Pakistani Translators' Strategies for Translating English Idioms in to Urdu Language

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Abstract- Recent years have witnessed a boom of research in the field of translation studies. The present study aims to analyse the strategies employed by Pakistani translators in the translation of idioms from English language into Urdu language. Data has been collected from two English textbooks written by Pakistani translators.Present study is quantitative in nature. The findings revealed that paraphrase or non-idiomatic translation was the commonly used strategy of translating idioms with a score of 85%. The second commonest strategy was similar in content only with a percentage of 12%. Despite linguistic inadequacies and limited knowledge of social nature of meaning, the strategies used by Pakistani translators were successful in transferring the meanings of idioms of English language.Finally, some recommendations are suggested to handle the translation of idioms more adequately.

Key Words: **Source Language, Target Language, Strategies**

I.   INTRODUCTION:

Wave of globalization brought a significant change in every field of life and the field of academia is not an exception.Talking about the inextricable relationship between language and culture, Chun (2015) says that language can never be separated from culture because both complement each other.As language is the manifestation of culture, idioms occupy an important place in the field of translation studies. Language knowledge is essential but insufficient to convey proper meaning whenever the translation of an idiom is there. It's not only the linguistic background required to render meanings in the process of translation but also asound knowledge of cultural, technical,and legal backgrounds. Gouadec (2007) states that although translation used to be a fun in the past but now, it has got a significant place in the world as a profession. Thus, interlingual translation becomes challenging for the translators unless they have a thorough understanding of both cultures. According to Bachelor (2015), every successful translator should have a native speaker like know-how of the target language's culture, as every culture has its specific terms.So, the translator should not only be bilingual but also bicultural. Many words apparently seem equivalent but are found non-equivalent in application.Translation is considered an essential tool that enables people all over the globe to share information, news, culture, and literature.Translation is a very complex task particularly translating idioms, as their translation requires cultural competence of both languages, their culture, and knowledge of strategies that are appropriate for rendering and conveying the intended meaning (Dweik and Thalji, 2016). Language and culture are closely embedded in each other and the knowledge of one widens the concept of the other. Idioms are culturally sensitive expressions and the translation of these expressions requires careful choice of the words in transferring the true essence of these expressions (Howwar, 2013). This cultural-sensitivity makes the translation process difficult and thus, translators are expected to be extra careful as well as conscious to cultural and connotative aspects while translating from source language to target language. Translating and rendering cultural elements of the source texts into the target language is significantly important. The translator should replace the textual materials with their equivalent materials at all the possible levels. In this respect, Catford (1965:20) is of the view that translation is the formal process of the replacement of source language text by an equivalent target language text. This suggests the importance of translating cultural elements in the process of translation. This claim is also supported by Newmark (1981) who stressesthe importance of cultural elements when translating culturally-bound expressions and idioms. Nida (1985: 9) also adds that the major role of the translator lies in the smooth flow of information containing message, meaning, and cultural elements from source language into target language so that it is equally acceptable among the recipients. Having competence in actively using idiomatic and fixed expressions is not an easy task and cannot be achieved easily (Baker, 1992:77). The role of culture in translation is apparent and it has to be carefully considered by translators when translating idiomatic expressions (Min, 2007:215). These cultural elements have their own implications when translating idioms from English language into

Urdulanguage due to the differences between the two languages and this would definitely make the process of translating idioms a demanding and difficult task for translators.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study is to investigate which of the strategiesare most frequently used by Pakistani translators for the translation of English idioms into Urdu languageby keeping cultural differences between English and Urdu language in mind.

Research questions

1. Which strategies are normally employed by Pakistani translators for translating English idioms into Urdu language?
2. Which strategies are more frequently employed for translating English idioms into Urdu language?

Significance of the study

The present study is significant because it attempts to examine the strategies used by Pakistani translators while translating English idioms into Urdu language. Although, a lot of research is available on the translation of English idioms into different languages but there is scarcity of research available for the translation of English idioms into Urdu language in the Pakistani perspective.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Translation of Idioms

Idioms are considered common feature in all languages and the proper understanding of idiomsis the sign of success in a given language. Idioms are deeply rooted in languages and these differ significantly from language to language (Ajaaj and Mohammed, 2014), and have semantic, syntactic and pragmatic complexity which creates challenges for learners as well as translators(Aldahesh, 2013:23). An idiom is a fixed expression functioning as a single unit (Richards and Schmidt, 2002:246).For example, the meaning of each word in the idiom "it rains cats and dogs" has nothing to do with the meaning of the idiom as a whole. Moreover, Barkema (1996: 127) defines idioms as"lexicalized expressions with idiosyncratic meanings". According to Larson (1984), idiom is a collection of words which has different meaning when taken as a whole and conveys entirely different meaning when taken the meaning of its components individually.Although, idioms are used interchangeably in spoken as well as written discourse but most frequently considered spoken discourse(Maxos, 2003:4). Mostly, idioms are metaphorical and cannot be translated directly as well as literally (Ghazala, 2003:204). These are classified in different ways: according to grammatical category or parts of speech, according to the concepts or emotions portrayed, according to the image they convey. Translating idioms has always been very challenging task (Qassema and Vijayasarathi, 2015). Trosborg(1997:109) further strengthens the view by stating that translating idiomsis very difficult and central to the field of translation studies. Translation of idiomsneeds great care and the translators must figure out the meaning of the idiomsthat they intend to translate and then look for an equivalent which can express the whole meaning. Translators should avoid translating idioms literally or word for word translation (Newmark, 1988:125).

Difficulties in the Translation of Idioms

Idioms are highly challenging for both foreign learners as well as for translators. While translating idiomatic from one language to another, translators face multiple issues at stylistic, cultural and even religious level (Smadi, 2015:124). Straksiene (2009) claims that although translator faces many problems but the most important of these problems in the translation of idioms and the issue of equivalence at idiomlevel. There is no language without an idiom but it is never an easy task to find exact equivalent in the target language that can be claimed as full equivalent to the idiom in the source language both in meaning and form. There are several difficulties which have been reported in the literature with regard to translating idioms as well as the reasons behind those difficulties. The two interrelated difficulties which may encounter translators while translating idiomsare: inability in the proper comprehension an idiom, and the effort to find exact equivalent in the target language. Baker (1992:83) further strengthens this view by stating that the major problem involved in translating idioms is that the idiomatic expressionsmay not haveexact equivalent in the target language. The way languages use idiomsto express

different meanings and notions vary from one language to another and that constitutes a great difficulty for translators. That's' why, lack of equivalence in the target language can create issues for translators.

Strategies for the translation of Idioms: (Baker, 1992)

Using an idiom of similarmeaning and form

This type of strategy is used in the translation of an idiom in the target language which has roughly the same meaning as that of the source-language idiom which is occasionally possible only. For example, again and again/بہ بار بار/, break some one's heart /کسی کا دل توڑنا/etc. (Akram, 2017: 367).

Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form

This strategy is often used only when the meaning of the idiom is similar in both source and target language but the form is different.

For example, Jack of all trades/مولافنہر/; 'A dark horse' /رستمچہپا/

Translation by Paraphrase

It is very commonly used strategy in the translation of idioms particularly when there is no match in both the languages. For example, prepare the ground موافق حالات پیدا کرنا; for the best; جسکا نتیجہ اچھا ہو.

Translation by Omission

This strategy is used only when there is case of single words. In this type of strategy, an idiom can be completely omitted due to the equivalence issues at semantic and stylistic levelin the target text.

Translation through Compensation

This strategy usually takes long space and time in coping with the loss occurred in the process of translation.Strategy of compensation is employed where one may omit a feature in an idiom in the source text and introduce it somewhere else in the target text.

III.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

Baker (1992)'s strategies for the translation of idioms served as theoretical framework for the present study.

Nature of Research

Present study is quantitative in its nature that aims to employ descriptive statistics for the analysis of data. According to Cohen (2007: 274), this design is useful in finding out who, what, when and where.

Sampling and Data Collection

Data was collected through purposive sampling technique from Sunshine English Grammar and A-One English Grammar and Composition written for Intermediate level students because these books were most frequently used among teachers and students.

Research Design

The study aimed at analysingstrategies employed by Pakistani translators for translating English idioms into Urdu language. The present study was delimited to 200 English idioms with Urdu translations from Ideal English Grammar by Akram (2017). Quantitative method of data analysis was used to present results. The data was analysed in the light of Baker (1992)'s strategies for the translation of idioms. Descriptive statistics was used to highlight the most frequently used strategies.

Data analysis

Strategies Used by translators are shown in table 1 below:

Table1: Strategies used by Pakistani Translators

	N	Similar in form and content	Similar in content only	Paraphrase or Non-idiomatic translation
Idioms	250	(3%)	(12%)	(85%)

Graphical representation of table 1 is shown in figure 1 below.
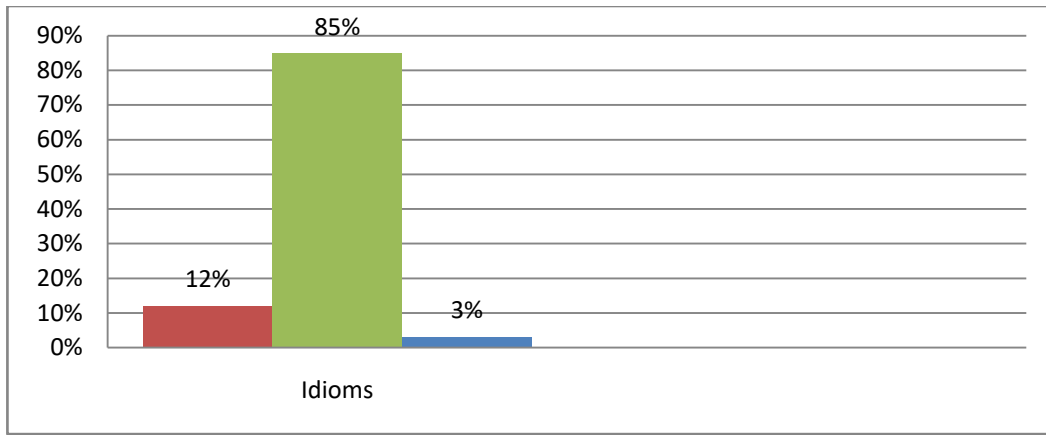
Figure 1: Percentage of Strategies used in Idioms

Using an idiom of similar meaning and form

This strategy is normally used where the idiom conveys the same meanings in both the languages and this can be rarely achieved. As figure 2 belowshows that only 3% idioms are translated by employing this strategy.
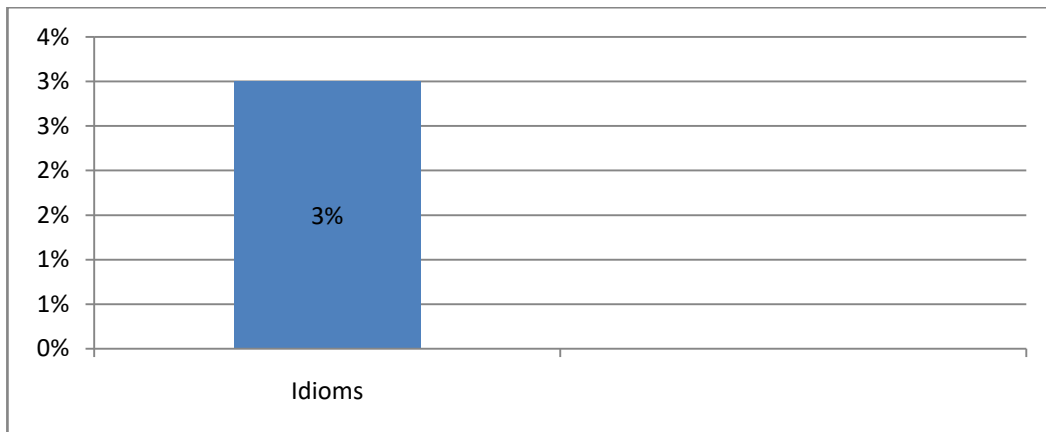

Figure 2: Similar Form and Content Strategy

For example,

Step by stepقدم بہ قدم

Split hairsبال کی کھال اتارنا

As many mouths, so many opinionsجتنے منہ اتنی باتیں

A hard pill to swallowکڑوی گولی نگلنا

Bell the catبلی کے گلے میں گھنٹی باندھنا

Alladin's lampالہ دین کا چراغ

Break some one's heartکسی کا دل توڑنا

Face to face روبرو

(Akram 2017)

Using an Idiom of similar Content but Dissimilar form

This kind of strategy is used in a situation where there is semantic similarity but with the use of different lexical items. Findings reveal that only 10% of the English idioms matches with their counterparts in Urdu language which reveal the similar world views on both languages as shown in the figure 3 below.
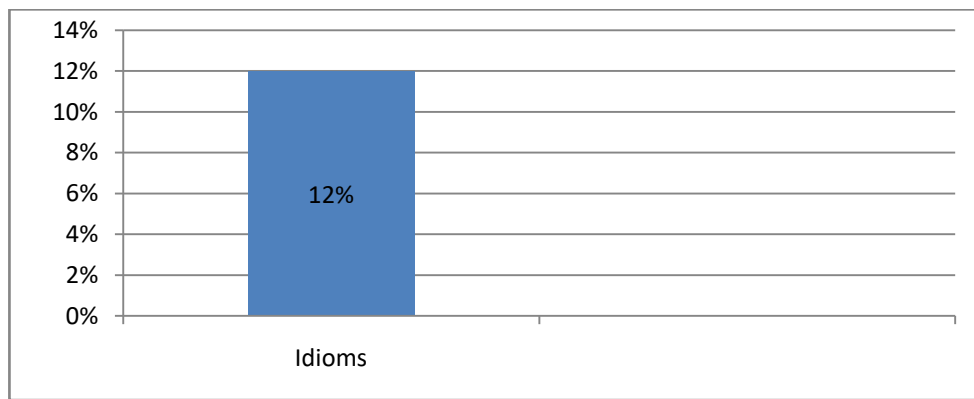

Figure 3: Similar Content but dissimilar form Strategy

For example,

Do not turn a hairکان پر جوں نہ رینگنا

Jack of all tradesہر فن مولا

A dark horse چھپا رستم

A little purse is a heavy curse غریب کی جورو سب کی بھابھی

Forgiveness is the noblest revenge معافی بہترین انتقام ہے

(Akram 2017)

Translation by Paraphrase or Non-Idiomatic Translation

This is the most popular strategy (85%) among translators when translators fail to find an equivalent in the target language as shown in figure 4.
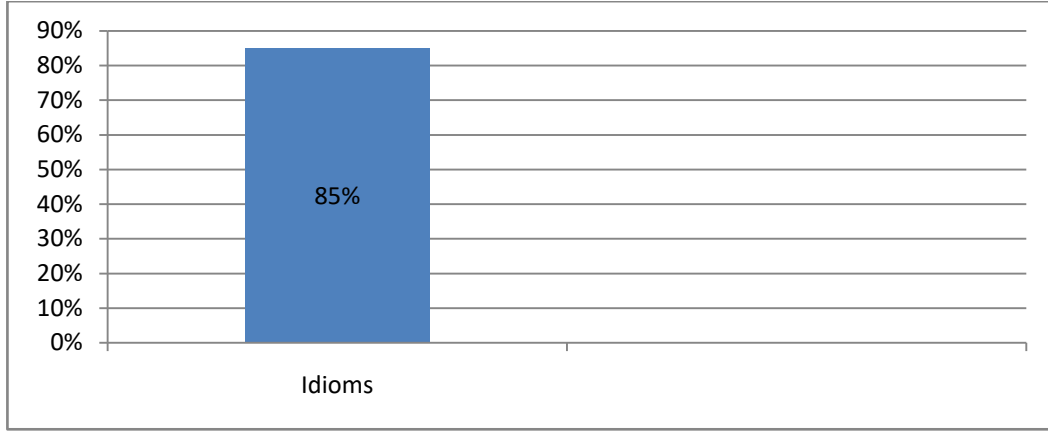
Figure 4: Paraphrase or Non Idiomatic Strategy

Here are some examples from Akram, 2017:

Cry wolf بلا ضرورت لوگوں کو مدد کیلئے بلانا

Have a bee in your bonnet ایک ہی بات کی بارے میں سوچنا

A wild goose chase بے سود کوشش

Great talkers are great liars باتونی لوگ جھوٹے ہوتے ہیں

Wonder is the daughter of ignorance حیرت جہالت کی بیٹی ہے

The subjects' love is king's life guard رعایا کا خلوص بادشاہ کی جان کا ضامن ہے

Strike while the iron is hot موقع پر کام کریں

IV. DISCUSSION

Cultural context has a particular impact in the production, reception and consumption of idioms. Same ideas and expressions are conveyed differently in different regions. It is believed that the resemblances between the cultures stem from the issue of the universality of concepts among languages. Normally, Newmark (1998)'s semantic translation procedure is preferred in the translation of idioms. The first step involved in the translation of an English idiom into Urdu language is to look for a bilingual dictionary so that a close approximant may be found and it, rarely, happens that there is only a single form in both the languages having single meaning which definitely leads to the second strategy as a choice.If the translator fails to find any equivalent, then the strategy of paraphrasing is the ultimate choice. However, what is significant is the aim of the translator to select anappropriate which can best serve the purpose, and the choice of the strategy is governed by the context in which the idiomis used. So, a text can be of any category: historical, journalistic, literary, and scientific and whenever there is some idiom of any particular genre, it becomes challenging for the translator to choose any strategy which can best suit the purpose (Venuti, 1998). The problem arises when the text is of some particular region and the translator has to provide the region as well as cultural background to the audience for the proper comprehension of the translation. In such a situation, translator has to decide what and to what extent the knowledge of that particular region should be provided.So, it can be suggested that some other useful strategies can be sought for along with the ones mentioned above (Munday, 2001). However, sometimes it is not enough to provide just literal meaning and further explanation is required to make the reader clear, and normally the translator provides such extra information in the footnote. Analysis of the data shows that Paksitani translators prefer to use paraphrasing as translation strategy to convey the meaning of idioms only.

V. Conclusion:

The results show that there is no persistent use of any one particular strategy employed by Pakistani translators in the process of achieving adequate translations.Despite cultural differences between both languages, the strategies used by the translatorshave been successful in meeting the requirements of the field. Not only the linguistic but also the semantic, stylistic, cultural, and pragmatic knowledge contribute a lot in the translation process. So, it can be suggested that for a proper understanding of the translation of English idioms, a combination of the strategies would be a better option.

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