

Research paper

Investigating Translation Strategies and Translatability of Fixed Expressions in *The Blind Owl* by Hedayat

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Abstract

Translation is a way of connecting two languages with different cultures. Fixed expressions are often challenging issues in the realm of translation. This article has investigated applied strategies and translatability of fixed expressions in *The Blind Owl* (*Boof-e koor*). Therefore, two well-known English translations by Costello (1957) and Bashiri (2013) were examined. The data were analyzed to find applied strategies and investigate the translatability and untranslatability of fixed expressions. Two hundred ninety fixed expressions were collected of the corpus and its English translations. It was found that a few fixed expressions are untranslatable due to linguistic and cultural differences. Moreover, the author's style in the book has impacted the translation. In addition, by the comparative study of the translators, it was found that the performance of Bashiri as a native translator is almost better than Costello as a non-native translator. Hence, the translator's familiarity with language and culture of source language could be affected in translation.

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Introduction

Translating fixed expressions seems to be one of most complicated issues in translation (Shojaei, 2012). Fixed expressions usually convey certain stylistic and specific cultural connotations, and also, the combination and the order of words cannot be changed (Baker, 2011). So, finding an adequate equivalent is difficult for translators. Fixed expressions or idioms may have a similar counterpart in the target language (TL), but two expressions may have different connotations (Baker, 2011).

Comprehending the meaning of idioms and fixed expressions of each language needs good knowledge of both languages and cultures. One should be able to cope with finding a suitable equivalent for the idiomatic pairs (Shojaei, 2012). Cultural untranslatability occurs when a specific situational feature, which is functionally significant for the source language (SL) text, does not exist in the TL culture (Catford, 1965).

Some previous studies report the untranslatability of literary items such as allusion and figures of speech due to cultural differences between languages (Mohammadi & Keshavarzi, AL-Harashseh, 2016). Therefore, this study tries to investigate applied strategies by the translators and the performance of translators. Since the source language is Persian, Bashiri is considered as the native translator and Costello, the non-native translator in rendering the fixed expression to explore the reasons for untranslatability in detail.

Hence, translators should know the source language's religion, literature, and beliefs to dominate the precise meaning. Moreover, culture and language make improvements in a society at the same time (Moon, 1998). Therefore, translators should be careful about the relationship between culture and language. The study of translatability and untranslatability of fixed expressions can provide valuable insights into how translators tackle such fixed expressions or other idiomatic expressions in the translation process (De Pedro R, 1999). In the same vein, the present study investigated linguistic and cultural untranslatability in English translated versions of fixed expressions in Hedayat's *the Blind Owl*.

Absolute untranslatability, whether linguistic or cultural, does not exist. At the same time, the perfect translation, i.e., one which does not entail any losses from the original, is unattainable, especially when dealing with literary translation (De Pedro. 1999).

The present study attempts to explore which strategies the translators restored more often to overcome cultural and linguistic untranslatability in the process of translation and to identify the extent of the translatability of fixed expressions in Hedayat's *the Blind Owl*. In addition, the study tries to assess the performance of native and non-native translators. The present study expands our knowledge about the translatability of fixed expressions (including idioms) in translated originals, and literary texts and provides insights into their translations. Newmark (1988) believes that a good translator or writer could often avoid errors of language use and uses the ordinary senses and show delicacy to language.

The purpose of this study is analyzing the applied strategies in translating fixed expressions (including idioms) of the book *the Blind Owl* to see which strategies were adopted more often by the translators and to see how translation strategies can deal with the problem of

untranslatability and to what extent they are successful. In addition, the study tries to compare the translators' performance in translating the fixed expressions from Persian into English.

Literature Review

Translatability

Some scholars believe that translatability is ensured by the existence of linguistic factors such as syntactic and semantic categories shared by all languages (De Pedro, 1999). Other scholars have adopted the second approach based on the concept that translatability is jeopardized (according to which the reality is interpreted in different ways by different linguistic communities) (De Pedro, 1999). The third approach to translatability was developed in France in the late 1960s, challenging the notion of translation as a matter of transfer the meaning. This approach was found by Andrew Benjamin, Michel Foucault, Paul de Man and Jacques Derrida (De Pedro, 1999). Newmark (1988a) believes when translating some elements of language is not simple or obvious, the concept of translatability is one issue that can be discussed.

In previous studies, De Pedro (1999) deduced that text's function has an important role; a text with an aesthetic process makes translation difficult, whereas the informative function of text could be more accessible. As cited in Aixela (1996, p.54), the first two laws of translatability proposed by Even-Zohar (1978) and Toury (1995) state that "translatability is high when textual traditions involved are parallel and when there has been contact between the two traditions," (De Pedro, 1999).

The above-mentioned studies provide helpful information on the level of text; whereas translating fixed expressions seems to be one of the complicated issues in translation. This article has considered idiomatic factors. Omrani and Shams Hosseini (2021) believe that there are many idiomatic expressions in Iranian Culture that are not clear for other language speakers; thus, translators need to be knowledgeable of the culture of the source language. The most important problem is related to the differences between the cultures of the source and the target languages.

According to Reiss (2014, p. 31-38), "literary works, including literary prose, imaginative prose, and poetry in all its forms, are form-focused, in which the author makes use of formal elements for a specific aesthetic effect." Therefore, it is necessary to find a similar device to represent its literary and aesthetic function in a form-focused text. For example, facing a fixed expression in such texts, the translator must replace it with an equivalent expression.

Untranslatability

Roman Jakobson classifies as untranslatable only poetry (Hatim & Munday, 2004). From this statement, the authors deduce that the sense may translate, while the form often cannot, "and the point where form begins to contribute to sense is where we approach untranslatability" (ibid: 10). Therefore, the domain of untranslatability approached because the fixed expressions represent the case of translating both sense (meaning) and form.

Catford (1965) presented the first definition for translation. He stated that translation is the replacement of equivalent textual material from one language into another language. Catford (1965) further states that “idioms and phraseological units should not be considered as the only possible translation units on the level of combination of words” (p.54). According to Catford (1965), “source and target language words do not usually have precisely the same meaning in the linguistic sense, but that does not mean that they could not nevertheless function well enough in the same situation” (p.49).

Nobody can ignore the differences across languages. Furthermore, there are some elements in one language but they cannot be used in other languages (Catford, 1965). However, there are some situations in which there is no one to one correspondence between languages, it is referred to as untranslatability (Catford, 1965).

According to Catford (1965), Failure to find a TL equivalent is due entirely to the difference between the SL and the TL. Some examples of this type of untranslatability would be ambiguity, play on words (puns), polysemy (the quality or state of having a few meanings, as opposed to having a single meaning or many meanings), etc.

Catford (1965) made a distinction between linguistic untranslatability and cultural untranslatability:

1. Linguistic untranslatability: “failure to find a TL [target language] equivalent is due entirely to differences between the SL and the TL” (Catford, 1965, p. 98). Some examples of this type of untranslatability would be ambiguity, plays on words, polysemy, etc.
2. Cultural untranslatability: arises “when a situational feature, functionally relevant for the SL [source language] text, is completely absent from the culture of which the TL [target language] is a part” (ibid: 99). For instance; names of some institutions, clothes, foods and abstract concepts, amongst others.

According to Baker (2011):

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 contexts which can make it untranslatable or difficult to translate (P.71).

Baker (2011) claims that different grammatical structures in the SL and TL may cause remarkable changes in the way the information or message is carried across. These changes may induce the translator either to add or to omit information in the TT because of the lack of particular grammatical devices in the TL itself.

Baker (2011) states that: "The way in which an idiom or a fixed expression can be translated into another language depends on many factors.... Questions of style, register, and rhetorical effect must also be taken into consideration" (p. 75-76). Regarding translation strategies, Baker (2011, pp.75-85) presents six strategies for translating idioms:

1. Using an idiom of similar meaning and form
2. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form
3. Borrowing the SL idiom
4. Translation by Paraphrase
5. Translation by Omission of a play on idiom
6. Translation by omission of entire idiom

Catford (1965) and Baker (2011) suggest that culture is rather a matter of degrees, linguistic and cultural differences between two different languages make perfect correspondence practically impossible. Moreover, from the Catford's theory and Baker's proposed strategies concluded that, fixed expressions usually convey certain stylistic and specific cultural connotations and also the combination and order of words cannot be changed. So, finding adequate equivalent is difficult for translators.

Culture-specific Items

According to Nord (2001), CSI is a cultural phenomenon that is present in one culture but is not present in another culture (in the same way). Aixela (1996, p.56) notes that "many discussions of CSIs have avoided offering any definition of the concept implying that it is intuitively recognizable". Moreover, Aixela (1996) confirmed that CSIs could be recognized only with indication to a certain source text.

Newmark (2010) considers that CSIs are seen as separate units like items in a glossary. Baker (2011) claimed that the culture-specific concept may be abstract or concrete and relates to a religious belief, a social custom, or a type of food.

Role of a Translator in Translation

Among problematic factors in translation studies, especially those dealing with literary texts, seems to be culture-specific items in the TL. Therefore, it can be a challenging issue for translators to find acceptable equivalents. Culture-specific items carry negative, positive, or neutral connotations (Afrouz, 2021). In translating cultural-bound items, translation plays a significant role, and since the translation is a mean of communication between languages, the role of translators has more significance in the process of translation.

Baker (2011) argues that a person's competence for using idioms and fixed expressions of a foreign language is not comparable with that of a native speaker. Also, she suggests that most of the translators cannot hope to be same with native speakers of a language about judging when and how an idiom can be manipulated in the language when they are working into a foreign language.

The translator needs to have an experience in the translation studies to understand the source and the target language and the message in the original text which is proposed by the author of the text well (Floranti & Mubarok, 2020). Venuti (1995) believes that, the invisibility of the translator is a weird self-annihilation; undoubtedly, convincing and practicing translation reinforces its marginal status in Anglo-American culture. And finally, the translator's task is to create conditions under which the SL author and the TL reader can interact with one another (Lotfipour, 1997).

Venuti (1995) states that, the concept of invisibility of the translator is a cultural critique, a diagnosis that opposes the situation it represents. On the other hand, the issue should be considered to make the translator more visible to change and resist the conditions under which translation is theorized and practices nowadays. He believes that, the first step will be "to present a theoretical basis from which translations can be read like translations, as texts in their own right, permitting transparency to be demystified, seen as one discursive effect among others".

In this part the role and the task of translator between two languages for making communication in the process of translation were discussed. To translate fixed expressions well, the translator first needs to be able to recognize them in the original text, then to find the meaning and finally to identify an appropriate equivalent to the TL. For dealing with problems of literary translation, translators should find pragmatics techniques. Literary translation consists of the translation of poems, plays, literary books, literary texts, rhymes, literary articles, non-fiction stories, short stories, etc. Translators should translate the language and render information to reader and translate the culture and context.

Interaction of Culture and Language

Idiomatic expression, include two different meanings; figurative meaning and literal meaning. Therefore, knowing and understanding the meaning of idiomatic expressions is crucial. Translating the idiomatic expressions is not an easy work, and the translators need to know both languages and cultures of the source language, to identify and cope with the problems in the process of finding an equivalent. It is important that, what translators do to render the content into target language (Manipuspika & Winzami, 2021).

A deep understanding of the culture of the source and the target languages is one of the most challenging issues in the translation studies. So that cultural familiarity should be the most important for the translators and needs attention (Floranti & Mubarok, 2020). The important roles of linguistic and cultural aspects proved the fact that cultures and languages are identical to each other; therefore, the process of translating idiomatic expressions becomes more easily (Shojaei, 2012).

The differences between cultural systems of two languages can be for example, religious differences, custom differences, different understanding to objective things and so on. Another

important item in the process of literary texts seems to be, the familiarity of the translator with the source language's culture.

Because of these linguistic or cultural differences between two languages, there will be some problems for the translators in the process of translation that is, transference the Culture-specific items. The native translators are more capable than the non-native due to the native's familiarity with their own culture (Ordudari, 2016). For dealing with the problem, different scholars mentioned some strategies. For example, Baker (2011) suggested six strategies to deal with the difficulties in translating fixed expressions. Therefore, this article attempts to find the effect of strategies on untranslatability.

The Blind Owl

Sadeq Hedayat's '*the Blind Owl*' is a masterpiece in the modern Persian literature. *The Blind Owl* is Hedayat's major literary work of the 20th century in Iran. It is believed that much of the novel had already been completed by 1930 while Hedayat was still a student in Paris. *The Blind Owl* was translated into French by Roger Lescot during World War II. In Germany, two translations appeared in the early 1960s. *The Blind Owl* was translated into English by D.P. Costello (1957), Henry D. G. Law, and Iraj Bashiri (2013). Bashiri's translation was revised first in 1984 and then in 2013. In Turkey, in Poland, in Romania, in Mexico, in Urdu, in India, in Finland, in Armenian, in Japan, in Indonesia, in the Philippines, in the Netherlands, in China, in Czechoslovakia. (Afrouz, 2021).

According to Costello (1997), *the Blind Owl* is considered as the most important work of modern Iranian literature. It is a haunting tale of loss and spiritual degradation. Sadeq Hedayat's masterpiece details a young man's despair after losing a mysterious lover with potent symbolism and terrifying surrealistic imagery. *The Blind Owl*, which has been translated into many foreign languages, has often been compared to the writing of Edgar Allan Poe.

Every work like *the Blind Owl* has many aspects: cultural, religious, literary, artists, socio-political, philosophical, and others, each of these aspects should be separated by experts to deal with it. *The Blind Owl* is a kind of fiction and the correspondences are not as accurate as it. (Bashiri, 2013, p.78). Thus, this novel could be the best for the present study due to the majority of cultural-bound items such as fixed expressions and idioms. According to Bashiri (2013), *the Blind Owl* is in two parts:

Each part depicting a phase on a continuum of the cosmic drama dealing with birth and rebirth, while in the first life the character is distracted by visions that destine him to rebirth, in the second life, using the knowledge gained in his previous life, he successfully recognizes the cause of his rebirth and eliminates it (p.81).

The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. Which particular strategies have been used by the translators to translate the fixed expressions from Persian into English?

2. Do translation strategies deal with the problem of untranslatability?
3. What is the extent of translatability of the fixed expressions in the two translations of *the Blind Owl*?
4. Does the translator's familiarity with the Persian language and culture affect the correctness of the transference of the fixed expressions from Persian into English?

Methodology

Corpus

Hedayat's well-known novel '*the Blind Owl*' selected as the source text and two English translated texts as the target texts. In addition, Baker's (2011) translation strategies have been chosen as the theoretical framework of this study. The finding of this study will have an influential role in identifying appropriate strategies for translating fixed expressions. Comparative analysis of two translated versions can be helpful for critical studies between the native and the non-native translators, and also will help many translators to find a suitable equivalent to express the meaning and translating as naturally and accurately as possible. Moreover, according to Catford's theory, this study intends to examine two translated texts of the book *The Blind Owl* to determine the translatability and untranslatability of fixed expressions.

The Blind Owl that is written by Sadeq Hedayat (1937) and its two English translated versions by D.P Costello (1957) and Iraj Bashiri (2013) was chosen because according to many famous writers and theorists, *The Blind Owl* is among the valuable and working ones.

✓ Henry Miller, the great American writer says that the book *The Blind Owl* is the best book I have ever read.

✓ Andréa Breton, the leader of surrealist movement says that *The Blind Owl* is one the top twentieth century novels.

✓ In Iran, the director Darioush Mehrjuie made the film "Hamoon" based on *The Blind Owl*.

The present study is based on the strategies proposed by Baker (2011) for translating:

1. Using an idiom of similar meaning and form
2. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form
3. Borrowing the SL idiom
4. Translation by Paraphrase
5. Translation by Omission (p.75-85).

Based on Catford's (1965) theory, the following definitions in *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*: Linguistic untranslatability: "failure to find a TL [target language] equivalent is due entirely to differences between the SL and the TL" (Catford, 1965, p. 98). Cultural untranslatability arises "when a situational feature, functionally relevant for the SL [source language] text, is completely absent from the culture of which the TL [target language] is a part" (Catford, 1965, p. 99).

Design

This research was corpus-based research and descriptive – comparative one, highlighting strategies for translating fixed expressions from Persian into English to identify the translatability and untranslatability of fixed expressions. The present paper is based on a case study of the book *The Blind Owl* written by Sadeq Hedayat and its two English-translated versions. For investigating the translatability of the fixed expressions according to Catford's theory, the Baker's proposed strategies which are applied by two translators for translating the fixed expressions are examined.

Procedures

Data Collection

The data was collected from the book, *the Blind Owl* and its two translations. The book was available in the market of Iran. However, the translated texts were not so easy to find in the market. The translated texts were downloaded from the net. One that is translated by Iraj Bashiri was downloaded from www.academia.edu. And one other is translated by D. P. Costello was purchased from www.bookyar.com. Then the original book and its translations were viewed by the researcher in the process of analysis to find the fixed expressions in the original book and the parallel translations of fixed expressions in the translated texts. The theoretical framework of this study is based on the translation strategy proposed by Baker (2011) for translating fixed expressions and Catford's (1965) theory for (un)translatability.

Data Classification

First, 290 fixed expressions of the book *The Blind Owl* were highlighted according to the glossary of Dehkhoda (1930-1931) online. Moreover, they have been searched in the website www.vajeyab.com and then, the equivalents of these items in both translated texts were specified. Second, the strategies have been adopted by the translators for translating the items were examined according to Baker's (2011) categorization of translation strategies. Third, in order to have a comprehensive picture of data gathering, tables were drawn for each part. Forth, the performances of the translators in translating the fixed expressions have been assessed by comparing their applied strategies. Then, the translatability and the untranslatability of the fixed expressions according to Catford's theory were investigated.

In order to make the study reliable, two raters rated the collected data. The researcher in this study arranged a table of collected data for evaluation. For analyzing the data as the raters with Ph.D., Degrees rated the data. Moreover, the raters are familiar with both Persian and English. This research was not an experimental type; it was descriptive; therefore, there were no participants or members.

Data analysis

Adopted Translation Strategies

After collecting the Persian fixed expressions and their English equivalents, the data are classified into two categories (translatability and untranslatability) according to Baker's strategies and Catford's theory. First, the data are investigated by Baker's strategies and the strategies are identified from English translations. Then, the data are set into above mentioned categories. In general, five translation strategies are identified as follows:

Similar Meaning and Form

This procedure focuses on both the form and meaning of an idiomatic expression. Example (1): *وقت را بکشم* means; wasting time without doing a work, that is translated to kill time (Costello and Bashiri). Both of the translators have used the same equivalent and they have employed the same strategy. Example (2): *مو را به تن آدم راست می کرد* means; to cause someone to be very frightened or disgusted, is translated to: make the hair of one's body stand on end (Costello), and made one's hair stand on end (Bashiri). In example (2), the lexical items in both Persian and English fixed expressions are the same. In addition, both translators have employed the same strategy and in example (3): *مثل مرغ سرکنده* which means; act in a frenzied manner or behave in a distracted, crazy way. That is translated to: like a chicken with its head cut off (Bashiri). In example (3), Just Bashiri has employed the same meaning and form. Costello did not find an equivalent for this fixed expression. Difference between the applied strategies has occurred in some other cases too.

Similar Meaning and Dissimilar Form

Dissimilar form means that the lexical items of the SL fixed expressions are not the same as the TL fixed expressions; while, a semantic equivalent is given in TL. Example (1): *دست کشیدم* means; to stop trying to do something, is translated to: gave up (Costello) and I gave up (Bashiri). Both Persian and English expressions are idiomatic expressions but English translations have dissimilar forms or different lexical items. Example (2): *رودرواسی* means; a feeling of fear or discomfort when being around other people, especially in a new situation or among strangers, which is translated to: trace of shyness (Costello), and shy (Bashiri). In example (2), both the English expressions and the Persian expressions use different lexical items to express more or less the same meaning. Example (3): *گرگ و میش* means; 1. A time when it begins to grow light after the night, 2. A period or state of obscurity, ambiguity, or gradual decline, is translated to: twilight (Costello), and dawn was breaking (Bashiri). In this example, Translators used different expressions to express the same meaning as the Persian expression. Both English translations have different lexical items but they convey the same meaning.

Borrowing

Borrowing means just the use of loan words. Example (1): *سیزده بدر* means; the thirteenth day (last day) of Norouz which is traditionally considered as unlucky and a sinister day, and people should not stay at home, is translated to: thirteen day of Nouruz (Costello), and thirteen day of Farvadin (Bashiri). Translators have borrowed a word from SL to clarify the expression for the readers in TL. But the English equivalents do not have the connotation of Persian expression. As an example (2): *ریش حنابسته اش* means; someone with henna-dyed beard follows the Islamic tradition to show his belief, is translated to: henna-dyed beard (Costello), hennaed beard (Bashiri). In this example, the origin of the word "حنا" is Arabic. So, this word is a loan word in SL and translators have translated the loan word from SL into TL. "Henna" is a loan word in the English language as well. Example (3): *دست عزرائیل* means; Azrael is the angel of death in Islam. Hands of Azrael indicate the death is near, is translated to: hand of Ezrail (Costello), Hand of the Angel of Death (Bashiri). For this expression, Costello employed the borrowing

strategy for translating the fixed expression from Persian into English. The word “عزرائیل” is a loan word in the SL. And Bashiri has employed the paraphrase strategy.

Translation by Paraphrase

This is the most common way of translating idioms and fixed expressions and the meaning of the idiomatic expressions are explained in a non-idiomatic way. Example (1): عهد دقيانوس means; past too far, is translated to: how long ago (Costello), and forgotten time (Bashiri). As it is clear, translators have applied the paraphrase strategy for translating this expression. Example (2): كج سليقه means; someone who cannot be careful about what says or does, that is translated to: madman (Costello), and disposed of architect (Bashiri). In this example, as it is clear, translators have applied the paraphrase strategy for translating this expression. Example (3): از نظرم افتاد means; when someone or something is no longer important to you that is translated to: lost for me (Costello), completely lost (Bashiri). Both of the translators could not find idiomatic expression for translating this fixed expression.

Translation by Omission

This strategy is used often when an equivalent fixed expression is not found in the target language. Example (1): تار و پود means; the basis of everything. Costello has omitted the expression from the English translation without a linguistic and cultural reason. Whereas, an appropriate equivalent has been found by Bashiri. Example (2): تقلا و جان كندن means; suffering and striving, that is omitted by Bashiri, and Costello has employed the paraphrase strategy for translating the fixed expression. Example (3): يك مشت means; 1. An amount that is as much as you can hold in your hand. 2. A little, that is omitted by the translator (Bashiri). He has omitted this fixed expression without any linguistic and cultural reason.

Both of the translators have used the strategies such as; similar meaning and form, similar meaning and dissimilar form, paraphrase, borrowing, omission and they have some wrong translation which is not among the translation strategies. Paraphrase has the most frequency in translating the fixed expressions by Costello. Translators have omitted three cases of fixed expressions and both have applied the borrowing strategy for translating three cases as well. They have omitted the cases for three reasons as the above-mentioned; (a) to prevent repetition (b) item is unnecessary to translate (c) compensate the meaning of expression by translating the similar expression.

Translatability

Translatability means translation is possible (Catford, 1965). In this study, most of the fixed expressions are translatable. Example (1): بپايش افتادم means; to ask someone, in a very emotional way, to do something for you, is translated to: fell at her feet (Costello), and threw myself at her feet (Bashiri). Example (2): روى هم رفته means; to do something completely or as well as you can, is translated to: all things considered (Costello), and on the whole (Bashiri). Examples (1) and (2) are clear because the translators have found the idiomatic expression in the TL. Example (3): از خود بيخود شده بودم means; get out of your normal state, is translated to: I was beside myself with passion (Costello), and I lost consciousness (Bashiri). In example (3),

translators employed the common way of translating when a match cannot be found in the TL or when is not appropriate to use the idiomatic expression in the TL. Therefore, the translation by paraphrase can prove the translatability. As it can be seen in (table 1), example 4 is translatable, while both of the translators have employed an omission strategy. Sometimes it is possible that a translator omits one expression because of some logical reasons. For instance, *معدوم شدنم* is omitted by both of the translators because the writer has written three different words with the same meaning in one sentence such as *خواهد مرد, معدوم شدنم, هرگم*. Translators for avoiding of repetition have omitted *معدوم شدنم*. But they translate the last word with the same meaning at the end of the sentence.

Table1.
Examples of translatability

Example	Employed strategy by Costello	Employed strategy by Bashiri	(un)translatability
Example 1	Similar meaning and form	Similar meaning and form	Translatable
Example 2	Similar meaning and dissimilar form	Similar meaning and dissimilar form	Translatable
Example 3	Paraphrase	Paraphrase	Translatable
Example 4	Omission	Omission	Translatable

Untranslatability

Three expressions are borrowed by both translators. Two expressions are borrowed by Costello, while, another translator could translate them into the TL. So, it means that these two expressions are translatable. (1) *سیزده بدر* means; the thirteenth day of Nouruz, which is traditionally considered as an unlucky and a sinister day and people should leave home to go on a picnic, is translated thirteenth day of Nouruz (Costello), and the thirteenth day of Farvardin (Bashiri), is an untranslatable expression because this expression related to the culture of SL, cultural untranslatability occurs when a certain situational feature, which is functionally significant for the SL text, does not exist in the TL culture (Catford, 1965). 13 is an unlucky number in Iranian culture and at the first thirteenth day of the year, people should go out of the home. So, it is in the branch of cultural untranslatability. (2) *دو قران و یک عباسی* means; a unit of money during the reign of Reza Shah which was valueless, is translated two kran and one abbasi (Costello), and two Qerans and one Abbasi (Bahiri), is in the branch of linguistic untranslatability, because this expression shows the unit of money in one era, also it shows the low price of money. 'حنا' is a loan word in the SL, its language is Arabic. In Islam, khe(a)zaab (henna is used to dye beard and the hand) is included emphatic tradition for men. So, (3) *ریش حنا بسته اش* means; someone with henna-dyed beard follows the Islamic tradition to show his belief, is translated henna-dyed beard (Costello), and hennaed beard (Bashiri), is a fixed expression with strong religious connotation which is not possible to translate. It can be in the branch of cultural untranslatability.

Results

This article attempts to illustrate the frequency of strategies applied by two translators and the number of translatability and untranslatability. The quantitative results are shown in the figures. As shown “in figure 1”, translation by paraphrase is the most frequently applied strategy with the frequency of 50%. In other words, the translator showed a clear tendency toward translation by paraphrase. Moreover, the wrong translation is not among the strategies mentioned above. The wrong is here in the table due to the wrong translation of the translator. “In figure 2”, similar meaning and dissimilar form is the most frequently applied strategy. The paraphrase and the similar meaning and form are approximately at the same frequency. Furthermore, just one wrong translation has been identified in the translation of fixed expressions by the translator.

Translation by paraphrase is the most similar strategy that translators have applied in translating the fixed expressions. Both of the translators showed a clear tendency toward translation by paraphrasing “in figure 3”. In the last part, “in figure 4,” as it is clear, just three numbers of the fixed expressions are untranslatable, and the others are translatable. It means that translation of the fixed expressions is possible in this study.

Figure1. *Applied strategies by Costello*

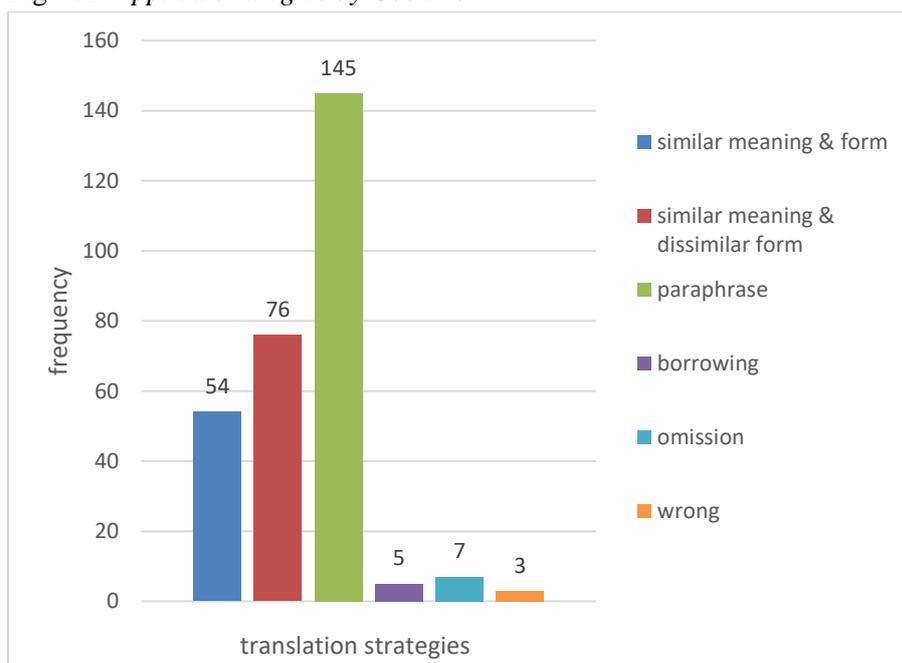


Figure 2. *Applied strategies by Bashiri*

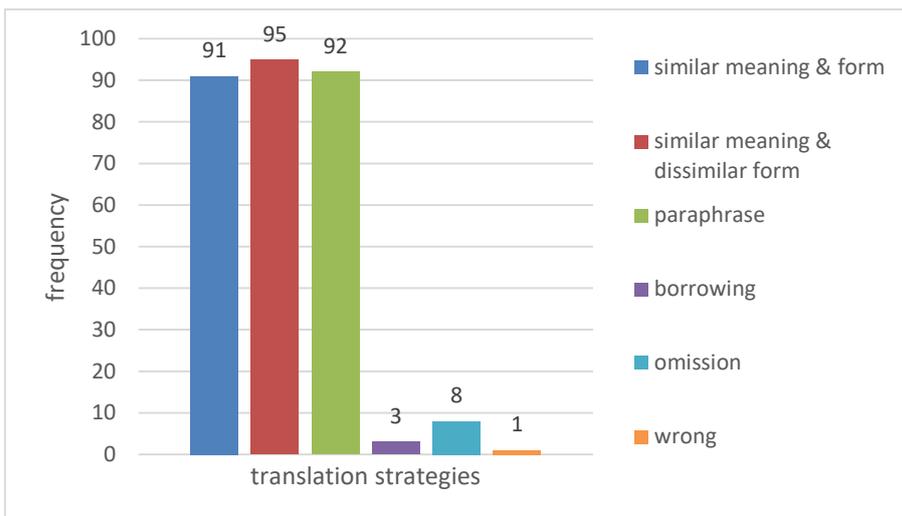


Figure 3. Similarities between the two translators' applied strategies

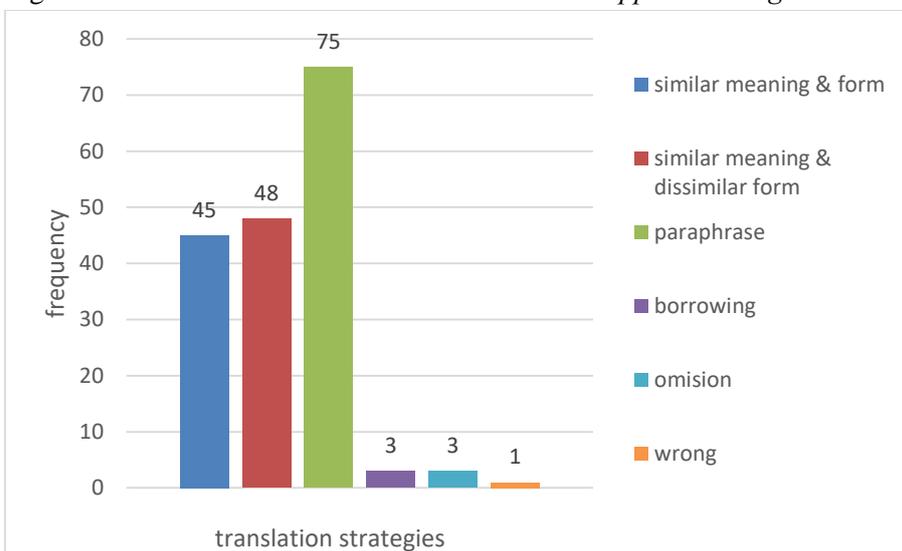


Figure 4. (Un)translatability of fixed expressions

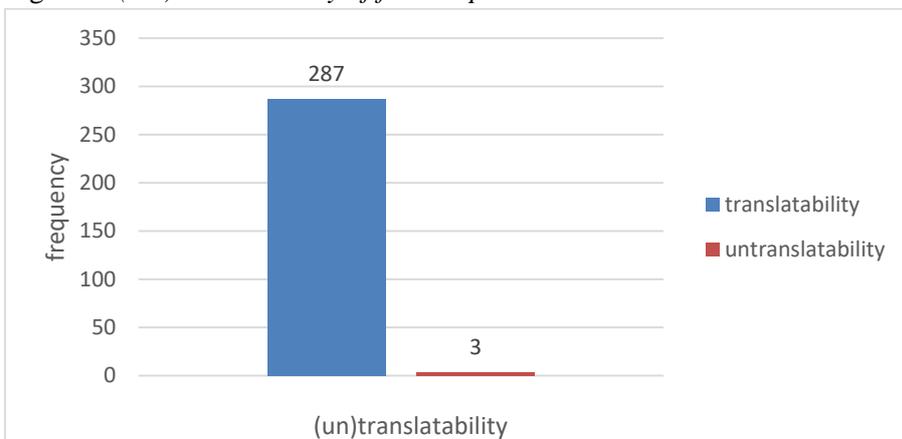


Table 2.*Applied strategies by Costello.*

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Similar meaning and form	54	18.62%
Similar meaning& dissimilar form	76	26.21%
Borrowing	5	1.72%
Paraphrase	145	50%
Omission	7	2.41%
Wrong	3	1.04%
Total	290	100%

In this study, 290 fixed expressions were collected from the book *The Blind Owl*. They are analyzing the fixed expressions in Hedayat's *The Blind Owl* and their translations in English. It is found that out of 290, 54 fixed expressions were translated using similar meaning and form by Costello, While, Bashiri applied the similar meaning and form for translating 91 fixed expressions. As it can be seen in Table 2, the percentage of employing the first strategy is 18.62% by Costello, whereas 31.38% of fixed expressions are translated by Bashiri into English using the first strategy, as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3.*Applied strategies by Bashiri.*

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Similar meaning & form	91	31.38%
Similar meaning& dissimilar form	95	32.76%
Borrowing	3	1.04%
Paraphrase	92	31.72%
Omission	8	2.76%
Wrong	1	0.34%
Total	290	100%

Again, in table 2, 26.21% of fixed expressions are translated into English using a similar meaning and dissimilar form (second strategy); While, 32.76% of fixed expressions are translated by Bashiri into English using the second strategy. The percentage of making use of the second strategy is almost near to the first one "in both tables 2 and 3". Borrowing is the third strategy. According to Baker (2011, p.79), "just as the use of loan words is a common strategy in dealing with culture-specific items, it is not unusual for idioms to be borrowed."

Five fixed expressions are borrowed by Costello, and Bashiri has borrowed three fixed expressions from the SL. By comparing the performance of two translators, no considerable difference can be observed in the performance of the two translators as to using the strategy of borrowing. Translation by paraphrase is the fourth strategy. In the translation that is made by Costello, 50 % of fixed expressions are translated by using the fourth strategy, while Bashiri has translated 31.72 % of fixed expressions into English.

As it can be concluded by comparing two “figures 1 and 2”, there is a difference between the two translators’ performance as to using the strategy of translation by paraphrase; the difference is about 19 percent. The fifth strategy is a translation by omission. As Baker (2011) states, if there is no close match in the TL, and its meaning cannot be paraphrased, an idiom may be omitted. Three cases of the fixed expressions are untranslatable due to the cultural and linguistic differences between the source and target languages. The (un)translatability percentages are calculated at 98.96 and 1.04 for translatability and untranslatability, respectively. Most of fixed expressions in this study are translatable. A few of the fixed expressions are untranslatable in the study because of the following reasons:

- a. Fixed expressions may be culture-specific meaning they may relate to specific religious, social, cultural, or political occasions.
- b. Cultural and linguistic differences between the languages cause translating of fixed expressions impossible.
- c. Sometimes a fixed expression has a political or religious connotation while its counterpart in the target text may have a different connotation.

Discussion

Omrani & Shams Hosseini (2021) examined the strategies used to translate idioms according to Baker’s (2011) categorization of translation strategies. Their study aimed to assess problems during the process of translation and investigation. They collected some Persian idioms from the novel ‘*The Blind Owl*’ and concluded that the most common strategy used in translation was ‘translation by similar meaning and dissimilar form.’ This present study came up with Omrani & Shams Hosseini’s (2021) study revealing the critical role of fixed expressions in different languages. According to the findings in the study, the ‘paraphrase’ strategy is the most common in Costello’s translation and the ‘similar meaning and dissimilar form’ in Bashiri’s translation.

Afrouz (2021) criticized equivalents used by a native and a non-native translator of a Persian novel ‘*The Blind Owl*’ based on componential analysis and the semantic load of the words. Costello is considered as a non-native and Bashiri as a native translator. The researcher collected some expressions (especially culture-specific ones) and then categorized the items into various groups. It is concluded that the translators are inconsistent in resorting the specific procedures. Moreover, the most common procedures are ‘expansion’ and ‘compensation’. The least frequencies are ‘omission’, ‘amplification’, and ‘mistranslation’. According to the result of the study, it is concluded that the performance of the native translator is better than the non-native in observing the meaning components and semantic-load of the lexical items embedded in the novel. The result of this study supported Afrouz (2021), revealing that the native translator has been more successful than the non-native in translating the fixed expressions. One reason to justify the event seems to be the familiarity of the native translator with the source language’s culture.

In the study of Manipuspika & Winzami (2021) about idioms and fixed expressions, they have been realized that idioms and fixed expressions are culture-bound; therefore, it is easy to say that culture is complex to deal with translation. Moreover, idioms and fixed expressions cannot be formally translated due to their misleading forms. It is concluded that translation by 'paraphrase' is the most preferred strategy in translating idiomatic expressions. According to the findings of the present study, the most common strategy in the translation of the fixed expressions by the native translator is 'similar meaning and dissimilar form'. Costello, as a non-native translator, has employed paraphrase in most items.

According to Floranti & Mubarok (2020), translation of idiomatic expressions can be considered a challenging process due to their connotation. Based on the results, the translator prefers applying paraphrasing strategies. The translator needs to be experienced in understanding the source and target language well. In the present study, the performance of two translators (native & non-native) has been assessed. Therefore, two different results have been obtained from the investigation of strategies. The 'paraphrase' is the most common strategy in Costello's translation and the 'similar meaning and dissimilar form' in Bashiri's work. Bashiri believed that Costello had not adhered to the exact text of Hedayat (Bashiri, 2013).

The findings of the study are in line with those of Shojaei (2012) in the process of translating idiomatic expressions becomes more easily when two languages are more identical to each other. Another concept that considered in the study of Shojaei (2012) is that the translator must have deep knowledge of both SL and TL to understand the connotative meanings of idioms and fixed expressions. As it can be seen from the data analyzed, the linguistic and cultural differences between the languages make a few fixed expressions untranslatable. In table 4.6, 1.04% of the data are untranslatable. Moreover, the findings of this study were shown, the performance of the native translator and the non-native translator, due to the familiarity of the native translator with the culture and language of the source text is better than the non-native translator in translating the fixed expressions from Persian into English. While, concerning a few of the fixed expressions in which both of the translators have borrowed the words from SL, having deep knowledge of the culture and language of the source text may not solve the problems that idiomatic expressions cause.

Raquel de Pedro (1999) believes that the consensus seemed to be that absolute untranslatability, whether linguistic or cultural, does not exist. Whereas, as stated in the results, there are a few untranslatable fixed expressions due to the linguistic and cultural differences between SL and TL and the style of the source text (some of the expressions have strong political and religious connotations). It can be concluded that absolute untranslatability does not exist. However, Fernando and Flavell (1981) warn us to be against the "strong unconscious urge in most translators to search hard for an idiom in the receptor-language, however inappropriate it may be" (p.82) (as cited in Baker, 2012, p.76). So, every similar correspondence in TL is not accurate or appropriate.

There is a difference between absolute untranslatability and untranslatability. Absolute untranslatability focuses on the translation without considering the factors such as style, context. That is important in translating fixed expressions. So, the untranslatability, in this regard, may happen. Some culture-bound items can be omitted when far-off from the cultural context (Keshavarzi, 2015). However, omission cannot be reliable when an author has an object of putting the item. Nevertheless, translators should compensate the item in another place if there is no way instead of omission. Hence, translators would have compensated in another part, or even they could have considered the TL's culture instead of omitting the items.

Conclusion

Both of the translators have used the strategies such as; similar meaning and form, similar meaning and dissimilar form, paraphrase, borrowing, omission, and some wrong translation which is not among the translation strategies. Paraphrase has the most frequency in translating the fixed expressions by Costello. Translation strategies made the process of translation easier for translators. However, the translation, especially the translation of fixed expressions, depends on many factors, for example, the context in which a fixed expression is translated, cultural or linguistic differences between SL and TL, and the ability of the translator to employ an appropriate strategy in the process of translation. So, it can be concluded that just having some knowledge of translation strategies is not enough. The accuracy of using the translation strategies depends on the context.

As it can be seen "in figures 1 and 2", it can be concluded that the performance of Bashiri as a native translator is better than the performance of Costello as a non-native translator in translating the fixed expressions from Persian into English. The most frequent strategy that Costello applies in translating fixed expressions is the translation by paraphrase. Both of the translators have omitted three cases of fixed expressions, and both have applied the borrowing strategy for translating three cases. They have omitted the cases for three reasons as above mentioned; (a) to prevent repetition, (b) item is unnecessary to translate (c) compensate the meaning of expression by translating the similar expression.

Most of the fixed expressions in the corpus are translatable, and just three cases of the fixed expressions are untranslatable. One of the expressions is in the branch of cultural untranslatability. Thus, translators had to borrow it from SL. A reliable way for rendering this kind of expressions may be an explanation in parentheses to explain the connotation.

Pedagogical Implications

This thesis can be beneficial to several people:

1. Students of translation: the translation students can be familiar with the concept of (un)translatability and fixed expressions.
2. Professors of translation: the professors of translation can use the result of this thesis to show students how translation is not possible in translating fixed expressions.
3. Novice translators: the novice translators can also benefit from the results of this thesis to adopt more suitable approaches for translating fixed expressions. In other words,

applied strategies by the translators in this study can guide them.

Suggestions for Further Research

There are some suggestions for further research as following:

First, sometimes context is important in translating the idioms and fixed expressions. So, translators are supposed to consider not only the meaning but the context. Second, there are still many other Persian books that have not been considered for working on their fixed expressions. Third, Translatability at the word level can be considered as another path for researchers of translation studies. Fourth, due to the realism style of the book, some expressions and words have strong political and religious connotations, which can make it untranslatable; it can be a new path for other researchers. At last, it may be interesting to compare the performance of one non-native translator with a native translator about translating culture-specific items in literary works through the years.

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