THE TRANSLATABILITY OF BODY IDIOMATIC
EXPRESSIONS FROM ENGLISH INTO ARABIC

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Abstract

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Idioms constitute a great difficulty for translators. Thus, the present study aims at investigating the translatability of English body idiomatic expressions into Arabic and particularly, to determine the following:

1. The type of idioms which cause more erroneous translation.
2. The type of equivalence the subjects resorted to when rendering the target expression.
3. The translation strategies the students employed in the translation of body idiomatic expressions.
4. The problems arising from the subjects' translations of idioms from English into Arabic, particularly mother-tongue interference.

For this purpose, a test sample including 50 English body expression was distributed to 30 M.A. students of translation in the English Department at Yarmouk University to be translated into Arabic without using the dictionary.

The results of the study show that opaque idioms are the most difficult to translate whereas the least difficult ones are transparent idioms.

As for equivalence, the study reveals that the students relied more heavily on ideational equivalence than on formal and functional ones.

A number of strategies are used by translators including paraphrase, irrelevance, assumed synonymity, literal translation, cultural interference, figurative translation, verbosity, idiomaticity, and deletion.

The difficulties encountered by the translators are mostly featured in mother-tongue interference.

On the basis of the previous findings, the study concludes with some recommendations to improve the students' command of interpreting English idiomatic expressions and their ability to translate them into Arabic through emphasizing the teaching of idiomatic expressions, in general, and body idioms, in particular, in the students' English language input.