

Difficulties in Translating English Idioms into Arabic: An Analytical-Descriptive Study of Undergraduate EFL Students at Azzaytuna University

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الصعوبات في ترجمة المصطلحات الإنجليزية إلى اللغة العربية: دراسة وصفية تحليلية لطلاب جامعة الزيتونة

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Abstract:

This analytical-descriptive study investigates the challenges faced by undergraduate students in translating English idioms into Arabic. Conducted at the English Language Department, Faculty of Languages and Translation, Azzaytuna University, the research involved sixteen participants who completed a test consisting of twenty English idiomatic expressions for translation into Arabic. The findings conclusively indicate that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students lack the necessary tools and skills for accurate idiomatic translation, often resorting to literal translations or failing to provide any equivalent. This suggests a critical need for enhanced pedagogical approaches to address the linguistic and cultural nuances inherent in idiomatic expressions, ultimately aiming to improve students' translation proficiency and overall communicative competence.

Keywords: English Idioms, Idiomatic Translation, Libyan Students.

الملخص:

تشكل التعبيرات الاصطلاحية جزءاً مهماً من اللغة الإنجليزية لأنها تظهر طوال الوقت في كل من الأشكال المكتوبة والمنطوقة بمعانٍ مجازية وحرافية. إن معرفة المعنى الصحيح يجعل مهمة فهم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية مهمة صعبة للطلاب. هذه المقالة هي دراسة وصفية تحليلية تهدف إلى استكشاف تحديات ترجمة التعبيرات الإصطلاحية من اللغة الإنجليزية إلى العربية. حيث أجريت الدراسة بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية (كلية اللغات والترجمة)، بجامعة الزيتونة. وتم تسليم الاختبار المكون من ستة عشر تعبيراً اصطلاحياً لعشرين مشاركاً وذلك لترجمتها للغة العربية. وأظهرت النتائج بشكل قاطع أن طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية يفتقرن إلى الأدوات والمهارات الكافية التي تساعدهم على الترجمة بشكل مناسب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المصطلحات الإنجليزية، ترجمة المصطلحات، الطلاب الليبيين.

Introduction

Background and Significance of Idioms

Idiomatic expressions constitute a fundamental and pervasive component of the English language, appearing consistently in both written and spoken communication. These expressions often carry both figurative and literal meanings, adding depth and nuance to linguistic exchanges. The adept use of idioms is widely regarded as a significant indicator of language proficiency, serving as an effective means to enhance communicative skills within daily contexts. Consequently, non-native English learners must cultivate a profound

understanding of idioms, encompassing not only their true semantic content but also their intricate cultural associations.

Despite the acknowledged importance of idiomatic competence, accurately interpreting these expressions presents a considerable challenge for EFL students. This article presents an analytical-descriptive study specifically designed to explore the difficulties encountered when translating English idioms into Arabic. The investigation was conducted within the English Language Department at the Faculty of Languages and Translation, Azzaytuna University, focusing on a cohort of sixteen undergraduate EFL students. These participants were administered a test comprising twenty distinct idiomatic expressions to be translated into Arabic. Preliminary observations from this study indicated that EFL students generally demonstrate a deficiency in the requisite tools and skills for accurate idiomatic translation. This initial finding immediately highlights a significant disparity between the expected proficiency level, where idiom use signals advanced language mastery, and the actual performance of these students. This discrepancy underscores the practical importance and severity of the challenges under investigation, suggesting that current language education may not be adequately preparing students for this critical aspect of linguistic competence.

Literal vs. Figurative Meaning and Idiomatic Expressions

Language, as a primary human communication skill, encompasses both literal and figurative meanings. Literal meaning refers to the direct, explicit interpretation of a word or a sentence, corresponding precisely to the object or concept it denotes, without any implied or hidden connotations. Conversely, figurative meaning is employed to provide imaginative descriptions or to achieve a special rhetorical effect, thereby implying a hidden meaning that cannot be predicted or inferred solely from the individual words that constitute the expression. Idiomatic expressions are an intrinsic and ubiquitous part of everyday language use; individuals often employ them extensively in their daily lives, whether in spoken or written forms, sometimes even unconsciously. An idiomatic expression is best characterized as a colloquial metaphor, demanding not only a foundational knowledge and experience in both the native language (L1) and the target language (L2) but also a robust cultural background in both the source and target texts from the translator. This cultural dimension is paramount, as idioms are frequently inspired by and deeply embedded within the native speakers' culture, a context that foreign learners often lack.

Statement of the Problem, Purposes, and Limitations

Statement of the Problem

Languages such as English and Arabic exhibit profound cultural and linguistic differences, which are particularly pronounced in the domain of idiomatic translation. These disparities mean that a direct, word-for-word translation of idiomatic expressions is often unfeasible and frequently leads to substantial misunderstandings and mistranslations of the source text. This phenomenon represents a considerable challenge for undergraduate students engaged in translation studies. Consequently, it is not straightforward to translate an idiomatic expression or to identify a precise equivalent in the many idioms. This indicates a profound level of difficulty, suggesting not just a mistranslation, but a complete inability to even attempt a translation. This complete lack of response implies a fundamental barrier, perhaps a total absence of comprehension of the idiom's meaning or a perceived lack of any conceptual equivalent in the target language, thereby reinforcing the depth of the cultural and linguistic challenge more profoundly than a simple incorrect attempt. target language that fully captures its original meaning and nuance. This observation prompted the researcher to investigate the

specific problems that undergraduate English students encounter when attempting to translate idiomatic expressions. The analysis of student performance reveals that beyond mere incorrect translations, a significant number of "no answers" were recorded for

Purposes of the Study

This study was designed with two primary objectives :

1. To identify the major problems that undergraduate students face when translating English idioms.
2. To propose viable solutions to overcome these identified problems, thereby facilitating a better understanding and more accurate translation of idioms among students.

Study Limitations

This study is subject to three specific limitations, which define its scope and generalizability:

1. **Subject Limitation:** The research exclusively focuses on investigating the difficulties encountered by participants at Azzaytuna University during the translation of idiomatic expressions. Therefore, the findings may not be directly transferable to students at other institutions or in different linguistic contexts.
2. **Time Limitation:** The study was conducted during the seventh and eighth semesters of the academic year 2022-2023. This temporal constraint means that the findings reflect the specific curriculum and pedagogical approaches in place during that period.
3. **Place Limitation:** The study was specifically carried out at Azzaytuna University, within the Faculty of Languages and Translation, English Department. This geographical and institutional specificity further limits the generalizability of the findings to broader populations of EFL students.

Literature Review

General Challenges in Idiom Translation

Translating idiomatic expressions poses a significant challenge for undergraduate students and is a source of concern for their professors. Students often lack the necessary strategies to effectively translate idioms, leading them to frequently resort to literal translations. This tendency to translate word-for-word stems from an insufficient understanding of appropriate translation methods that could otherwise guide them. Several previous studies have explored the difficulties students experience when attempting to translate idioms into various other languages, including Arabic. The current study builds upon this existing body of research, employing an analytical exploratory procedure designed to specifically highlight the challenges faced by English students at Azzaytuna University when dealing with the translation of idioms into Arabic.

Definitions and Characteristics of Idioms

Linguists and scholars specializing in various branches of language studies offer diverse definitions of idioms, reflecting their multifaceted nature.

- **Jarvie (1993, p. 148)** defines an idiom as "an expression whose meaning cannot easily be defined... worked out from the words it contains". He further notes that idioms inherently possess the potential to cause considerable difficulty for foreign learners of a language. Non-native speakers often struggle with understanding idioms because their meaning cannot always be deduced from their constituent words, and they are frequently inspired by the native speakers' culture, knowledge of which foreign learners typically lack.

- The etymological root of the word "idiom" traces back to the Greek "idioma," meaning "special feature or special property," and "idios," meaning "strange" or "individual". This etymology reflects the unique, individual, or peculiar nature often associated with idiomatic expressions.
- **Crystal (1980, p. 179)** provides a more technical definition, describing 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". He elaborates that the meaning of an idiomatic expression cannot be derived by simply combining the meanings of its individual words. Furthermore, the internal structure of idioms often disallows any contextual variability or word substitution; for instance, the idiom "to shed crocodile tears" does not permit alterations such as "*to shed cat or bird tears*" or "*the crocodile tears are being shed*". Crystal also points out that idioms are often illogical, and few strictly adhere to conventional grammatical rules.
- **Palmer (1976, p. 148)** similarly asserts that an idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot be inferred from its individual components. He further defines idioms as "collocations of a special kind whose meaning is often opaque". Idioms are also subject to numerous syntactic, semantic, and grammatical restrictions, leading to the understanding that idioms function as semantically single units that should not be analyzed into their individual words.
- **Collins (1995)** offers a complementary definition, stating that 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". He highlights that idioms are typically metaphorical, functioning as figurative, non-literal expressions that have become fixed or "fossilized" (unchangeable) over time.
- **Fernando (1997, pp. 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 key features of idioms:
 - **Compositeness:** Idioms are multiword expressions, ranging in length from short two-word compound structures to complex clauses with multiple subordinate clauses.
 - **Institutionalization:** Idioms are products of social interaction, serving as vehicles through which people express their experiences and collective wisdom.
 - **Semantic Opacity:** This refers to the inherent figurativeness and non-literalness of idioms, making their meaning non-transparent.

Importance of Idioms in Language Proficiency and Pedagogy

Despite the acknowledged difficulty in comprehending or translating them, idioms hold significant importance in daily life and communication. The use of figurative language is considered a hallmark of native-like language proficiency, and idiomaticity itself is a natural indicator of fluency and mastery that language learners are expected to achieve. Recently, linguists and language teachers have increasingly emphasized the critical role of idioms.

Bortfeld (2003) notes that the growing number of idioms documented in the Dictionary of American Idioms (Boatner, Gates, and Makkai, 1975-1995) serves as clear evidence of their essential function in daily language use.

Moreno (2011) articulates three primary reasons why teaching idioms is crucial, arguing that their high frequency necessitates special attention, preventing them from being relegated to a secondary status in the curriculum :

- Firstly, language learners who frequently and appropriately use idioms are more likely to achieve fluency and develop a sophisticated figurative and communicative competence. Moreover, idioms enrich language with variety and character, thereby assisting learners in penetrating and understanding the culture, customs, and lifestyle of the target language.
- Secondly, cognitive linguistic studies have consistently demonstrated the vital role of memory in the acquisition and retention of fixed expressions such as idioms. This highlights the importance of carefully considering the teaching and learning abilities related to idioms and their pedagogical implications.
- Finally, many idioms undergo constant evolution over time. To uncover their underlying essence and fully grasp their meaning, it becomes necessary to explore cultural factors and adopt a diachronic view of language, often involving etymological elaboration.

Translation Theories and Difficulties

Taber (1982, p.208) defines 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, according to them, typically consists of three distinct stages:

- Analysis:** This involves a set of procedures, including back transformation and componential analysis, aimed at discovering the underlying semantic kernels of the source text and achieving the clearest possible understanding of its meaning.
- Transfer:** This stage entails the reproduction of the message into the target language.
- Restructuring:** This final stage involves changing the form of the discourse without altering the contents of the message. Specifically, it focuses on transforming the raw results of the transfer process into a stylistic form that is appropriate for the target language and its intended receptors. While the task of translation can be stimulating and rewarding, translators frequently encounter difficulties in the translation process. Translating idioms, in particular, is hindered not only by grammatical or syntactical complexities but also by other significant socio-linguistic factors, most notably culture.

- Teilanyo (2007, p.16)** emphasizes 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".
- Balfaqeeh (2009, p. 6)** further articulates the common problem related to finding appropriate "equivalence," stating 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".
- Bassnett-McGuire (1980, p.24)** asserts 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," thereby emphasizing the importance of functional equivalence.
- Baker (1992, pp.68-71)** summarizes the principal difficulties a translator faces when translating idiomatic expressions :
 - The non-existence of a direct equivalent in the target language, as the ways languages express meaning are diverse and not easily predictable.
 - An idiom may have a similar counterpart in the target language, but its context of use differs significantly.
 - An idiom may be employed in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses simultaneously, creating ambiguity.

- The very convention of using idioms in written discourse, the specific contexts in which they can be used, and their frequency of use may vary considerably between the source and target languages.
- Additionally, Awwad (2013) stresses that when the target language (TL) and the source language (SL) are culturally dissimilar, translators are more prone to experiencing difficulties in the translation process. Ignorance or a lack of knowledge regarding the SL and TL cultures can lead to the translated idiom deviating from its true or correct meaning as expressed in its natural context.

The literature review extensively details the inherent difficulties of idioms, such as their semantic opacity and the challenges in finding direct equivalents. The empirical results of this study, particularly the high rates of incorrect and "no answers" for many idioms, serve as direct, real-world validation of these theoretical difficulties. This connection strengthens the study's contribution by demonstrating how abstract linguistic theories manifest in concrete learning challenges for students, thereby confirming the practical relevance of these theoretical constructs. Furthermore, the strong advocacy by scholars like Moreno for teaching idioms due to their importance for fluency and communicative competence, when combined with the empirical evidence of students' significant struggles and the identified reasons for these struggles (semantic opacity, cultural differences, lack of strategies), leads to a clear pedagogical imperative. This implies that current teaching methods are insufficient and that a more deliberate, culturally-sensitive, and strategy-focused approach to idiom instruction is not merely beneficial but essential for developing truly proficient translators and language users.

Research Design and Procedures

Research Design

The study employed an analytical-descriptive research design. This methodological approach was selected to systematically explore and describe the challenges encountered by undergraduate students in translating English idioms, and to analyze the specific types of errors made and the translation strategies, or lack thereof, employed by the participants.

Participants of the Study

The participants in this study were sixteen Libyan undergraduate students enrolled in the English Department of the Faculty of Languages and Translation at Azzaytuna University. These EFL students were in their seventh and eighth semesters, indicating an advanced stage in their academic program. Participants were selected randomly, and their ages ranged from 20 to 24 years. The selection of this specific population was based on two primary factors :

1. **Prior Translation Study:** All participants had completed at least two semesters of dedicated translation courses, suggesting a foundational familiarity with translation theories and procedures.
2. **Advanced Level:** Their enrollment in higher semesters positioned them as advanced-level students, implying an expectation of a richer cultural background and more developed linguistic skills relevant to the complexities of idiomatic translation.

However, a notable observation arises from the subsequent results, which reveal significant struggles among these ostensibly "advanced" students, with many idioms receiving very low correct translation rates and high "no answer" rates. This presents a paradox: if these students are indeed at an advanced level with relevant translation training, their fundamental difficulties with idioms suggest that the current "advanced" curriculum or pedagogical approaches may not be adequately addressing the specific complexities of idiomatic

translation, or that the assumed "richer cultural background" is insufficient for the nuanced understanding required. This observation implies that the problem is more deeply rooted in the educational system than merely a lack of initial exposure for beginners.

Instrument of Study: The Translation Test

A translation test served as the primary instrument for data collection in this study. The test comprised twenty English idiomatic expressions, which participants were required to translate into Arabic, aiming to provide the most appropriate equivalent translation. The test was meticulously designed with dual objectives: to explore the specific difficulties participants encountered when translating idioms and to detect the underlying strategies they employed during this process. The inclusion of an adequate number of idioms (twenty) was crucial to ensure the representativeness of the sample of English idioms, thereby preventing the detected difficulties from being based on a limited number of expressions with which participants might already be familiar.

Scoring Scale

The scoring scale for the translation test was structured into three possible response categories:

- **Correct Answer:** This category was assigned when a student successfully provided an appropriate equivalent of the idiom in Arabic, accurately conveying the full meaning of the English idiom.
- **Wrong Answer:** This category was recorded when a student provided an erroneous translation, meaning the equivalent idiom offered did not express the same meaning as the target language idiom.
- **No Answer:** This category was utilized when a student did not provide any translation for a given idiom.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected directly through the administration of the translation test to the sixteen participants. The analysis involved tabulating the results for each of the twenty idioms based on the defined scoring scale. This quantitative tabulation was then followed by a qualitative interpretation of the findings to understand the underlying reasons for the observed translation performance.

Results

Overview of Test Performance

The data analysis of the translation test, which required participants to translate twenty English idioms into Arabic, revealed varying levels of success among the students. Overall, the results indicated significant challenges for a majority of the idiomatic expressions, with a notable prevalence of incorrect and absent translations.

Detailed Translation Performance per Idiom

The performance for each of the twenty idioms is summarized in Table 1, detailing the number and percentage of correct, incorrect, and no answers provided by the sixteen participants.

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Table 1: Results of Undergraduate Students' Translation of English Idioms into Arabic (N=16)

Idiom	Correct (N)	Correct (%)	Incorrect (N)	Incorrect (%)	No Answer (N)	No Answer (%)
It is raining cats and dogs	14	87.5%	2	12.5%	0	0%
He is a bad egg	0	0%	14	87.5%	2	12.5%
To walk on air	2	12.5%	10	62.5%	4	25%
To let the cat out of the bag	0	0%	8	50%	8	50%
Pigs might fly	2	12.5%	8	50%	6	37.5%
Smell a rat	2	12.5%	6	37.5%	8	50%
Till the cow come home	2	12.5%	2	12.5%	12	75%
It costs an arm and a leg	1	6.25%	2	12.5%	13	81.25%
To make a mountain out of a molehill	3	18.75%	10	62.5%	3	18.75%
To give a free hand	15	93.75%	1	6.25%	0	0%
It is a piece of cake	3	18.75%	10	62.5%	3	18.75%
Made	1	6.25%	10	62.5%	5	31.25%

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things that much worse						
I have not had moment's peace	3	18.75%	8	50%	5	31.25%
Made my day	7	43.75%	7	43.75%	2	12.5%
On top of the world	0	0%	4	25%	12	75%
Spend money like water	0	0%	4	25%	12	75%
Be on the breadline	0	0%	6	37.5%	10	62.5%
A rough a diamond	4	25%	4	25%	8	50%
Feel a bit under the weather	1	6.25%	2	12.5%	13	81.25%
Hit the nail on the head	6	37.5%	6	37.5%	4	25%

The results clearly demonstrate a wide range in translation success rates for the idioms. Idioms such as "It is raining cats and dogs" (87.5% correct) and "To give a free hand" (93.75% correct) were translated successfully by a large majority of participants. This suggests that these idioms might be more transparent in meaning, more frequently encountered, or possess more direct conceptual or linguistic equivalents in Arabic.

Conversely, a significant number of idioms proved exceptionally challenging, exhibiting very low correct answer rates and high percentages of incorrect or no answers. For example, "He is a bad egg" had 0% correct translations and 87.5% incorrect. "To let the cat out of the bag" resulted in 0% correct, 50% incorrect, and 50% no answer. Even more striking were idioms like "It costs an arm and a leg" and "Feel a bit under the weather," both with only 6.25% correct translations and a staggering 81.25% "no answer" rate. Similarly, "Till the cow come home," "On top of the world," and "Spend money like water" each had 75% "no answer" rates.

The high percentage of "no answers" for several idioms is a critical observation. While an "incorrect" answer implies an attempt was made, even if flawed, a "no answer" suggests a complete failure to comprehend the idiom's meaning or to identify any plausible translation strategy. This points to a more fundamental barrier—perhaps a complete lack of cultural context, semantic opacity beyond inference, or an inability to even begin the translation process—which represents a more severe form of difficulty than a mere mistranslation. This finding reinforces the profound challenges related to cultural and semantic understanding that students face.

Discussion

Overall Difficulties in Idiom Translation

The findings of this study conclusively demonstrate that English idioms present considerable difficulty for a substantial number of students when attempting to translate them accurately and meaningfully. Only a limited number of instances indicated a high level of inter-language understanding among participants, typically observed for common and frequently used idiomatic expressions, such as "It is raining cats and dogs" and "To give a free hand". This suggests that familiarity and frequency of exposure may play a role in successful translation.

Prevalence of Literal Translation and Lack of Strategies

A pervasive observation was the tendency among many participants to resort to literal translations as an "emergency strategy". This approach, however, frequently undermined the overall accuracy and communicative intent of the translated expression. This behavior is directly attributable to a lack of appropriate translation procedures, such as those articulated by Vinay and Darbelnet, particularly when students encountered idioms for which no direct or even partial equivalents exist in the Arabic target language. This aligns with Baker's (1992) assertion that a primary difficulty for translators is the "non-existence of an equivalent in the target language". The empirical evidence from the test, showing high rates of incorrect and "no answers" for many idioms, serves as a concrete manifestation of these theoretical difficulties, demonstrating how the abstract concept of semantic opacity directly translates into real-world learning challenges.

Linguistic and Cultural Factors Contributing to Challenges

Beyond the procedural deficiencies, the study's findings indicate that a complex interplay of linguistic and cultural factors contributes significantly to these translation challenges.

- **Limited Cultural Understanding:** A prominent hurdle identified was the limited understanding of the cultural aspects inherent in the target language. This deficiency often stems from students' insufficient reading skills in both English and Arabic, which restricts their exposure to the cultural nuances embedded within idiomatic expressions. As highlighted in the literature, non-native English learners require a robust knowledge of idioms' true meanings and their cultural associations. The cultural dissimilarity between English and Arabic, as noted by Awwad (2013), makes translators more prone to difficulties, and a lack of cultural knowledge can lead to the translated idiom deviating from its true meaning.
- **Mother Tongue Interference:** The orientation of language, specifically the mother tongue (Arabic), can also interfere with students' cognitive processes of thinking, understanding, and translating idioms between English and Arabic. This interference often results in literal and erroneous translations, further underscoring the complexity of

idiomatic translation beyond a simple word-for-word conversion.

- **Terminological Hurdles:** Participants also struggled with identifying the correct corresponding terms in the target language, adding another layer of terminological difficulty to the translation process.

These factors are not isolated but interact in complex ways. For instance, a limited cultural understanding, potentially stemming from insufficient reading, can lead to an inability to grasp the figurative meaning of an idiom. This, in turn, may compel students to resort to literal translation, a strategy often exacerbated by interference from their native language. This complex interplay suggests that addressing any single factor in isolation may not be sufficient; a multi-faceted pedagogical approach is required to tackle the systemic nature of the problem.

Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

To effectively address these challenges and work towards the study's objective of overcoming difficulties and finding practical solutions, the crucial role of instructors cannot be overstated. It is vital for educators to actively raise awareness among students regarding the paramount importance of idiom use, given their frequent appearance in both spoken and written English.

Furthermore, lecturers must adopt and implement a diverse range of approaches for translation teaching. They should actively encourage their students to utilize these varied approaches and strategies to effectively navigate the figurative nature of idiomatic expressions. The findings, which show that students struggle due to idioms being semantically opaque and culturally sensitive, and that they resort to literal translations due to a lack of appropriate strategies, strongly indicate the need for a shift from isolated vocabulary memorization to integrated, contextualized instruction. This implies that idiom expressions need to be taught explicitly and systematically alongside other subjects and courses, rather than being relegated to a secondary status. This recommendation directly supports Moreno's (2011) argument for the crucial teaching of idioms. Such an approach would involve teaching idioms not merely as discrete lexical items but within their cultural narratives, communicative contexts, and alongside explicit translation strategies such as paraphrasing, cultural substitution, and compensation, thereby fostering deeper comprehension and strategic application beyond rote learning.

Conclusion

The translation of English idiomatic expressions is a complex and demanding task within the language learning process, extending significantly beyond mere literal translation. Idioms inherently carry figurative meanings that are deeply embedded within specific cultural contexts. Consequently, misunderstandings are highly probable, particularly when students lack sufficient proficiency in both the linguistic and cultural aspects of the source and target languages.

The translation test administered in this study offered valuable insights into the translation strategies employed by undergraduate students and the extent of their ability to manage English idiomatic expressions. It was observed that participants infrequently utilized formal translation strategies, often resorting to literal and out-of-context translations as emergency measures to cope with these challenging idioms. To enhance proficiency, English language students must cultivate a profound understanding of the cultural and linguistic dimensions of both English and Arabic. They also need to actively apply appropriate

translation procedures and strategies to effectively navigate the complexities of idiomatic expressions. Furthermore, a critical recommendation is for students to refine what might be termed their "artistic side" in translation through extensive reading in both languages. This suggestion points to the understanding that for intricate linguistic phenomena like idioms, translation transcends a purely technical skill; it demands an intuitive, creative, and deeply culturally informed sensibility. This "artistic side" is developed through broad exposure to both source and target cultures via extensive reading, which builds the implicit knowledge and cultural schema essential for nuanced interpretation and appropriate re-expression. This moves beyond explicit rule-following to emphasize the development of a more holistic, intuitive competence, a higher-order skill for truly advanced translators. By embracing these recommendations, students will be better equipped to successfully manage a wide variety of idioms, proverbs, and diverse expressions, ultimately fostering their development into competent and effective translators.

Future research could investigate the effectiveness of specific pedagogical interventions designed to teach idiom translation strategies and cultural nuances. Longitudinal studies tracking the development of idiom translation competence among students over their academic careers could also provide valuable insights into the learning process and the impact of different instructional methods.

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