

THE PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATING IDIOMS AND FIXED EXPRESSIONS AND STRATEGIES TO PREVENT THEM

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In the period in which English is flourishing and developing as a global language, it is essential to be able to speak fluently and appropriately to excel at it and accomplish a wide range of educational opportunities and economic growth. As long as it is impossible to conduct English communication without fluent speech, learners are required to be devoted to translating and learning the idioms and fixed phrases as well as applying them in their speech correctly and translators are in charge of this procedure.

First and foremost, translators should be aware of the exact definition and usage of the idioms and fixed phrases while translating them from the source language to the target language. Baker (1992) considers idioms as the frozen patterns of language carrying the united meaning of several words and keeping the same variation or with little changes.

There are two main procedures while translating set expressions such as equivalence and non-equivalence. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) explain the former as a procedure that “replicates the identical circumstance as the original, but with the entirely different terminology”. Additionally, they claim that when the equivalence is accomplished in the translation, the stylistic impact of the source language is kept in the text in the target language. In most cases, it is impossible to achieve the full equivalence as Jakobson (in Bassnett, 1991) and Armstrong (2005) argue that it is not always available to apply direct equivalent but the translator has to find the nearest possibility.

When cultural, stylistic, grammatical, and lexical differences are experienced during the translation process, non-equivalence appears. According to Bassnett (1991), it can be present when “the absence in the target culture of a relevant situational feature for the source language text”. The example of “snow” is provided by Sapir and Whorf (1964) which perfectly illustrates the phenomenon. The mentioned word has many alternatives in European countries as they have more a year, whilst in Arabic countries, it only means the single type of snow.

A translation problem is a burden that stops the translator from interpreting the source-language text as there are grammatical, stylistic, lexical, or cultural translation problems. Complicated source language grammar, differences in grammar, and word order in the target language cause grammatical translation problems. The translation of the conditional, verbal or nominal sentences; verbs such as “be”, “have” and modal verbs, and translation of tenses can be the perfect example of grammatical problems. In case there is an obstacle with misunderstanding or not understanding entirely the expression or word. According to Ghazala (1995), the major issues include monosemy and polysemy, synonymy, and collocations. A style means how the text or sentence is written and challenges concerning it are vital in the transmission of the meaning. For example, we have formal vs informal, simple vs complex, or fronting. Culture and its impact on the translation create an obstacle to translating correctly also since every nation or cultural group has different perspectives of the world. For

example, The French use the pronoun “vous” when they are with an important person in formal situation and when it is informal and with their friends or family members, they use “tu”.

There are various strategies available to solve the difficulties that occur during the translation process. According to Baker (1992), the main ways that help to deal with the problem of lexical equivalence at the word level are the following:

- Translation by using neutral or less expressive words; it overcomes the differences in the meaning and when there is no direct equivalent, it is preferable to provide neutral or more formal words;

- Translation by a superordinate (a general term); with the help of this translation strategy a general term to refer to the specific one can be given by a translator;

- Translation by the loan words; is the translation strategy that can be used with modern concepts and culture-specific items. According to Campbell (1998), “a loan word is a lexical term which has been borrowed from another language, a word which originally not a part of the vocabulary of the recipient language but was adopted from some other language and made part of the borrowing language’s vocabulary”;

- Translation by omission; As Baker (1992) states omitting does not change the original meaning of the text, the translator can simply omit the words if there is no equivalent.

Throughout this scientific work, some problems related to translating the idioms and expressions were discussed and analyzed with relevant examples. The main features that a translator should take into consideration are different – grammar, word order, culture, or style between the source language and target language. The translation strategies such as using omission, a superordinate, loan words, or the less expressive words are widely used to overcome the translation problems mentioned above in case there is no direct equivalent in the target language.

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