain one’s object by appearing to be other than you are. (The term is a nautical one, and refers to the practice of pirates approaching their unsuspecting prey with false colors at the mast.)

b. Ship shape: ready for sailing, which means clean or in a good condition.

c. ‘All at the sea’: to be in a state of disarray or chaos. Before modern navigation and communication, any ship on the voyage out of sight of land or ‘at sea’ was in danger of being lost.

2.9. Agriculture:

a. ‘To hold out the olive branch’: to make overture for peace. (In allusion to the olive being an ancient symbol of peace. In some of Numa’s the king is represented holding an olive twig, indicative of a peaceful reign)

2.10. Daily life:

a. ‘A dark horse’: a person who keeps his true capabilities to himself till he can produce them to the best advantage. (a horse whose merits as a racer are not known to the general public)

3. Characteristics of idioms:

Baker (1992, p.163) listed some characteristics that guarantee the degree of idiomaticity and the figurativeness of idioms as follow:

3.1. Idioms are metaphorical and not literal:

When the single words are combined they lose their literal meaning to express the indented meaning of an idiom (the metaphorical meaning).

3.2. Idioms are of a fixed form.

3.3. Substitution:

One cannot substitute the words with others that are close in meaning neither replace a verb with a noun phrase or vice versa. E.g. blood is thicker than water. The word water cannot be substituted with liquid, jus or replacing thicker by deeper or more solid. Moreover one cannot say *he makes blood thicker than water.

3.4. Passiveness:

Idioms cannot be changed into the passive form because their figurative meaning maybe damaged. E.g. spill the beans, *the beans were spilled has completely a different meaning

3.5. Addition/Deletion: One cannot add or omit words to the idiom
3.6. **Modification**: One cannot change the order of words in idioms

3.7. **Idiomaticity**: In other words, idioms vary on how metaphorical and invariable they are (the quality of being idiomatic is a matter of degree).

3.8. **Idioms are syntactically anomalous**:

They have an unusual grammatical structure. Most of idioms (but not all of them) are phrases of two or more words. The only changeable part of the idioms containing a verb is the tense, but students should pay attention to the fact that although an idiom is considered as one semantic unit, the tense morpheme should be attached to the verb. (Baker 1992, p.63).

4. **classification of idioms**

Scholars have classified idioms into different types, whether according to syntactic bases or the degree of idiomaticity. Therefore four classifications given by different scholars are chosen.

4.1. **Makkai’s classification**: he divided idioms into two categories:

4.1.1. **Idioms of encoding** (identifiable):

Are those idiosyncratic lexical combinations that have transparent meaning involving collocational references and restrictions, exemplified by “at” in: he drove at 70m.p.h.

4.1.2. **Idioms of decoding** (non-identifiable):

Refer to those non-identifiable and ambiguous lexical expressions whose interpretations could not be comprehended on the basis of only learned linguistic conventions. In other words, the meaning of decoding idioms is not predictable. Expressions such as ‘beat about the bush’ and ‘fly off the handle’ are examples of this type of idioms. Idioms of decoding are classified into lexemic and sememic idioms. (Makkai, 1972, p.135-179).

4.1.2.1. **Lexemic idioms**:

- Phrasal verbs: to come up with
- Tournures (turns of phrase): kick the bucket
- Irreversible binomials: paper and salt
- Phrasal compounds: black ice
- Incorporating verbs: man-handle
- Pseudo-idioms: kit and kin

4.1.2.2. **Sememic idioms**: usually convey pragmatic meaning related to a particular culture.

They include:
Proverbs: a bird in hand is worth two in the bush
Familiar quotation: not a mouse stirring
First base idioms: associated with a national game like baseball: have two strikes against one, never to get to the first base.
Idioms of institutionalized politeness: may I.......... 
Idioms of institutionalized greeting: how do you do, so long
Idioms of institutionalized understatement: I was not too crazy about him
Idioms of institutionalized hyperbole: he will not even lift a finger

4.2. Moon’s classification:

Another classification was made by Moon (1996) in which idioms were classified on the bases of “the spectrum of idiomaticity”

4.2.1. Transparent idioms:

Idioms whose meaning can be predicted from the meaning of its constituent parts, they are easy to comprehend and translate e.g. fight a losing battle.

4.2.2. Semi-transparent idioms:

Idioms whose constituent parts have a little role in comprehending the whole meaning of the expression they usually have metaphorical meaning e.g. break the ice (reveal the tension).

4.2.3. Semi-opaque idioms:

Idioms whose figurative meaning is not related to the meaning of their constituent words. In other words, the idiomatic expression is separated into two parts; a part with literal meaning and the other with a figurative meaning. E.g. to know the rope, (to know how a particular job should be done).

4.2.4. Opaque idioms:

The meaning of such type of idioms cannot be predicted from the meaning of its part because there are items which have cultural references, they are considered as the most difficult type of idioms, because the literal meanings of its words have little to do with the actual sense of idioms e.g. to spill the beans (to reveal a secret).

4.3. O’Dell and McCarthy’s classification:

O’Dell and McCarthy (2010, p.1) have classified idioms as the following:

4.3.1. Proverbs: are short sentences referring to something most people have experienced and which give advice or warning or express wisdom. Their form is fixed also. Such as ‘where there is a will there is a way’ (p.26).
4.3.2. **Metaphors**: describe a person, object or situation by comparing it to something else with similar characteristics.

4.3.3. **Similes**: are expressions which compare two things; they always include the word as or like. Such as ‘the baby’s skin is as smooth as silk’ (p.22).

4.3.4. **Binomials**: are type of idioms in which two words are joined by a conjunction (linking word), usually and. The order of the two words is fixed. Such as, we always say black and white, not white and black (p.24).

4.4. **Palmer’s classification**: according to Palmer (1976), idioms could be categorized into three types:

- **4.4.1. Phrasal verbs**: the most common type of idioms in English which is the combination of the verbs and adverbs. Palmer (1976, p.99).
- **4.4.2. Prepositional verb**: a group of words, verbs made from a verb followed by another words
- **4.4.3. Partial idiom**: an idiom in which one of the words has usual meaning and the other has a meaning of peculiar to a particular sequence.

5. **Distinctive features of English idioms**

Idioms are treated as a special kind of language; they have some features that distinguish them.

5.1. **Syntactic features**:

Johnson-Laird (1993) argues that “if natural language had been designed by a logician, idioms would not exist”. Idioms can have a regular, irregular or even wrongly grammatical structure. Idioms can take one of the following structures:

a- **Regular form and clear meaning**: for example ‘fight a losing battle’ is an idiom that has a regular form and its meaning is clear and can be understood from its constituent’s words.

b- **Regular form and ambiguous meaning**: ‘to have a bee in ones bonnet’, this idiom is grammatically correct but its meaning is vague, having a bee in a bonnet means to have an obsession about a particular idea.

c- **Irregular form and clear meaning**: ‘I am good friends with him’ is an idiom that is grammatically incorrect; the pronoun ‘I’ does not replace ‘friends’ but it should be said ‘friend’, also the preposition ‘if’ should be used instead of using ‘with’ as well as the possessive pronoun ‘his’ that should alternate the pronoun ‘him’, in other words the idiom could be grammatically correct by saying ‘I am a good friend of his’.
Both meaning and form are abnormal: ‘be at large’, this idiom means to be free, both its structure and meaning are irregular. On the one hand, the preposition “at” should be followed by a noun and not an adjective on the other hand; the meaning is vague and cannot be understood literally.

5.2. Semantic features:

According to Johnson-Laird (1993, p.7) “idioms are illogical and frustrating features of discourses since their meaning do not depend on the meaning of their parts”. English idioms are considered as lexemes since they satisfy the criteria required for being stored in the lexicon. Lexeme is “a word or several words that have a meaning that is not expressed by any of its separate parts” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 7th edition). That is why idioms cause the confusion on the case whether or not they should have been put into lexical system due to their abnormal peculiarities in terms of syntax and semantics.

5.3. Cultural features:

Levorato (1993, p.126) assumes that idioms can express abstract meaning in a fascinating concrete way. Idioms are the product of human interaction in communication. Idioms are a mirror that reflects the variation between cultures, the difference in the national character, customs, and geography in other words, the distinctions of culture explain for figurativeness of idioms. Native speakers use a great number of idioms which portray their culture in their speech that is why non-native speakers are required to possess a fundamental knowledge and share some cultural references to achieve a successful communication. For example the idiom ‘according to Hoyle’ it never causes difficulties to native speakers because they share the same culture and know who Hoyle, is and therefore can decode the meaning, but to a non-native speaker of English who is exposed to the idiom for the first time, he may not be able to interpret it. This idiom takes its origin from an English astronomer named Fred Hoyle and his book Short Treatise on the game of Whist. It means in accordance with the highest authority; in accord with a strict set of rules. Idioms are affected by the change that occurs in language or culture they can be changeable through time, an idiom may lose its popularity in favour of a new occurred idiom.

6. Distinction between idioms, proverbs saying, phrasal verbs and colloquialisms
There are some similarities between idioms, proverbs, clichés colloquialism. Proverbs and idioms resemble each other very much; phrasal verbs possess some characteristics of idioms.

6.1. A Saying:

Is “a well-known phrase or statement that expresses something about life that most people believe it is wise or true” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 7th edition), they are conventionalized by the popularity. It encompasses clichés aphorism proverbs idioms etc.

6.2. A proverb:

Is “a short well known sentence that states a general truth about life and gives advice” (Oxford advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 7th edition.) the proverb is deduced from practical experience of humanity, common sense, therefore, it can be understood literally, that means the meaning could be obtained from the meaning of individual words, such as ‘a fox is not taken twice in the same snare’.

6.3. Phrasal verbs:

Phrasal verbs and idioms share the common feature that is the non-compositionality, which means the overall meaning of the phrase is not the sum of its constituents meaning. However idioms are not identical to phrasal verbs for their visual differences between them, structure and meaning as well. Another distinction is that idioms do not follow any fixed structure while a phrasal verb carries one stable structure. That is to say, the verb is combined with one or two particles (a preposition and/or adverb) like build up, wear off. In addition, phrasal verb takes a small number of verbs and a small number of particles to build up its form.

6.4. Colloquialisms:

Are “a linguistic expression used exclusively in familiar, informal conversation and thus not used in formal speech, writing or paralinguistics”. E.g. ‘red up one’s room’. Colloquialisms can be words such as “y’all” (you-all is used especially in the southern US to mean you when talking to more than one person (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 7th edition)).

6.5. Clichés:

Are frozen patterns made up of extended stretches of language, clichés can be understood from the meaning of its component words, unlike idioms whose meaning is not related to the literal meaning of its constituent parts.
7. The importance of idioms

Although idioms are very difficult to comprehend or translate, they possess a great importance in our daily life. The use of figurative language is a main feature of native like language and idiomaticity is a nature of proficiency as well as fluency that language learners are expected to achieve.

Recently the importance of idioms has been emphasized by linguists and language teachers. Bortfeld (2003) states that the increasing number of idioms in the Dictionary of American Idioms (Boatner, Gates and Makkai, (1975-1995) is indicative of the essential role idioms play in daily language use. Moreno (2011) gives three main reasons why it is so crucial to teach idioms arguing that because of their high frequency, special attention should be paid to idioms, and teachers should not relegate them to a secondary state in the curriculum:

a. Firstly, language learners who use idioms frequently are more likely to be fluent speakers and will develop a figurative and communicative competence. Moreover, idioms which give language variety and character help learners penetrate into culture, customs, and lifestyle of the target language.

b. Secondly, cognitive linguistic studies have demonstrated the crucial role of memory in learning fixed expressions such as idioms. Hence, the teachability and learnability of idioms and their pedagogical aspects should be taken into consideration.

c. Finally, many idioms are constantly changing over time, in order to find out their underlying essence, we have to resort to cultural factors and adopt a diachronic view of language (such as etymological elaboration).

8. Translating idioms:

Idioms are deeply rooted in the structure of language and immersed in the culture; they are part of the cultural elements of language that cause a serious difficulty in translation.

Nida and Taber (1982, p.208) define translation as the “reproduction in the target language of the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style”. This process of translation consists of three stages:

1. Analysis “the set of procedures including back transformation and componential analysis which aim at discovering the kernels underlying the source text and the clearest understanding of the meaning “ (ibid:197)
2. Transfer or “reproducing the message in the target language” (ibid:208)

3. Restructuring or “changing the form of a discourse without changing the contents of the message, specifically transforming the raw results of the transfer process into a stylistic form appropriate to the target language and to the intended receptors” (ibid:206).

Baker (1992, p.71-72) says that translating idioms is not only a matter of finding the equivalent meaning in the target language, it also depends on many factors whether cultural or lexical. Idioms as a special kind of language are challenging to the translator, they have to be recognized, understood and analyzed before the translation process took place. First of all, the ability to identify idioms is of a great importance, as R. Ingo (1990, p. 247) puts it, the translator must first analyze what the writer has intended to say before s/he can even think of translating the expression. M. Larson (1984, p. 143) agrees, as he argues that the first crucial step in the translation of idioms is to be absolutely certain of the meaning of the source language idiom. Therefore the most important issue in translating idioms is the ability to distinguish the difference between the literal meaning and the real meaning of the expression (Ingo 1990, p. 248). Thus, before a translator can even think of translating the expression into the target language, he must identify the non-literal meaning of the idiom in a source language. In addition the translator must also be able to use idioms fluently and competently in the target language (Larson 1984, p. 116). The final difficulty, then, is to find a TL expression with the same meaning. The problem lies in the fact that an idiomatic expression in one language rather often does not have an equivalent expression in another language. The translator has to think of an appropriate translation strategy for the idiom.
Section two

A Journey in the World of Translation

Translation took much attention in recent years, and the need for it drove scholars to conduct studies about it, to formulate its definition, determine its types, strategies and difficulties.

1. Definition of Translation:

The Science of translation, translatology and traductology are different names given to the discipline that is concerned with the study of translation. James Holmes was the first who coined the term ‘translation studies’ as a unified term for the academic discipline of translation. According to Nida and Taber (1982, p.12) “Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalence of the source language (SL) message firstly, in terms of meaning and secondly, in terms of style”. Catford (1995, p.20) however, defines the translation process as “the replacement of textual material in one language, by equivalent textual material in another language”.

Translation is the art of transferring thoughts and messages from the source language to the target language as far as translation is concerned; Newmark (1973, cited in Al-Hamdalla, 1998) defines translation as the attempt to produce an approximate equivalence between two stretches of different languages on various levels. He argues that thought and linguistic forms are the main aspects in this attempt. Bell (1991, p.5, cited in Homeidi, 2004) expresses a similar point of view; he quotes “translation is the expression in another language (or target language) of what has been expressed in another, source language, preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences”. Both definitions denote the concept of equivalence, but this does not mean that translation is merely a matter of replacing words or sentences in the source language (SL) with equivalent properties in the target language (TL); translation is an activity in which culture and other aspects such as stylistic features are also taken into account to produce an approximate correspondence between SL and TL. Therefore, beyond the belief which declare that translation is a transfer of a set of signs from one language to another, the process, in fact, involves a whole set of extra-linguistic criteria such as culture and social reality.

Newmark (1981, p.18) considers that we need to deepen our perception about translation; translation can be more than enriching the source language and culture, beyond the renovating and evolution the life of the original text, and not only a matter of
expressing and drawing the relationships of languages with each other, but it may become a gate into a universal language.

2. Types of Translation

Translation is a practical task where the translator attempts to find the appropriate equivalent in the target language. Since the process of translation is difficult and it depends on many linguistic and/or socio-linguistic futures, scholars tended to subdivide it into different types. We will attempt to state different classification according to some specialists’ point of view.

2.1. Schleiermacher classification

Schleiermacher (1838) distinguishes between two types of translation which he calls free and literal translation (cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997, p.97).

2.1.1. Literal Translation

Is a kind of translation “made on a lower level than sufficient to convey the content unchanged while observing target language norms” (Barkhudarov, 1969 cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997, p.95). Catford (1965) states that literal translation respects structural and grammatical parallelism starting with word for word equivalence. This type of translation gives importance to the form of text by replacing the source text linguistic units with their equivalent linguistic units in the target text, regardless to other factors like culture or context. As a translation strategy (Hocket, 1945, p.313) claims that

A literal translation clearly has its uses; a fairy literal approach is, for example generally appropriate for translating many types of technical texts, while in a different context the technique can also provide language learners with useful insights into target language structures.

Concerning Biblical translation and other sacred text” Only literal translation can be considered faithful (Nida and Taber 1983, p.203). Although literal translation has its utility, in Casagrande’s opinion, it may lead to a kind of false translation which "can be misleading" (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997, p.185). Furthermore, it may lead to a complete falsification of the message of the original (Chukovsky, 1984). This notion (literal translation) has been formulized by Nida (1964) as formal equivalence which refers to a target text item which represents the closest decontextualized counterpart to a word or a phrase in the source language, while Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) categorize it as a type of direct translation listing it as one of the seven translation procedures (cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997).
2.1.2. Free translation:

A translation “made on a level higher than is necessary to convey the content unchanged while observing target language norms” (Barkhudarov, 1969 cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997, p. 62). Unlike literal translation that gives importance to the form, free translation privileges the meaning, it is also known as sense for sense translation, it aims at making the meaning explicit to the target language reader (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1997). A translation in which " the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the response of receptor is essentially like that of the original receptors" (Nida and Taber, 1982, p. 200). Furthermore, Nida (1964, p. 159) sees that a free translation’s main concern is “relating the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture”.

2.2. Other Types of Translation

In addition to the aforementioned types, each scholar may follow a particular division for the types of translation but generally speaking these types can be summarised as the following:

2.2.1. Faithful translation

This type of translation transfers cultural words and preserves the degree of grammatical and lexical deviation from SL norms, and to reproduce the exact contextual meaning of the original text within the constraints of the TL grammatical structures. It attempts to be completely faithful to the intentions and the text-realisation of the SL writer.

2.2.2. Semantic translation

In contrast to faithful translation, semantic translation gives more importance to the artistic value of the SL text, without damaging the meaning so that no recurrence, word play or repetition appears in the finished version. It does not rely on cultural equivalence and makes very small concessions to the readership. While faithful translation is dogmatic (inflexible), semantic translation is more flexible.

2.2.3. Communicative translation

It renders the exact contextual meaning of the original text, so that both language and content are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership.

2.2.4. Idiomatic translation

It reproduces the message of the original text but tends to distort the degrees of meaning by preferring colloquialisms and idioms.

2.2.5. Adaptive translation
This is the unrestricted form of translation mainly used for plays and poetry: themes/characters/plots preserved, SL culture converted to TL culture & text is rewritten.

2.2.6. Free translation

It reproduces the content without the form of the original text. Usually it is a paraphrase much longer than the original.

2.2.7. Word-for-word translation

The SL word order is preserved and the words translated by their most common meanings and if some cultural words are found, they are translated literally. The main use of this type of translation is either to understand the mechanics of the source language or to comprehend a difficult text as pre-translation process.

2.2.8. Literal translation

The SL grammatical structures are converted to their closest TL equivalents but the lexical items are translated out of context.

3. Strategies and techniques of translation

For the sake of delivering the message accurately and clearly to the receptor, among the strategies of translation, translators vary their techniques of translation. Among them, the most known and used ones are chosen, namely Nida’s (1964), Vinay and Darbelnet (2000, p.84-93) and Baker’s strategies.

3.1. Nida’s formal and dynamic equivalence

Nida (1964) has introduced two dissimilar techniques of translation; formal and dynamic translation.

3.1.1. Formal equivalence (word – for-word translation)

Nida (1964) claims that:

Formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content. . . One is concerned that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language. (p.159)

Formal equivalence tries to remain as close as possible to the original text without adding the translators ideas into the translation, thus the more literal the translation is, the less danger there is of corrupting the original message, it is much more word for word translation. It is reader-based; it gives much concern to the original language structure, allowing readers familiar with the source language to analyze how meaning was expressed in the original text. Most typical of this kind of translation are ‘gloss translations’ where
form and content are reproduced as faithful as possible and the TL reader is able to
“understand as much as he can of the customs, manner of thought, and means of
expression” of the SL context.

3.1.2. Dynamic Equivalence (sense-for-sense translation)

In the Dynamic equivalence “the relationship between receptor and message should
be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the
message” (Nida 1964, p.159). The original language is translated “thought for thought”
rather than “word for word”. Dynamic equivalence involves taking each sentence or idea in
the target language from the original text and rendering it into a sentence in the target
language that bears the same meaning. It sacrifices some faithfulness to the original text to
achieve a more natural translation; it favors readability over the original wording, and
“aims at complete naturalness of expression” that can be achieved by adapting grammar
and lexicon and culture to reach “the closest natural equivalent to the source-language
message” (Nida 1964a, p.166, Nida and Taber 1969, p.12), this is preferable when the two
languages are dissimilar. Nida’s dynamic equivalence tries to relate the receptor to modes
of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture without insisting that he
“understand the cultural patterns of the source language context”, it is based on what Nida
calls “the principle of equivalent effect”. In this technique the translator render the message
to suit the receptor linguistic and cultural anticipations) the ST language should not
interfere in TT language and the 'foreignness' of the ST setting is decreased (Nida 1964a,
pp.167-8).

3.2. Vinay and Darbelnet’s Techniques

Vinay and Darbelnet were against individual words as units of translation, they
rather reinforced relying on thoughts and feelings. They distinguish two main methods of
translation; first, direct translation which encompasses borrowing, calque and literal
translation. Second, oblique translation that covers transposition, modulation, and
equivalence as well as adaptation.

3.2.1. Direct Translation: It includes the following procedures:

3.2.1.1. Borrowing

According to Vinay and Darbelnet most interesting aspect of using this strategy is
to create specific stylistic effects, like showing the flavor of cultures. It involves using
foreign phrasing in the target text; it is used when the concept discussed in the source
language is unknown to the receptors.
3.2.1.2. Calque

The calque strategy is “a special kind of borrowing” (p. 85), the translator translates literally the original elements where he borrows an expression from the SL to get whether a lexical calque where he preserves the syntactic structure of the TL to introduce a new mode of expression, or a structural calque to introduce a new construction into the language.

3.2.1.3. Literal translation

It is 'word-for-word' translation; it transfers directly the text from SL into TL respecting grammar and meaning. This type of translation is used when the two languages are similar and works better when the same culture is shared. (pp.86-8).

3.2.2. Oblique translation

This procedures are used when the two languages are dissimilar, they are:

3.2.3. Transposition

Replacing one word class with another without changing the meaning of the text and the result of this procedure is adaptable for the translator and clear for the reader. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, p.94) see transposition as “probably the most common structural change undertaken by translators”.

3.2.4. Modulation:

Is changing the form of the message through a change in perspective, an alteration of this kind may be required in contexts where a literal or transposed translation still sounds unidiomatic or awkward in the TL despite being grammatically correct utterance.

3.2.5. Equivalence:

This term was used by Vinay and Darbelnet (2000, p.90) referring to describing the same situation by different stylistic or structural means, also called reformulation. Equivalence is particularly useful in translating Idioms and proverbs (the sense, though not the image), exclamations and expletive like the English ‘Ouch’.

3.2.6. Adaptation:

this technique is used if the translator fails to find a situation in the target culture similar or equivalent to that of the source culture, in this case he will apply the adaptation technique where he changes the cultural. (pp. 90-2)

3.3. Baker’s Translation Strategies

Baker (1992) suggests four more detailed strategies for translating idioms as follows:
3.3.1. “Using an idiom of similar meaning and form”:

The TL idiom expresses exactly the “same meaning” by the use of the “same equivalent lexical items” to the SL ones. Baker expresses that this kind of match is not always achievable (p. 72), and it could be more possible when the source and target culture are identical, where the equivalent meaning is easy to find, that is what Venuti (1995) called “Automatic” process of “domestication” i.e., in some cases the idioms in the SL are domesticated in the TL without any significant difficulty or idiosyncrasy due to the existence of similar idioms and ideologies resulting in an automatic domestication. For example the English idiom ‘poke his nose in everything’ can be translated to an Arabic equivalent similar to meaning and form which is “يحشر أنفه في كل شيء”.

3.3.2. “Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form”:

The SL idiom will be translated to TL idiom that has a similar meaning but different lexical items (Baker, 1992, p.74). Ghazala (2004) also considers that the English idiom as proud as a peacock has an equivalent Arabic counterpart in its connotative meaning but not in form. Because both Arabic and English culture share the same connotation about the fact that, the peacock symbolizes to pride and arrogance. Ghazala (ibid.) also adds that the only difference between the two expressions in term of meaning is that the Arabic idiom has a stronger connotative meaning than the English one.

3.3.3. “Translation by paraphrase”:

Baker states that if the matching equivalence cannot be found between SL and TL because of differences in stylistic preferences of both languages, translation by paraphrase is the suitable technique to be applied. The risk of using such a technique lies in “lose” translation i.e. the idiom may lose its connotative meaning or impact on the reader.

3.3.4. “Translation by omission”

This strategy is used if the idiom “has no close match in the target language, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons” (Baker, 1992, p. 77). In other words, when the idiomatic expression is omitted its meaning, stylistic effect or emotional force will be “damaged”, and in order to “compensate” this damage the translator is obliged to state some supplementary words in some parts of the sentence where an omission has been done. “Getting this level right means that your target text will feel less 'foreign' and, other factors being equal, may even pass for an original” (p.78). This strategy is closely related to the strategy of compensation which is usually used in long
texts in which a translator can omit or play features of idiomaticity “at the point where it occurs in the source text and introduces it elsewhere in the target text” (Baker, 1992, p.78).

4. Difficulties in Translating Idioms

Although the task of translation is exciting and enjoyable, translators experience some difficulties in the translation process; translating idioms is not only hindered by grammatical or syntactical difficulties, but also by other socio-linguistic factors like culture. Teilanyo (2007) stresses that: “The difficulty arises from the problem of finding adequate target language equivalents for terms conveying culture-sensitive notions in the source language as a result of the fact that the two languages have different meaning subsystems and cultures” (p. 16).

Balfaqeeh (2009) states the most common problem related to finding the appropriate “equivalence” saying that: “Idioms are difficult to translate. It is sometimes hard to find the right equivalent for a single word without finding equivalence for a sequence of words that convey one specific meaning”. (p. 6).

Bassnett-McGuire (1980, p.24) stated that “idioms should be translated on the basis of function of the phrase: the source language idiom should be replaced by a target language idiom that has the same meaning”, i.e. by its equivalence.

Baker (1992, pp.68-71) summarizes the major difficulties that a translator encounters when translating idiomatic expressions as follows:

a. The non-existence of an equivalent in the target language. The ways languages express their meaning is not the same and is not easily predicted when translating idioms.

b. An idiom may have a similar counterpart in the target language, but its context of use is different.

c. An idiom may be used in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time.

d. The very convention of using idioms in written discourse, the context in which they can be used and their frequency of use may be different in the source and target languages.

In addition, Awwad (2006) stresses that when the TL and the SL are culturally dissimilar; the translator is more likely to experience difficulties in the translation process. And the ignorance or lack of knowledge about the SL and TL culture, the translated idiom may deviate its true or correct meaning as expressed in its natural context.
Ghazala (1995) also stresses the translation difficulties in two points; first, literal translation may result in an idiom that makes no sense for the receptor. For example, a literal translation to the English idiom as “the crow flies” is senseless to Arabic speakers"اﻟﻐﺮاب ﯾﺤﻠﻖ" since the word crow has a negative connotative meaning in the Arabic culture. Second, the incompetence of the translator could be an obstacle for a successful translation.

5. The status of Translation in Algeria:

Even though Algeria is a qualified candidate for the position of ‘the medium’ ‘facilitator’ or ‘translator’ between eastern and western world due to some factors like its geographical location, the existence of The Arab High Institute of Translation financed by the Arab league based in Algiers and other specialized institutions of translation in its universities, status of translation is not so much optimistic. In the light of this situation, specialists are inquiring the real causes behind this catastrophic situation, aiming at founding a solid basis for translation studies as well as drawing a national policy in this field. Said Boutadjine, the Algerian professor and translator states that the problem of translation in Algeria is a matter of the absence of a monitoring law for the translator & translation. He confirms that “The Algerian University will vanish in the few coming years as long as translated materials are presented to us from abroad”. In the meantime Professor Ouacini Laaredj stressed that we have much lost due to the policy the state is following, and the virtual concept of the identity the rulers have put in order to defend the imaginary principles of preserving the society fixtures, because of which Algeria was & still losing so much, through preventing itself from an opening to the abroad knowledge with well-planned translation strategies, he stresses that we are in a real need of a Data Bank for the translators helping them fulfill their task in an appropriate way. Abdu el Hamid bourayou is calling for a national policy for the study of translation that will make translation a property of the state like some Arabic countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia and why not cooperating with such countries to enrich the movement of translation in the Arab world. Ouacini has a different view about this cooperation, stating that the Algerian spirit and culture should be introduced by Algerian translators when translating a given material for a better transmission of the message. (Echourouk.online).

In the national conference that was convened in Skikda, university professors have discussed the status of translation in Algeria. Dr. Tlilani Ahsan, the headmaster of the faculty of letters and languages in skikda states that translation has a major role in the
cultural evolution of the country, and in order to reach this evolution Algeria has to open the door for the vast knowledge of the word. The knowledge can be transmitted to us via translation. Sohaila Mafrouch, a teacher in the same university, states that “we do not read and we do not translate” and thus we are far away from the developed countries. Moreover, translation should not be considered as a simple task or only a material to teach in our universities, but as a must and an effective tool to achieve the cultural evolution of our nation.

6. Translation and Culture

Translation theorists have been aware of the problems attendant upon cultural knowledge and cultural difference at list since ancient Rome. Sager Jacobson’s innovative definition of translation sees translation in semiotic terms as “the interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language” (1994, p.121). Accordingly, translation is a two-stage process of decoding and re-encoding linguistic messages. In the light of the previous definitions, one can notice that translation is based on reproducing new linguistic material (the target text) on the basis of an original linguistic version (the source text) without any external considerations. However, one of the most recent innovations in the field of translation is the significance of “culture” as a factor that plays a crucial role in the process of translation. Toury’s (1985, p.20) target text oriented definition is a good one to support the previous point. It states that a translation is “taken to be any target language utterance which is presented or regarded as such within the target culture, on whatever grounds”. This approach emphasizes on the paramount importance of the way a target text functions in a specific cultural context. These definitions have shown that translation seems complex and controversial but nonetheless necessary. All in all, the more a translator is aware of complexities of differences between cultures the better translator he will be.
Section three:

Culture, translation and idioms

1. Definition of culture

A broad and controversial term like culture cannot be defined in few lines or paragraph. Since there is not an agreed upon definition for culture, a humble attempt is carried out to give a simple and concise definition of culture from the perspective of different scholars. Newmark (1988, pp.94-103) defines culture as “a way of life and its manifestations peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression”. Taylor (1958, p.1) considers Culture as the complex whole, which embraces one’s knowledge, morals, belief, art, habits, law, customs, that allow him to act as a member of society, to present his origins, and to draw his future. Lado (1957, p.111) expresses culture as “structural systems of patterned behavior”. For Bonnet (1968, p.10) “culture is the reflection of the total behavior of a society”. So from these previous points of view we conclude that culture encompasses knowledge, beliefs, behaviors, religion and all aspects of life that shape peoples’ environment and make them act appropriately.

Language lays under the umbrella of culture and the meaning of its vocabulary is related to the culture that determines the appropriateness of linguistic units and if there is a cultural variation, the degree of understanding between two language communities will be affected. (CF. Kussmaul 1995, p.65). According to Sapir (1949), "environment and culture have a considerable influence on the language of speakers as is clearly seen in their vocabulary". Language is a reflection of culture, and idioms as a special kind of language reflects culture. Idioms represent life style, dressing, food, customs etc.

2. A general view about English and Arabic culture

Arabic as a language has a specific cultural and social norms that are distinct from western languages (particularly English language). They differ in religion (Islamic vs. Christianity). For example, Arab societies use proper names that were inherited traditionally and can be symbols of social and cultural background, such as religious names ‘Abdu Allah’, those of the prophet ‘Muhammed’, than Western societies do. Those proper names the geographical setting that makes them distant from each other and therefore expand the differences. Furthermore the two languages belong to different families; Arabic is a Semitic language however English belongs to an Indo-European language family. The difference between Arabic and English language in terms of their origin, cultural features, customs, beliefs and so forth, can clearly be observed in the nature of their idioms.
According to Awwad (1990), the English idiom the fox is not taken in the same snare twice is equivalent to the Arabic on "المؤمن لا يلدغ من الجحر مرتين". However, both languages differ in their choice of the items which make up the idiom; while English uses a name of an animal fox, Arabic prefers the religious term "المؤمن". These differences construct the so called ‘cultural gap’.

3. Definition of cultural gap:

A cultural gap is a systematic difference in values, customs, and religion, habits, and ideology between two cultures which hampers mutual understanding and comprehension of the corresponding cultures. Cultural gap effects understanding and transmitting the message across cultures, generally, such cultural gaps are accompanied with linguistic gaps. Thus, a successful translation for cultural terms like idioms requires bridging the cultural and linguistic gaps, in addition to meeting readers' expectations. According to Yowelly and Lataiwish (2000, p.107), “the greater the gap between the source and target culture, the more serious difficulty would be”.

4. Relation between Culture and Translation

Translation is not merely a simple activity that can be exercised by rule application, but it is a cultural practice that transfers knowledge from one culture to another and promotes understanding among nations and cultures. That is to say, translation exceeds the fact of only interpreting words, sentences or articles, rather it also covers the transfer between cultures. According to Eugene Nida, translation consists in reproducing the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. However, to reproduce “the closest natural equivalent” in the target language is more or less influenced by the cultural differences. These problems created some translation obstacles which hamper people from understanding each other as it is expected. Nida (1964, p.130) argues that “the differences between cultures may cause many serious problems for the translator than do differences in language structure” this does not take for granted that the problems does not occur when the two languages belong to similar cultures, as Nida (1964) states “translation problems may happen even when the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) have some similar linguistic and cultural features” But the more different cultures are, the more translation problems are there. He continues; “Frequently where there is cultural focus, there is a translation problem due to the cultural ‘gap’ or ‘distance’ between the source and target languages”. Translation problems are not only restricted to cultural differences or
cultural gap; they also include the association of both cultural and linguistic problems. The lack of equivalents in Standard Arabic for certain English terms can be among these problems. So, the translator is attempts to look for the connotations of words and determine appropriate equivalents in particular contexts, if the equivalent word is not found then the lexical gaps can be filled with the Borrowings. Another problematic issue in translation is the interference of the translator’s personality. Every translator has his own mental as well as cultural point of view that is different from other translators. “A target language culture can also be extended by the introduction of new ideas and styles... the translational act may give rise to new forms of the target language” (Holman and Boase-Beier 1999, p.15).The translation may insert his ideas, expectation or point of view when translating a text or an idiom, whether he does it consciously or unconsciously. If the translator belongs to a culture different from that of the receptor, he may not transmit the message faithfully to him, it could be a kind of bias, in this respect Kussmaul (1995), “Translators have to be aware of the fact that readers' expectations, their norms and values, are influenced by culture and that their comprehensions of utterances is to a large extent determined by these expectations, norms and values” (p. 70).

1. **How does culture influence translation**

   In fact, translation’s main aim is how to get cultural equivalence between the source language and the target language, and avoiding the misunderstanding that might take place between them. Cultural equivalence is related to semantic equivalence and pragmatic equivalence. In translation, the meaning of a word usually can be either designative meaning or associative meaning. The former’s role is to define the range of referents which the word in question can represent, whereas “the associative meanings of a word are derived primarily from the context (both cultural and linguistics) in which such words habitually occur”.

   Thus, Semantic equivalence’s purpose is to achieve both types of meanings, two examples for illustration:

   **(1) One stone kills two birds:** "ﯾﻀﺮب ﻋﺼﻔﻮرﯾﻦ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ ﺑﺤﺠﺮ 

   *(these two idioms share the same meaning that we can achieve two aims by doing one thing.)*

   **(2) Castle in the air:** "ﯾﺒﻨﻲ ﻗﺼﺮ ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء ﻓﻲ اﻟﮭﻮاء 

   *(both two versions refer that some body’s thought or plan is actually not practical.)*

   Idiom constitute as the special cultural image. Its translation does not only need to give the meaning of the original, but also the national features have to remain.
2. Idioms as a Cultural Problem in Translation

The concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology (1996, cited in Kerdoun, 2001) defines idioms as expressions peculiar to a given language. This implies the idea of peculiarity that idioms can have for the reason of being related to one language rather than another. Due to the fact that idioms are culturally specific what makes it quite hard task to have the equivalent meaning in the target language, Baker (1992) stated that:

Idioms and fixed expressions which contain culture-specific items are not necessarily untranslatable. It is not the specific items an expression contains but rather the meaning it conveys and its association with culture-specific context which can make it untranslatable or difficult to translate. (p.68)

Thus, during the process of translating idioms, one has to take into account the context of use because it is very important for getting the meaning as it is expected. Teilanyo (2007, p.16) also stated that culturally-bound expressions as a source of difficulty in translation when saying; “The difficulty arises from the problem of finding adequate T.L equivalents for terms conveying culture-sensitive notions in the source language as a result of the fact that the two languages have different meaning subsystems and cultures.

To sum up, the process of translating idioms can simplify the target text and make it more original and less foreign. It is not impossible to look for a full equivalent of the idiomatic expression for the reason that idiomaticity constitutes a universal phenomenon.

Dealing with idioms, needs the lexical knowledge in addition to the cultural as well as stylistic and rhetorical knowledge about the TL. Nida (2001, p.28, cited in Chen, 2009) said that “finding a satisfactory equivalent for idioms is one of the most difficult aspects of translating”. So, it is a matter of fact that idioms are culture-bound. Moreover, Ghazala (2004) stated that finding difficulty in interpreting and translating idioms is inevitable for foreign students since it is quite hard to guess the meaning of idiomatic expressions. He claimed that context is quite significant for learners to understand the meaning of indirect idioms for the sake of avoiding the literal translation.

3. Challenges that EFL Learners Encountered in Translating Idiomatic Expressions

The previous researches mad about difficulties of translation idiomatic expressions had resulted in a group of major and shared problems that hinder the translation process. These difficulties can be introduced in the following points:

1. Unfamiliarity with the source language idiomatic expressions
2. The absence of unawareness of the strategies involved in the process of translating idiomatic expressions.

3. The immense gap between the source language culture (English) and the target language culture (Arabic).

4. Inability to recognize the cultural differences with regard to traditions, habits, ceremonies, entertainments and environment. Specially that there are some specific terms for these cultural items.

5. Inability to write well in the target language (Arabic); using slang words rather than standard. Although I do not think that this is a problem because since idioms reflects our life style, habits, tradition and language, the non-standard language is also considered as a part of the culture, hence it can be used since it illustrates the exact and appropriate meaning of the idiomatic expression.

6. There are some Idioms that have a similar counterpart in the target language but with different meaning.

7. Translating the idiom word by word rather than dealing with it as a whole unit

8. Understand the idiom’s meaning but cannot bring out an equivalent Arabic idiom.

9. The complexity of an idiom that may be used in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time.

10. Giving extra information (redundancy) that is not relevant to the idiomatic expression.

11. Most of the Arabic idiomatic expressions are frequently used in the various Arabic dialects rather than standard that makes them unaware of the standard equivalent.

12. An idiomatic expression may have more than one translation, so translators do not know what the one to be used.

13. Some translators lack prior knowledge in idiomatic expressions either in the source language or in the target or both.

14. Arabic culture is different from western cultures. Arabic makes use of words similar to their environments, habits, traditions and religion.

15. The grammatical structure of idiomatic expressions is different from what they get used to (in some cases illogical structure).

16. Some of the participants understand the meaning of the idiomatic expression but are unable to express its meaning in their own language.

17. The meaning of the idiomatic expression cannot be comprehended from the words within the text, alone.
Chapter two

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to investigate the difficulties that third year students faced when they translated English idioms into Arabic, specifically cultural problems. The strategies that students have applied to get the correct meaning of the idiomatic expression are also taken into account. The method used to test the hypothesis is also discussed in this chapter as well as data collection and analysis and the target sample.

1. **Research methodology:**

   The objective of this study is to test how third year students translate English idioms respecting the target culture and finding the appropriate equivalence. In our case study, students are asked to translate 20 English idioms, the data will be collected from this test and analysed.

2. **Data collection and sampling:**

   The instrument that was used to collect data for the study is a translation test, the participants were asked to translate 20 English idioms to Arabic, trying to provide ‘the appropriate equivalent’. The scoring scale is composed of four possible responses; correct answer, literal translation, wrong and no answer.

   The target population is third year students they are approximately 140 students, 30% (42 students) of them have been chosen as a sample of study. This population is chosen on the bases of two factors; first of all, they have studied translation for three years so they are aware of its procedure unlike master students who were not introduced to the translation process. Second, they are the advanced level among first or second year the thing that makes them possess a richer cultural background.

3. **Description of the test:**

   A test of translation was administered to third year students at Larbi Ben M’hidi University to investigate the major cultural challenges that they encounter in translating idiomatic expressions. The test consisted of twenty idiomatic expressions, which were chosen specifically to meet the requirements of the current study. The test was pretested before it was administrated. Each item in the test represented a specific aspect of culture such as religion, habits, sport, and beliefs. Concerning the score of the test, four main scales were chosen;
a) **Correct answer:** if the participant succeeds in providing the appropriate equivalent of the idiom in his source language, and transmitting the same meaning of the target language idiom.

b) **Literal translation:** the participant translates the idiom literally i.e. word for word translation. Sometimes, it results in providing a correct answer if the literal and metaphoric meaning of the idiom is the same, in other cases literal translation would be considered as wrong answer when the meaning of the constituent word of the idiom differs from its metaphorical meaning.

c) **Wrong answer:** if the participant provides an erroneous answer, where he gives a wrong equivalent idiom that does not express the same meaning of the target language idiom.

d) **No answer.**

4. **Data analysis and results:**

The results of students’ performance in the test are presented in tables with frequency and percentage of the four levels of scoring; correct, literal translation, wrong answer and no answer. Each idiom is discussed separately for a better explanation of the encountered difficulty.

1. **Idiom 1: forbidden fruit is sweet:**

   **Arabic Equivalent:**

   Table N°01: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N°01

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N°1</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![idiom n 1](image-url)
Figure N°1: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N°01

The meaning of this idiom is that the things that are prohibited for us in our religion or tradition are tempting. Its equivalence in Arabic is \( \text{ﻛﻞ ﻣﻤﻨﻮع ﻣﺮﻏﻮب} \). When translating this idiom 52% of students succeeded in providing the correct answer by giving the Arabic equivalent, due to their familiarity with this idiom that is inspired from the Islamic religion, particularly from the story of Adam and Eve in the holy Quran known by all Muslims, with a reference to the Christian belief in the bible (Genesis. 2:17) as well, whereas 12% of them who were not familiar with it have used literal translation or paraphrasing i.e. they relied on their semantic knowledge and not the cultural knowledge, so they answered 

\( \text{اﺷﺘﮭﺎء ﻣﺎ ﻣﺤﺮم} \) and \( \text{اﻟﻔﺎﻛﮭﺔ اﻟﻤﻤﻨﻮﻋﺔ ﻣﺤﺎرة} \). The use of literal translation strategy seemed acceptable and correct in this case because the literal and metaphorical meaning of this idiom is the same.

5% of the participants provided wrong answers; some of them did not understand the meaning of the word “forbidden” so they answered 

\( \text{اﻻﻟﻔﺎﻛﮭﺔ ﻣﺤﺎرة} \), and 14% of them have not answered because they are not have any previous knowledge about this idiom.

2. Idiom 2: Achilles’ heel:

Arabic Equivalent:

Table 02: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N°02

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N° 02</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure N°2: Students’ Answer Concerning Idiom N° 02
The meaning of this idiom is someone’s weakest point or fatal weakness. In Greek mythology, the nymph Thetis dipped her infant son Achilles in the water of the river Styx to make him immortal, but the heel by which she held him was not touched by the water; he was ultimately killed in a battle by an arrow wound in this one vulnerable spot. The results of the test shows that only 3 participants out of 42 provided the right answer which is “اليد التي تولم” and "ﻧﻘﻄﺔ ﺿﻌﻒ" because they are familiar with it and they have a cultural background on the story from which the idiom originates (mainly they watched the movie of Achilles). 5% of the participants translates the idiom word for word; “عقب اخيل” although the idiom is semantically and syntactically correct, it does not express the meaning of the source language idiom, the receptor does not understand that it is an insinuation to the weakness point, it is vague and senseless for him, so literal translation is not a successful strategy in this case.

17% of the students gave wrong answers because they did not know the name of ‘Achilles’ as well as the word ‘heel’ that some of them have translated it to ‘جهنم’ i.e. ‘hell’ or “hill” “ھضبة”. The higher percentage (27%) is the one of the students who provided no answer because of their non-familiarity of the idiom.

3. **Idiom 3: Benjamin of the family**

**Arabic Equivalent:** “اﺧﺮ اﻟﻌﻨﻘﻮد” “ﻣﺪﻟﻞ اﻟﻌﺎﺋﻠﺔ”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom n° 3</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The meaning of this idiom is the youngest or favourite son or daughter, when translating this idiom 41% of students have answered correctly and 14% provided a literal equivalent. However 26% of the students gave wrong answers and 19% of them did not answer.

Students who provided the correct Arabic equivalent are familiar with this idiom since it has a root in the story of the prophet Jacob and his son Benyamin, a shared knowledge between Islamic religion and Christianity. Students who translated this idiom literally "النجمان العائلة" or "صديق العائلة" and those who provided no answer do not know the story of the prophet Jacob, but they do not know its equivalence or its usage in the target language that is why they fail to translate the idiom correctly.

4. Idiom 4: ace in the whole

Arabic Equivalent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom n°04</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 04: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N° 04

The results of translating this idiom are as expected to be. Out of all students, no one could provide the correct equivalent in Arabic which is “ورقة رباحة”, and only 1 student (2% of the participants) translates it literally, although this technique (word for word translation) is acceptable but it does not transmit the correct message that someone has a valuable thing that makes him win. 22 participants (53%) translate it wrongfully; they did not recognize the word “ace”, so they have understood it as “ice”. Additionally 19 of them (45%) gave no answer, because this idiom belongs to gambling, and since the students belong to Islamic culture gambling is forbidden therefore it is expected that they students do not know how to translate it.

5. Idiom 5: turn water into wine

Arabic equivalent: "حول التراب إلى ذهب"

Table 05: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N° 05

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N° 05</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9% of the participants could provide the correct equivalent which is “mercial” because they have recognized both English and Arabic form of this idiom and the difference in word usage; the word ‘wine’ and ‘water’ used in English language while in Arabic the word ‘ ﺑُذْبُب’ are used. The vocabulary of the idiom are inspired from the culture since wine is permissible in western culture and forbidden in Arabic and Islamic culture, therefore it is substituted with the pre mentioned words. However, 38% of the sample (16 students) did not provide the Arabic equivalent, but used word for word translation as they answered “commercial”, still, they did not reach the exact meaning of the idiom which is someone who is skillful to the extent that he makes great things out of tiny stuff. The ones who gave wrong answers (29% of the participants) like “تأتي الريح بما لا "تنتهي السفن” or " " are ignorant of the T.C they have a number of Arabic idiom in mind but they did not know what is the meaning of the T.L idiom. The rest of the participants (24% of them) were not able to translate it, mainly because they are unfamiliar with this idiom.

6. Idiom N° 06: those who live by the sword die by the sword
Arabic equivalent: “ ﺑِذْبُب”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N° 06</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Idiom n° 06 is a good example about the importance and variety of the context, although this idiom has its Arabic equivalent that is semantically and syntactically similar, but culturally different. The meaning in English is people who kill or do bad things to people will be killed by the same way and have the same destiny, however, in Arabic it stands for “ﻣﻦ ﻋﺎش ﺷﺠﺎﻋﺎ ﻣﺎت ﺷﺠﺎﻋﺎ”. The ambiguity of such expression calls for a rich repertoire about the T.C, because even if the translator is semantically capable, he may fail in finding the significant meaning of the idiom that varies across cultures. As it is shown in the table below only 1 student out of 42 could provide a culturally appropriate equivalent which is “ﻛﻤﺎ ﺗﺪﯾﻦ ﺗﺪان”. Whereas the majority of them (55%) have translate it literally and did not deliver the anticipated meaning to the receptor. 10% of students have given wrong answers like “اﻟﺸﺠﺎع ﯾﻤﻮت ﺑﺎﻟﺴﯿﻒ”, the rest of the participants(8% of them) have not answered due to the unfamiliarity of the idiomatic expression to them.

7. **Idiom 7: extend the olive branch**

   Arabic equivalent: “ﺣﻤﺎﻣﺔ اﻟﺴﻼم”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N° 07</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of translating this idiom shows that only 1 student provided the correct answer, however 5 students used word for word translation. And; 12 participants failed to translate it correctly the wrote "التجربة خير برحان" or "لا تنتظر الحدود انفك وساع منظورك" in addition to 24 students who did not answer at all. This expression has biblical origins, and was seen as a symbol of peace. in Genesis, a dove brings an olive branch to Noah to indicate that God’s anger had died down and the flood waters had stopped. Participants who succeeded in giving the appropriate answer are familiar with this idiom they knew that an ‘olive branch’ is a symbol of peace in western culture so they replace it with “the dove” that represents peace in his culture, however those who did not know its meaning tried to use word for word translation to deduce the meaning but unfortunately they did not transmit a clear meaning of the expression. Concerning the rest of the participants, they did not provide the correct answer because they do not know its origin.

8. **Idiom 8: Dancing on someone’s grave**

**Arabic Equivalent:** “فقال القتيل ومشى في جنازته”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N°08</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The percentage of the answers was not as expected that the majority of the students will translate this idiom correctly but, only 5% of the participants provided the appropriate equivalent in their language and that is due to their previous knowledge about the meaning of this idiom, yet 43% of them translate it literally "الرقص على قبر احدهم", still they did not express the anticipated meaning in the Arabic culture. Concerning the 21% of the students, they provided erroneous answers such as “dancing with someone dangerous” in which they faced a semantic difficulty with the word “grave”, as they have translate it mean “dangerous” (like in French). For the rest of the participants (10%) they provided no answer.

9. Idiom 09: Turn a blind eye:
Arabic Equivalent:"عين رات وعين لم ترى "

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N° 09</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This idiom is dated back to the story of the famous English naval hero Admiral Horatio Nelson, who during the battle of Copenhagen in 1801, is alleged to have deliberately raised his telescope to his blind eye, thus ensuring that he would not see any signal from his superior giving him discretion to withdraw from the battle. 38% of the participants provided the correct answer since they have being exposed to this expression before, those who did not know its origin tried to guess from the literal meaning of the word but unfortunately they fail to express the exact meaning, so the answered by "يتحول عين العمى". Other students (29%) gave wrong answers like "عين بصيرة واليد قصيرة" or "في رمضاة عين" and the rest of them 21% did not answer.

10. Idiom 10: Charity begins at home

Arabic Equivalent: "اَلْقَرَحُونَ أَوْلِيَاءَ ﺑِالْمَعْرُوفَ"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N°10</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19% of the participants succeeded in translating this idiom where they have mentioned the appropriate T.L equivalent that is inspired from religion. However 50% of them did get the meaning but were unable to provide the equivalent, so they have translated it literally.

Concerning those who gave wrong answers (21% of the participants) "ﻣﻦ شبث علیه ﻣﺸﻲء شاﺑ" and this mainly since they did not possess a S.L equivalent, a small percentage of the participants (10%) have not answered probably because they are not familiar with this idiomatic expression.

11. Idiom 11: If you cannot stand heat get out of the kitchen
Arabic Equivalent: “يخشى صعود الجبل يعش اباد الدهر في الحفر”

Table 11: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N° 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N° 11</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both Arabic and English versions of this idiom share the same structure and meaning but differ in word use; in English it is drawn from daily life ‘kitchen heat’, however in Arabic it is about the environment or nature ‘mountain, holes’ therefore students who are aware of this fact (6 students) have answered correctly, unlike the 25 students who did not recognize the SL equivalent and have translated it literally.

The six students who could not identify the appropriate Arabic equivalent have answered wrongfully by "لا تتدخل فيما لا يعنيك حتى لا تسمع ما لا يرضيك". This idiom is completely different from the English idiom, so students knew the meaning of the TL idiom but they did not know its Arabic equivalent, the rest of the participants (5 participants) have not answered at all.

12. Idiom 12: If Mohamed won’t come to the mountain, the mountain must come to Mohamed
Arabic equivalent: "إذا لم تستطع فعل شيء بالتي هي احسن افعله بالقوة"

Table 10: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N°12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N°12</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 1 (2% of the participants) student have translated this idiom correctly, although he did not provide a well-known equivalent idiom but he got the exact meaning which is if you cannot do things in the easy way do it in the hard way. The high
percentages of students (55%) have translated this idiom word for word yet they have not reached the exact meaning of this idiomatic expression.

14% of students provided wrong answers and this is because of the significance of the name “Mohamed” as a religious name of the prophet Mohamed peace be upon him, so they translate it by the sentence "محمد (صلى الله عليه وسلم) خاتم الرسل". And 29% of them did not know what does this idiom stands for, therefore they gave no answer.

13. Idiom 13: poor as a church mouse

Arabic Equivalent: " ﻣﺤﻤﺪ )ﺻﻠﻰ ﷲ ﻋﻠﯿﮫ وﺳﻠﻢ( ﺧﺎﺗﻢ اﻟﺮﺳﻞ.

And 29% of them did not know what does this idiom stands for, therefore they gave no answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N° 13</th>
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<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This English idiom is about a religious matter back in the 1960th when Christian church were poor to the extent that even a mouse could not find what to eat, the 5 students who provided the appropriate equivalent which is inspired from religion too when Omar Ibn Alkhabtab said “if poverty was a man, I would of killed him”. However, 18 students did not refer to this fact instead the translated this idiomatic expression literally.

Some participants (6 participants) gave wrong answer like "الفقر بيت السعادة" and others (13 participants) gave no answer because they are unfamiliar with this idiom.

14. Idiom 14: Road to hell is paved with good intentions

Arabic Equivalent: خيرا تعمل شرا
Table 14: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N°14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N° 14</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
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<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure N°14: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N°14

Only a small number of students (3 students) provided the appropriate S.L equivalent because the idiom is familiar to them; however 19 students who had not being introduced to this idiomatic expression guessed its meaning from its constituents word and translate it word for word.

10 students out of 42, gave wrong answers like "طﺮﯾﻖ اﻟﻨﺠﺎﺣ مﻠﯾء ﺑﺎﻟﺸﻮك" or "وﻋﺴﻰ انﺗﻜﺮھﻮاﺷﯿﺌﺎوھﻮﺧﯿﺮﻟﻜﻢ" the same number of students (10 students) had not provided any answer because they are not familiar with this expression.

15. Idiom 15: When in Rome do as Romans do

Arabic Equivalent: دارهم دارهم وأرضهم أرضهم

Table 15: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N° 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N 15</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This idiomatic expression is used particularly for behaviour especially for a guest or a visitor to mean that he must behave appropriately in a given context and respect the place and the people he is with. 19% of the participants gave the right Arabic equivalent because they have being introduced to it; however, 64% of them preferred to translate it literally so it preserves its significance in the T.C rather than the S.C.

7% of the participants translated this idiom erroneously, "ﻣﻦ ﻋﺎﺷﺮ ﻗﻮﻣﺎ اﺻﺒﺢ ﻣﻨﮭﻢ" so they provided an appropriate equivalent that varies in meaning with the T.L idiom. The rest of participants (10%) had provided no answer.

16. Idiom 16: Look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N° 16</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure N°15: Students’ answers Concerning Idiom N° 15

Table 16: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N°16

Figure N°16: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N°16
The meaning of this idiom is that people cannot gain a great deal of money without starting with making a small amount of it, or they cannot achieve success in a night and day, but they must work hard and be patient. A small number of the participants (10% of them) provided the correct answer by offering the T.L equivalent. However, 17% have translated it literally; these students knew the meaning of the words that constitute the idiomatic expression; they had not provided its Arabic equivalent because they lack the cultural background knowledge, not English culture but the Arabic one. 19% of the participants gave wrong answers because they were not able to predict the meaning of the words ‘pennies’ and ‘pounds’ that stands for currency, though they gave irrelevant idioms such as “لا تندخل فيما لا يعنيك حتى لا تسمع مالا يرضيك” and “انظر لعيوبك بدل أن تنظر لعيوب الناس”. The majority of the participants provided no answer because they are unfamiliar with this expression and did not know the meaning of the aforementioned words as well.

17. Idiom 17: Know which way the wind blows

Arabic Equivalent: يعزف من اين تكول الكتف

Table 17: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N°17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N°17</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure N° 17: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N°17
When we say that someone knows which way the wind blows, we mean that he knows how to take care of his business, how to find solutions for the problems he faces. The English version of this idiom is inspired from seafaring particularly said to experienced or good sailors who know the wind direction and therefore know how to control their ships and save them from storms, and then the idiom was used in different context to express well-planning. However the Arabic version was inspired from Bedouin life for the one who knows how to eat the good parts of meat. Concerning the results of translating this idiomatic expression; 10% of the participants provided the accurate S.L equivalent stated above due to their previous knowledge about this expression, and 52% of them had guessed the connotation from the literal meaning of the constituent word without any reference to their S.L version of the idiomatic expression. Furthermore, 24% of the participants gave wrong answers due to the unfamiliarity of this expression to them like "الرياح بما لا تشهيه السفن" and 6% had no answered at all.

18. Idiom N° 18: do not count your chickens until they have hatched

Arabic equivalent: Non-standard version: "يزيد بوزيد"

Standard version: "لا تعد نقودك قبل ان تكسبها"

Table 18: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N°18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N° 18</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 18: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N° 18
Sometimes the S.L equivalent does not exist in standard language but rather in a non-standard one like in this idiom, some students (6 of them) had answered correctly either by given the non-standard language equivalent used in their daily lives that expresses the anticipated meaning of the T.L idiom and represents their S.C, or by giving the standard form in which the word substitution is the only difference between the English and Arabic version of the idiom (chickens → ﻧﻘﻮدك, hatched → ﺗﻜﺴﺒﮭﺎ). However 19 students (45% of them) had translated it literally and preserved the target culture connotation. Moreover, there are some students (6 students) who failed in interpreting this expression by answering"من حسن ماله ضاع منه", the rest of the students had not answered because they did not find the appropriate equivalent of this expression and this is due to the unfamiliarity of the idiom to them.

19. Idiom N° 19: Birds of a feather flock together

Arabic Equivalent: الطيور على أشكالها تقع

Table 19: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N°19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N° 19</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
<th>Wrong answer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure N° 19: the percentage of answers of the idiom N° 19

The meaning of this idiom is people with the same characteristics, manners or interests stick together. This expression has its total equivalent (same meaning and form) in Arabic as stated above which most of the participants (52% of them) had succeeded to figure it out due to the similarity between both versions i.e. the structure and word usage
and the meaning of both Arabic and English version of the idiom are identical. 17% of the participants had not referred to their T.L when translating this expression; instead, they had translated it literally.

20. Idiom 20: Beating a dead horse

Arabic Equivalent: ﻳﻀﺮب اﻟﺮﯾﺢ ﺑﺎﻟﻌﺼﺎ

Table 20: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N°20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom N° 20</th>
<th>Correct answer</th>
<th>Literal translation</th>
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<td>9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure N° 20: Students’ Answers Concerning Idiom N° 20

This idiom is used when someone tries to convince people to do something but he could not make them do it. It was expected that the majority of participants will answer in a correct way but, only 34% of them had provided the correct equivalent, these students knew the meaning of the idiomatic expression in the target culture (TL), and succeeded in relating it with its equivalent expression (stated above) in their source culture (SL). However 24% of the participants had relied on the literal connotation of the words to give the meaning of the idiom, instead of going back to their culture to afford an appropriate equivalent, this is mainly because they are not familiar with this expression and with its usage in daily life. The 21% participants who had gave wrong answers; were also unfamiliar with the expression, but they did not translate it literally instead; they gave wrong answers because they faced a semantic problem in understanding the word.
'beating’, thus they had interpreted it wrongfully to mean “‘betting’ on a dead horse”, however others had faced a cultural problem in which they had failed to provide the correct equivalent idiom, they had given a different idiomatic expression that was not identical to the TC idiom which is “ ﻓ käh دا جواد ﻛبوة” the same percentage of students (21%) provided no answers because they are introduced to this idiom for the first time.

5. Conclusion:

The results demonstrate that English students face difficulties in deducing the appropriate meaning of idiomatic expressions, these difficulties are sometimes semantic and more frequently cultural. Students do not possess rich background knowledge about idioms, and even if they sometimes know the correct meaning of the idiomatic expression, they fail to match it with their T.L idiom; this is mainly due to the nature of idioms’ meaning that cannot be deduced from the meaning of the constituent words. In other cases they tend to explain or paraphrase the idiom.

Another point is that students try to provide the T.L equivalent using standard language, but sometimes this equivalent may exist in the non-standard language, hence they have to translate it using the non-standard form. In addition, a various strategies of translation that have been mentioned in the theoretical part were not used, students stick only to one strategy which is word for word translation although it does not always result in an accurate answer.

Limitation of the study

Although this study was smooth in procedure and data collection, the participants (sample of the study) were cooperative and time was sufficient, there were some difficulties that hindered the easy-going process of the study, namely:

1. Some idioms did not possess a S.L equivalent in the standard language, so it became a need to accept the use of non-standard language as far as it conveys the accurate meaning.
2. Some idioms did not possess a S.L equivalent, neither in standard language nor in the non-standard one.
3. Some references were not available; or for purchasing online.

Pedagogical implication

a. The grammatical and semantic know ledges are not enough for recognizing culture-based expressions like idioms, therefore it is recommended to enrich students’ cultural background through the extensive implementation or teaching of culture although some
teachers may argue that culture is everywhere and there is no need for teaching it separately.

b. Students should be encouraged to dare using other translation strategies like borrowing, paraphrasing, calque, rather than sticking to only literal translation.

c. The cultural gap between the western culture (English culture) and the oriental culture (Arabic culture) should be decreased by rising students’ awareness about cultural variation and the importance of background knowledge.
List of references


As Levine affirms, “the literary translator can be considered a subversive scribe”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English idiom</th>
<th>Arabic equivalent</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forbidden fruit is sweet</td>
<td>نقصت التفاح الغير متوفرة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achilles’ heel</td>
<td>نقصت الحذاء</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin of the family</td>
<td>نقصت أنواع العائلة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ace in the hole</td>
<td>نقصت الأصبع</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn water into wine</td>
<td>نقصت الماء</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who live by the sword die by the sword</td>
<td>نقصت هؤلاء الذين يعيشون بالسكين يهلكون</td>
</tr>
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<td>Extend the olive branch</td>
<td>نقصت الفراشة</td>
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<td>Dancing on someone’s grave</td>
<td>نقصت الرقص على قبر شخص</td>
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<td>Turn a blind eye</td>
<td>نقصت النظر</td>
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<td>Charity begins at home</td>
<td>نقصت الخير</td>
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<td>لا تتحمل الحرارة بعدم البقاء في المطبخ</td>
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<td>If Muhammed won’t come to the mountain , the mountain must come to Muhammed</td>
<td>إذا لم يذهب مهملًا إلى الجبل ، يجب أن يذهب الجبل إلى مهمل</td>
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<td>Poor as a church mouse</td>
<td>نقصت كابن الكنيسة</td>
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<tr>
<td>Road to hell is paved with good intentions</td>
<td>نقصت الطريق إلى الجحيم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When in Rome , do as romans do</td>
<td>في روما ، مثل الرومان</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves</td>
<td>قارن بين قروض الأ Üniversitesi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know which way the wind blows</td>
<td>نقصت الريان</td>
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<table>
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<td>Do not count your chickens until they have hatched</td>
<td>....................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>........................................</td>
<td>....................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beating a dead horse</td>
<td>....................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>........................................</td>
<td>....................................................</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birds of a feather flock together</td>
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Résumé

Cette étude vise à explorer les obstacles culturels qui se produisent lors de la traduction des expressions idiomatiques. Ces difficultés rencontrées par les étudiants lorsqu’ils tentent de trouver approprié arabe synonymes. Sur cette base, l’objectif de cette recherche est de montrer les obstacles culturels qui entravent la traduction de ces phrases idiomatiques de l’anglais dans la langue maternelle (arabe), parmi les étudiants de la langue anglaise (troisième année) de l’université de Larbi Ben M’ hidi, ainsi que l’explorer les raisons pour lesquelles ils se produisent et essaient de trouver des solutions appropriées à ces difficultés. Sur la base de ces objectifs, on soumettre les apprenants à un test composant de vingt idiommes en anglais, et leur a demandé de fournir le synonyme approprié. Les résultats de cette recherche ont révélé qu’en plus d’avoir une certaine difficulté à connaître la signification de certains mots de l’idiome, les étudiants ont également confrontent des obstacles lié à l’aspect culturel, ou la plupart d’entre eux ne pouvaient pas trouver le sens métaphorique de ces termes, et appuyés uniquement sur la signification linguistique. Les raisons de l’apparition de ces obstacles sont que ces idiomes sont non-familiers aux étudiants, et aussi à cause de la faiblesse de la culture anglaise en générle et les idiomes comme un héritage culturels en particulier. Pareillement, l’utilisation de la stratégie de traduction littérale par le étudiant ne pas toujours efficace pour découvrir le exact sens de l’expression idiomatique et elle peut conduire à une distorsion du sens. Pour essayer de passer ces problèmes, ils doivent être sur les apprenantes d’enrichissent leur cultures et d’employant des autres stratégies de traduction qui peuvent les aider à atteindre les synonymes appropriés pour les expressions idiomatiques anglaise.
هدف هذه الدراسة هو محاولة إيجاد مرادفات عربية مناسبة للعبارات الإصطلاحية الإنجليزية. هذا الأساس فإن الهدف المنشود من هذا البحث هو تبيان الصعوبات الثقافية التي تعرقل ترجمة عبارة اللغة الإنجليزية إلى اللغة العربية، لدى طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة العربي بن مهدي الثالثة جامعي، وكذا تقسيم أسباب حدوثها وابدال حلول مناسبة لهذه الصعوبات. وبناء على هاته الأهداف، فقد كشفت النتائج هذا البحث أنه بالإضافة إلى التعابير الإصطلاحية الإنجليزية، فإن الطلبة قد واجهوا أيضا عقبات متعلقة بالناحية الثقافية حيث لم يتمكن معظمهم من إيجاد المعنى المجازي لهذه التعابير واعتمدوا فقط على المعنى اللغوي، والسبب في حدوث هذه العقبات يعود إلى أن هاته التعابير الإصطلاحية غير مألوفة للطلبة وضعف اطلاعهم على الثقافة الإنجليزية عامة والتعابير الإصطلاحية خاصة كموروث ثقافي هام، إلى أن استخدام الطلبة لاستراتيجية الترجمة الحرفي فحسب لا يمكن دائما ناجحا بل بعض الأحيان قد يؤدي إلى فشل. وللوقوف على الطريقة الحقيقية، اقتصر الطلبة وجد على الطلبية اقتراحات إضافية وتوظيف استراتيجيات ترجمة أخرى والتي بإمكانها مساعدتهم على الوصول للمرادفات المناسبة للتعابير الإصطلاحية الإنجليزية.