

A Study of Applied Strategies in Translating Idiomatic Expressions in Two Movie Subtitles: Bring It On & Mean Girls

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Abstract

Idiomatic expressions are considered as a part of everyday language. In other words, they are the essence of each language and one of the most problematic parts to cope with, especially in the process of interlingual translation. Furthermore, there is sometimes no one-to-one equivalent for the idioms of the source language (SL) in the target language (TL). This study aimed at investigating the applied strategies in the translation of idiomatic expressions in 2 American subtitled movies, namely *Mean Girls* (2004) and *Bring It On!* (2009), through using Baker's (1992) proposed procedures in translating idiomatic expressions in translation studies. To this aim, the idiomatic expressions were extracted from the original versions of the movies and compared with the subtitled translations in Persian. Analysis of the relevant data indicated that the chi-square results were not significant at $\chi^2(3, N = 2) = 1.188, p = 0$, considering $p < 0.05$. Therefore, Baker's (1992) strategies were not distributed equally between these two movies. Moreover, the "omission" strategy with the frequency of 40 was the topmost used strategy in these movies.

Keywords: Idiom, Subtitle, Translation Strategies

1. Introduction

Language, as an effective means of communication, has made a link between nations to solve human problems generally or particularly. To make this discourse, language plays a significant role. Besides, one of the major links between diverse nations is translation. As Newmark (1988) puts it, "translation is a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another

language" (p. 190). Translation, as to Pym's (2010) words, can be seen as a "general activity of communication between cultural groups" (p. 143).

Considering the concept of translation, one can recognize that the fundamental purpose of translation is to reproduce various kinds of texts in another language, and consequently, converting the text into another understandable text to a wider range of readers. Moreover, in this rapid world of communication, training good

translators that can easily convey the source language (SL) message into the target language (TL) message without any misunderstanding in meaning, is of paramount importance. Therefore, not only training good translators is of utmost importance, but also producing an acceptable translation is inevitable.

Due to the rapid pace of developing technology, audiovisual translation plays a crucial role in each individual life. Furthermore, movies, as one of the major cultural materials in each society, are of paramount importance in reflecting the cultural aspects of a society. Besides, one of the main problems in the process of subtitling is translating idiomatic elements related to the culture and individuals' values in the society whose idiomatic expressions are included in this group. Therefore, there are many reasons why one would think that translating idioms is important. This study aimed at investigating in 2 American subtitled movies, namely *Bring It On!* (2009) and *Mean Girls* (2004) via applying Baker's (1992) strategies in translation studies.

1.2. Idiomatic Expressions as a Problematic Issue

Idiomatic and cultural expressions are introduced as some of the most challenging issues in translation studies. Idiom is a group of words, established by usage, as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words like *over the moon* or *see the light*.

Baker (1992) considers idioms and fixed expressions as a different category under the multiword units. Baker believes that idiomatic expressions are "frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form, and in the case of idioms, often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components" (p. 63). As Baker states, idiomatic expressions are classified into five different categories:

1. Colloquialism: Colloquial expressions are those expressions not used in formal speech or writing. These expressions are good for

informal conversations, rather than formal speech or writing. For instance, for translating *laughing a lot*, translators can transfer the message with *از خنده روده بر شدن* in Persian.

2. Proverbs: Mieder (1982) believes that a proverb "is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form which is handed down from generation to generation" (p. 119). For example, *When in Rome, do as the Romans do* is translated *خواهی نشوی رسوا، هم رنگ جماعت شو* in Persian.

3. Slangs: They are considered as the strongly informal words or expressions that are not considered as the standard use of language. Dumas and Lighter (1978) argue that slang lessens the formality of speech or writing. For example, *the black sheep of the family* is translated *بزگرگله* in Persian.

4. Allusion: It is another literary device of figurative language, referring to place, event, myth, literary work, or work of art, either directly or by implication. For example, *to carry coal to New Castle* is translated *زیره به کرمان بردن* in Persian.

5. Phrasal verbs: They can be defined as the combination of a verb and an adverb, verb and a preposition, or a verb with both an adverb and a preposition. Phrasal verbs often have different meanings from the meaning of the original verbs. For example, *to call off* is translated *بیر هم زدن، خاتمه دادن* in Persian.

Due to the frozen forms of idioms, they are hard to be translated. Sometimes, it is hard to find the right equivalent for a single word, rather than finding an adaptive one to a frozen form. Therefore, finding an acceptable and adaptive equivalent for frozen forms is of the laborious task.

Translation strategies are problem-solving tools which translators use when they face problems. Lorsch (1991) defines translation strategy as "a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language to another" (p. 76). Also, Baker

(1992) introduced four strategies for translating idioms and fixed expressions. These strategies are determined by various factors: cultural, economic, and political. These idioms are presented through examples for concise recognition:

Translating the SL idiom with an idiom similar in meaning and form: Through this strategy, the translator aims at finding an idiom in the TL similar in meaning and form to the SL idiom. Generally, this strategy is hard to achieve due to the differences among languages, mainly in the process of interlingual translation. It is regarded as the ideal strategy in translating idiomatic translation, though. For example, *Cat got your tongue?* is translated in *موش زبونتو خورد؟* in Persian.

Translating the SL idiom with an idiom similar in meaning, but dissimilar in form: In this case, the meaning of the SL and the TL idioms are the same, but they are appeared in different lexical forms. For example, the idiom *Out of sight, out of mind!* is translated into *از دل برود هرآنکه از دیده برفت* in Persian.

Translating by paraphrase: This case is the most common used strategy, especially when the translators cannot find a suitable equivalent for the SL idioms. Furthermore, it is not a wise act to omit an idiom from the string of talk in translation when translators are incapable of pointing out an acceptable translation. Losing the intended meaning of the SL idiom is one of the main drawbacks of this strategy, however. For example, the idiom in *He is a supergrass!* is translated in *آدم خبرچین و فضولیه* in Persian.

Translation by omission: When there is no close match between the SL and the TL idioms, the last strategy acts as an aid not to reflect the meaning of the SL idiom into TL. For example, *I could not make head or tail of his talk* is translated into *از حرفاش سر در نیاوردم* in Persian.

Though the most recommended translation strategy for idioms is translating them with

a natural TL idiom which has the same meaning as the original SL idiom.

1.3. Idiomatic Expressions in Movie Subtitles

The first subcategory of audiovisual translation (or screen translation) is *subtitling*, which is a complex form of translation in which the oral communication (i.e., the SL) of a TV show or film is translated into the written language of the audiences (i.e., the TL). In De Linde and Kay's (1999) words, subtitling "supplements the dialogue of a film with written captions, while dubbing entirely substitutes an original dialogue with a phonetically-tuned synchronous oral translation" (p. 46).

Gottlieb (1992) explains that the subtitler is faced with formal (i.e., quantitative) and textual (i.e., qualitative) constraints. Textual constraints are those imposed on the subtitles by the visual context of the film, whereas formal constraints are the space factors (a maximum of two lines are allowed, with some 35 characters each) and time factor. The length of a subtitle depends on the quality and complexity of the text, the speed of the dialogue, the average viewer's reading speed, and, therefore, the necessity intervals between subtitles.

Delabastita (1989) also mentions that subtitles are constrained as forms of translation because the aural text must be rendered as segments of, sometimes, not more than two lines. Additionally, because of the fact that people read more slowly than they speak, most subtitles represent summaries rather than verbatim accounts of what are said on screen. So, omissions are virtually inevitable. Delabastita states that "the constraints of space and time lead into the problem of selection as the translator has to analyze the ST material carefully to decide what ought to be transferred to the TT and what can or must be left out" (p.200).

2. Literature Review

Figurative language is an umbrella term consisting of words or phrases that have left their literal meanings to create an imaginative image instead. Idioms are one of the most frequently used figures of speech in everyday lives. Considering idioms as linguistic elements, they represent objects, concepts, or phenomenon of material life specific to a culture. Besides, figurative language is considered as one of the most challenging problems in the process of translation, according to Newmark (1988), and idiomatic expressions are no exception.

Idioms, generally, as language specific items, carrying a nonliteral meaning, are usually different from the literal meaning of the expression. In all sorts of communication, idiomatic expressions are widely used almost in all languages. It is crystal clear that the English language is rich in the use of idioms. They are used both in formal style and in slang.

Furthermore, considering idioms as frozen patterns of language, Baker (1992) believes that these expressions let little or no change in their form, often carrying meanings which cannot be perceived from their individual elements. Therefore, she considers the five following characteristics for idioms:

1. The order of words: The word order in idiomatic expressions is fixed. In other words, the way words are put together is fixed, and they cannot change their place. For instance, *go to ruin and rack* cannot be used instead of *go to rack and ruin*.

2. No omission: The words in an idiomatic expression cannot be omitted. It is not possible to use *shed tears* instead of *shed crocodile tears*, for example.

3. No addition: No extra words can be added to the string of an idiomatic expression. One cannot, therefore, employ *have a narrow quick escape* with *have a narrow escape*.

4. No replacement: As the name indicates, no word can be replaced with another in an

idiomatic expression. The word *heart*, for example, cannot be replaced with *sight* or *mind* in *out of sight*, *out of mind*.

5. Fixed grammatical structure: No change is allowed in the grammatical structure of idioms. *The bell was ringed* cannot be replaced with *ring the bell*, for example.

Different scholars (e.g., Cacciari & Glucksberg, 1991; Nunberg, 1978; Yoshikawa, 2008) classified idiomatic expressions in different ways. Nunberg's (1978) classification proposed a typology for characterizing how the literal meanings of idiom components contribute—or may not contribute—to the overall interpretation of idiomatic phrase. As to Nunberg's system, idiomatic expressions may be classified into three different classes: normally decomposable idioms, abnormally decomposable idioms, semantically nondecomposable idioms. For one thing, normally decomposable idioms are those expressions in which a part of the idiom is used literally. Abnormally decomposable idioms, on the other hand, are expressions whose referent of the idiom's components can be recognized metaphorically. Finally, nondecomposable idioms serve the traditional definition due to the fact that the idiom's meaning is less likely to be perceived from the composite meaning of the words' strings (Titone & Connine, 1994).

Cacciari and Glucksberg (1991), in their taxonomy, identified idioms as opaque, transparent, or quasimaterial elements. They indicated that idioms like *kick the bucket* in which there is some degrees of semantic constraint on their interpretation give the meaning of the component words. Transparent idioms are mainly those idioms in which there is a direct projection of literal words meaning to idiomatic meaning. In *spill the beans*, for instance, literally translated to *reveal a secret*, *spill* indicates the act of *revealing* and *beans* stands for *the secret*. Lastly, idioms classified as quasi-metaphorical idioms are those phrases whose overall literal meaning of the phrase

metaphorically projects the idiomatic meaning similar to metaphorical expressions. These idioms, hence, convey their meaning, according to Cacciari and Glucksberge, through allusional content.

With regard to Yoshikawa's (2008) taxonomy, idiomatic expressions are classified into five different categories, namely A, B, C, C1, C2, and D. The degree of L1 and L2 structures and semantic similarity in this taxonomy is the primary criterion in classifying idioms. According to Yoshikawa's classification, an L2 idiom is structurally similar to an L1 idiom only if the major content words.

Idioms type A are English idioms with both semantic and structural similarity to L1 idioms. Idiomatic expressions of type B are idioms with partial semantic and structural similarity to L1 idioms. Idioms of type C1, on the other hand, are those structurally similar, but semantically dissimilar to L1 idioms. Idioms of type C2 are those structurally and semantically dissimilar to L1 idioms. Idioms of type D, on the contrary to type C1, are structurally dissimilar, but semantically similar to L1 idioms.

Moon (1998) claims that idioms are general terms for all kind of multiwords expressions, "whether semantically opaque or not" (p. 4). Fernando (1996), furthermore, distinguishes three subcategories of idioms: 1. Pure idioms: Fernando introduced pure idioms as "a type of conventionalized, nonliteral multiword expression" (p. 36). Being nonliteral, pure idioms may be either invariable or may have little variation. Additionally, "these idioms are said to be opaque" (p. 32). For example, *to spill the beans*, as a pure idiom, has nothing to do with *beans*.

2. Semi-idioms: It is believed that such idioms have one or more literal constituents in their strings with nonliteral subsense. Hence, this type of idiom is considered "partially opaque" (p. 60). For example, *foot the bill*, which means *pay*, is considered as a semi-idiom.

3. Literal idioms: This kind of idiom is considered as either invariable or allows little variation. Literal idioms, moreover, are named transparent idioms due to the fact that their meanings can be interpreted base on their constituents. *Of course, for certain, or in any case* are some examples of literal idioms.

With regard to the culture-bound elements in translation, idiomatic expressions are one of the most problematic issues in translation, especially in the case of interlingual translation. Translating idiomatic expressions, from English to Persian, is considered as one of the most arduous tasks for interlingual translators. As Baker (1992) writes, one of the main difficulties may be lack of equivalence in the TL. Baker also believes that different languages generally use different linguistic means to find the proper equivalent of the same form and meaning in the TL. Cacciari and Tabossi (1993), moreover, point out that the difficulty of defining idioms precisely might be one possible reason why they have been studied so little. Another difficulty posed by Baker (1992) is "the use of the idiom similar in its form and meaning in different context in the target language" (p. 69). Also, she believes that idioms may be used "both in literal and idiomatic sense" (p. 69). In this case, therefore, she believes that if the TL idiom does not match with the SL idiom, both in form and meaning, then it is "hard to transfer the meaning" (p. 70). For instance, in the following example, Baker introduces the idiom *to poke his nose* which is both used in literal and idiomatic sense:

- Example: *He had sufficient influence to be able to poke his nose into the private affairs of others where less aristocratic noses might have been speedily bloodied.*

All in all, 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. Idiom translation difficulties fall into different

types. First, there is a lack of sense equivalence in the TL. Idioms are culturally-specific, meaning that they may express a sense that does not occur in the TL.

Therefore, translating idioms mostly depends on the context in which they have occurred. Secondly, there may be equivalence for the idiom in the TL, but the situation in which it has been used differs from the SL to the TL. In other words, an idiom may have the same sense in the TL but a different connotation. For instance, the idiom *to sing a different tune* means "to say or do something that contradicts what has been said or done before." The Persian equivalence for this idiom is *ساز مخالف زدن* and is used to refer to those situations which someone only cares about his or her own benefits. Both idioms share the surface meaning, but are used differently. Thirdly, the frequency and formality of idioms differ from one language to another. Finally, it can be concluded that to translate these idioms, translators must find the proper equivalent in the TL.

Elkilic (2008) investigated Turkish students' understanding of transparent and opaque idioms in English in reading, as well as speaking. The aim of his study was to show whether or not the level of Turkish students affect understanding of transparent, opaque/common, and opaque/uncommon idioms. Thirty-five intermediate level and 36 advanced-level students from Kafkas University, Azerbaijan, participated in his study. Eighty idioms containing 40 English idioms (12 transparent idioms, 10 opaque/common idioms, and 18 opaque/uncommon idioms) and 40 Turkish idioms (10 transparent idioms, 12 opaque/common idioms, and 18 opaque/uncommon) were given to the participants. They translated the idioms and wrote equivalences in English and Turkish. The result indicated that the level of the students did not affect understanding of transparent, opaque/common, and opaque/uncommon idioms. Moreover, there was a significant difference between the transparent, opaque/common,

and opaque/uncommon idioms in both for the answers from Turkish to English and English to Turkish.

Belfaqeeh (2009), moreover, carried out a study regarding the more acceptable translation strategies to the Arab readers. His study was conducted based on domesticated or foreignized strategies. Collecting the relevant data from different books, his study was conducted. The analysis of the data indicated that domestication strategy was more popular to the Arab readers. In other words, for the Arab readers, the content of the message and translated equivalent idiom were of significant importance. Literal translation and deletion, furthermore, attained the least preferences for the Arab readers.

Marashi and Poursoltani (2009) used Gottlieb's classification of interlingual subtitling strategies to do an analysis of Farsi into English subtitling strategies employed in Iranian feature films. The materials used were two corpora of the Farsi audio scripts of 12 Iranian films and their translations in English which were in the form of subtitles. Based on their findings, Gottlieb's model was applicable to Farsi-to-English subtitling of Iranian feature films. In addition, their study revealed "transfer" as the most frequently used strategy and "deletion" as the least frequently one in translating the subtitles.

Shojaei (2012), moreover, tried to identify the difficulties in translating interlingual idiomatic pairs, and later on aimed to suggest some strategies to deal with those difficulties. Following Baker's (1992) classification of difficulties and strategies in translation studies, Shojaei applied them largely for some English and their equivalent Turkish (Azeri) as well as Persian pairs. The findings revealed that there was no clear-cut distinction to cope with idiomatic expressions; however, the situation decides which strategy to be taken.

Another study on idioms and its translation carried by Haghshenas (2012) was an attempt to investigate the adopted

strategies by Persian translators in rendering the symbolic meanings of animals in children's literature. Analyzing 12 Western children books and their Persian translations, the data were categorized into two main translation groups (i.e., domestication and foreignization), based on Venuti's (1995) categorization of translation strategies in translation studies. The results showed that most of the Persian translators tended to use the foreignization strategy for translating these cultural terms.

Tousi (2011) aimed at investigating which strategies translators apply when they try to compensate the loss of idiomaticity while translating idiomatic expressions. The data were gathered from the English novel Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as the SL and its Persian translation as the TL. The results indicated that the topmost used translation strategy by the translator was "translating SL idioms into TL nonidiomatic expressions." This fact leads to imbalance between the SL and TL idioms. Coping with this problem, the translator used the compensation strategy by adding idioms instead of nonidioms in the TL.

Khosravi and Khatib (2012) examined strategies which were used in the translation of English idioms into Persian in novels *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee and *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck and their translations. They did their study based on Baker's (1992) model that proposed four strategies for translating idioms: "using an idiom of similar meaning and form," "using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form," "translation by paraphrase," and "translation by omission." Based on their findings, "paraphrase" was the most common strategy, and "using an idiom of similar meaning and form" was the least common strategy applied in the translation of the two novels above.

Taking into account all the studies done so far, one of the main problems in the process of subtitling is translating idiomatic

elements related to the culture and individuals' values in the society which idiomatic expressions are included in this group. This study aimed at investigating the applied strategies in translating idiomatic expressions in two subtitled movies through Baker's (1992) descriptive translation studies.

Regarding the frozen form of idiomatic expressions, audiovisual translators' misunderstanding of the idiomatic concepts can cause misunderstanding of the movies by the audience, even though audiovisual translation just acts as an aid, and the audience has access to a great deal of the material, which is visual. Hence, misunderstanding can easily be understood by the audience.

Besides, translation studies have different phases to translate each and every different item in the field, and translating idiomatic expressions are included in this domain. Therefore, translation of idiomatic expressions is of core value in translation studies domain, especially in the authentic context of movies.

In this study, the researcher shed some light on the issue of idiomatic expressions in the domain of translation studies, mainly through using movies as an authentic material to audiovisual translators. Three research questions were, therefore, framed to investigate these aims:

1. What are the applied strategies in translating idiomatic expressions in the subtitles of the movies *Bring It On!* (2009) and *Mean Girls* (2004)?
2. What is the most frequent used strategy in translating idiomatic expressions in subtitles of the movies *Bring It On!* (2009) and *Mean Girls* (2004)?
3. Do the applied strategies in the subtitles of the movies *Bring It On!* (2009) and *Mean Girls* (2004) share the same frequency?

3. Method

3.1. Materials

Considering idiomatic expressions as one of the problematic issues in translation, two movies were selected as the corpus of the

study. These movies were selected from the 21st Century Visual and Media Company, which is an audiovisual translation company in Iran with Iranian native translators. Therefore, the materials used in this study were two American subtitled movies whose brief introductions are listed in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1. *A Brief Introduction of the Two Selected American Subtitled Movies*

No (min)	Original Title	Release Year	Run Time	Director
1	Bring It On!	2009	98	Peyton Reed
2	Mean Girls	2004	97	Mark Waters

3.2. Procedure

After gathering the subtitled American movies by 21 Century Visual and Media Company, which is a well-established audiovisual translation company, the original versions were compared with their subtitled ones to record the idiomatic expressions in the original versions and the translation of the same frozen chunks in the subtitled versions. Then, to recognize the applied strategies in the translation of the idiomatic expressions, the collected idioms—both the subtitled and original versions—were compared with Baker's (1992) model of translation. Then, these frozen chunks were presented in separate tables for each movie, and they were compared with Baker's (1992) strategies in translating idiomatic expressions in translation studies.

3.3. Data Analysis

After collecting the required data, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 22), the present researcher applied a frequency table for each movie. After that, chi-square was run to answer the research questions. To recognize the quality of the adaptive strategies in translating the idiomatic expressions in the subtitled

movies, a total frequency table was established to answer the topmost used strategy and to find the applied strategies in translating the idiomatic expressions.

4. Results

After watching the movies, comparing them with their subtitled versions, and extracting the idiomatic expressions, 70 cases of idiomatic expression were found. Of this, 40 cases of the idiomatic expressions were found in the *Bring It On!* (2009) movie, and 30 were observed in the *Mean Girls* (2004) movie (see Table 4.1):

Table 4.1. *Frequency of All Strategies in the Movies*

Original Title	1	2	3	4	Total
Bring It On!	8	8	1	23	40
Mean Girls	5	8	0	17	30
Total					70

Note. 1 = Translating the SL idiom to its similar equivalents in form and meaning, 2 = Translating the SL idiom to its equivalent similar in meaning but different in form, 3 = Paraphrasing the SL idiom, 4 = Omission
Later on, the relevant data were compared with Baker's (1992) strategies in translating idiomatic expressions. Baker stresses that there are four strategies in translating idiomatic expressions in interlingual translation, as follows:
1. Translating the SL idiom with an idiom similar in both meaning and form in the TL
2. Translating the SL idiom with an idiom similar in meaning, but different in form
3. Paraphrasing the SL idiom in the TL
4. Translating the SL idiom by omitting it in the TL and applying another expression in the TL

Therefore, the first research question is already answered. There were four strategies applied by the Iranian subtitled translators in translating these two movies, and these strategies were the same applied by Baker (1992) in the translation of idiomatic expressions.

Moreover, according to Table 4.1, 70 cases of the idiomatic expressions were observed in the movies. The tables below are prepared with some examples of each strategy. Table 4.2 is prepared with examples of the first strategy used in the first movie (i.e., *Bring It On!*):

Also, in the *Mean Girls* movie, some

cases of the first strategy was seen. Table 4.3 represents some examples of the first strategy in the *Men Girls* movie:

Moreover, the second strategy in the *Bring it On!* (2009) movie with the frequency of 8 had the equal frequency with the first strategy. Table 4.4 presents some examples of this strategy:

Table 4.2. Examples of the First Strategy in *Bring It On!* Movie

Strategy	Idiomatic Expressions	Subtitled Translations
Translating the SL Idiom With an Idiom Similar in Both Meaning and Form in the TL	<i>They give Malibu—a bad name.</i>	اونو رو بدنام کردند.
	<i>Okay, I'm in.</i>	باشه من هستم.
	<i>He's always dating down.</i>	اون همیشه با فقیر فقرا قرار میزاره.
	<i>So, I guess when Avery's mean to you, . . .</i>	پس وقتی اوری باهات کل میندازه.
	<i>So, now the truth comes out.</i>	خب حالا واقعیت رو شد.
	<i>Like mother, like daughter.</i>	به ننت رفتی.

Table 4.3. Examples of the First Strategy in *Mean Girls* Movie

Strategy	Idiomatic Expressions	Subtitled Translations
Translating the SL Idiom With an Idiom Similar in Both Meaning and Form in the TL	<i>Hey, get out of here!</i>	هی، از اینجا گمشین.
	<i>Okay, so think it over.</i>	بهش فکر کن.
	<i>You let it out, honey.</i>	بریز بیرون عزیزم.
	<i>You better get your story straight.</i>	اول داستانت رو جمع و جور کن.
	<i>I can try and get out of it.</i>	سعی میکنم از زیرش در برم.

Table 4.4. Examples of the Second Strategy in *Bring It On!* Movie

Strategy	Idiomatic Expressions	Subtitled Translations
Translating the SL Idiom With an Idiom Similar in Meaning but Different in Form	<i>Listen, you all need to drop the attitude.</i>	باید ادا اطوارتونو بذارید کنار.
	<i>Hey, you just can't walk up to them.</i>	همینطوری که نمیتونی بری تو دهنشون.
	<i>Stand out like bad teeth.</i>	داری میرو اعصابم.
	<i>That was a big bowl of wrong.</i>	نه، حتماً اشتباه شده.
	<i>I'm so over that.</i>	دیگه از این خیرا نیست.
	<i>He's supposed to scare.</i>	قرار بود بترسوندش، نه اینکه.
	<i>Him, not be all lovey-dovey.</i>	ناز و نوازشش کنه.
	<i>Let's roll out.</i>	بیا بریم به دوری بزنینم.
	<i>Load it out.</i>	از انرژیتون استفاده کنین.

In the *Mean Girls* (2004) movie, the second strategy had the frequency of 8, just as its equivalent strategy in the *Bring it On!* (2009) movie. The following table shows the exact samples of the movie (see Table 4.5):

Also, the third strategy was only observed once. In the *Bring it On!* (2009) movie, the sentence *I would give my best toe-touch if I could party with the RDDs* was rendered into *وای آگه بشه و بتونیم به همونیشون*

بریم، هم اسممو عوض میکنم هم از خوشحالی می میرم in Persian. The idiom *toe-touch* was “paraphrased” in Persian into *هم اسممو عوض میکنم هم از خوشحالی می میرم*

The final strategy (i.e., “omission”) received the highest frequency in both movies. Table 4.6 presents some examples of this strategy in the *Bring It On!* (2009) movie: Also, the “omission” strategy also had the topmost frequency in the *Mean Girls* movie (see Table 4.7):

Table 4.5. Examples of the Second Strategy in *Mean Girls* Movie

Strategy	Idiomatic Expressions	Subtitled Translations
Translating the SL Idiom With an Idiom Similar in Meaning but Different in Form	<i>If you were to hang out . . . with them, . . .</i>	آگه باهاشون بیلکی،
	<i>Regina was mad at her.</i>	رجینا از دستش عصبانیه.
	<i>Think outside out box.</i>	باید افکارمون رو گسترش بدیم.
	<i>The world has gotten out about my small get-together.</i>	کل عالم از مهمونی کوچیکم. خبردار شده بودن.
	<i>We're gonna get to the bottom of this right now.</i>	ما میخایم از قضیه سر در بیاریم.
	<i>I just wish we could all get along while we used to in middle school.</i>	کاش بشه باز مثل راهنمایی که همه به هم بودیم دوباره با هم باشیم.

Table 4.6. Examples of the Fourth Strategy in *Bring It On!* Movie

Strategy	Idiomatic Expressions	Subtitled Translations
Translating the SL Idiom by Omitting It in the TL and Applying Another Expression in the TL	<i>We are rough riders in the building.</i>	ما سرآمد این مدرسه ایم.
	<i>Cheer your little barrio heart out.</i>	یه کم جریزه به خرج بدین.
	<i>Love birds alert.</i>	صبح شده پاشین دیگه.
	<i>Only if you can say it in church, . . .</i>	مواظب باش وگرنه کلامون میره تو هم ها؟
	<i>You guys want to take this outside?</i>	میخاین بترکونید؟
	<i>Get pulled all the time.</i>	بابا یه ذره انعطاف نشون بده؟
	<i>You trying to push up on Lina?</i>	تو عاشق لینایی؟
	<i>Use our white voices?</i>	صدا قشنگه رو مینداختیم بیرون؟

Table 4.7. Examples of the Fourth Strategy in Mean Girls Movie

Strategy	Idiomatic Expressions	Subtitled Translations
Translating the SL Idiom by Omitting It in the TL and Applying Another Expression in the TL	<i>You've truly out-gayed yourself.</i>	این کلمات خلاف طبع تویه.
	<i>Jason, why are you such a skeez?</i>	جیسون، تو کار و زندگی نداری؟
	<i>So, you can go shave your back now.</i>	حالا زود بزن به چاک.
	<i>Nothing could mess me up</i>	هیچی تو کلاس نمیتونه حواسمو پرت کنه.
	<i>He cannot blow you off like that!</i>	هی، اون نمیتونه به همین راحتی ولت کنه.
	<i>What has everybody been up to?</i>	بازم غیبت‌های جدیدی در میونه؟
	<i>What an ax-wound she really is.</i>	تا همه بدونن چه جنس خرابی داری.
	<i>Regina had moved on.</i>	رجینا خیلی زود به زندگی عادی برگشت.

As mentioned in Table 4.1, “omission” had the highest frequency among all the strategies. Then, “translating the SL idiom to its equivalent in the TL similar in meaning but different in form,” “translating the SL idiom to its similar equivalents in form and meaning,” and “paraphrasing” received the highest frequencies, respectively. The frequency of all the applied strategies are shown in Figure 4.1:

Regarding to the second research question, “omission” had the highest frequency among all the strategies, that is, 40. Then, “translating the SL idiom to its equivalent similar in meaning but different in form” had the second highest frequency (i.e., 16). At the third place, “translating the SL idiom to its similar equivalents in form and meaning” with the frequency of 13 stands. Finally, “paraphrase,” with only 1 case of usage, had the least frequency among others. Therefore, “omission” was the topmost used strategies in these two movies. Besides, there was a less tendency toward using the “paraphrase” strategy (see Table 4.1).

Concerning the third research question about the similar distribution of the strategies, the chi-square test was run (see Table 4.8):

Table 4.8. Chi-Square Test Results

	Value	df	Assump. Sig. (2-Tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.118*	3	.756
Likelihood Ratio	1.555	3	.670
Linear-by-Linear Association	.001	1	.978
N of Valid Cases	70		

*Pearson chi-square is not significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

According to Table 4.8, the chi-square results were not significant in $\chi^2(3, N=70) = 1.188$, $p = 0.756$, considering $p < 0.05$. In other words, considering the degree of freedom 3 (i.e., $df = 3$) and the p value less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), the chi-square results were equal to 1.188 (i.e., $\chi^2 = 1.188$), which is less than the norm mentioned in the chi-square table. Therefore, the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis, meaning that the four strategies were not distributed equally and had different frequencies.

The significance or nonsignificance of Phi and Cramer's results depend on the significance or nonsignificance of the chi-

square results. Therefore, Phi and Cramer's results were not significant at $p < 0.05$, as the chi-square results did (see Table 4.9):

Table 4.9. *Symmetric Measures of Phi and Cramer*

	Value	Assump.	Sig.
Nominal by	Phi	.130*	.756
Nominal	Cramer's V	.130	.756
N of Valid Cases		70	

*Phi and Cramer's measurement is not significant.

5. Discussion

Idioms are multiword expressions which cannot be understood literally, even if we know the meaning of each single word appearing in the phrase. Even one idiom might have different meanings in different languages. They might have different functions in different texts, too. According to Langasher (1968), "an idiom is a kind of complex lexical item. It is a phrase whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of the morphemes it comprises" (p. 79).

Also, idioms have special characteristics which make them differentiable from other words. According to Baker (1992), idioms are "fixed expressions which allow little or no variation in their form" (p. 63).

As Cacciari (1993) points out:

It seems reasonable to adopt the view that idiomaticity is rather a matter of degrees in which the literal and figurative idioms are the ultimate extremities. So idioms are classified into different categories on the basis of their degree opaqueness. (p. 31)

In general, translation is not an easy task, and translating idioms makes it rather a more difficult task. This difficulty is due to the fact that words of an idiom should not be translated literally. Newmark (1988) believes that "these idioms are never translated word for word" (p. 125). It has also been emphasized by Larson (1984), that "the real danger comes in translating an

idiom literally, since the result will usually be nonsense in the receptor language" (p. 20).

Pedersen (1997, as cited in Trosborg, 1997) argues that "the translation of idioms is as difficult as it is central" (p. 109), whereas Larson (1984) argues that idioms "should be translated with great care; the translator must first be sure of the meaning of the idiom and then look for the natural equivalent way to express the meaning of the idiom as a whole" (p. 143).

To a certain degree, Iranian viewers are satisfied with what is available now in terms of translated subtitled movies, and they convey indifference regarding the quality of translation. However, we cannot conclude that they really do not care about the quality of language because when they have a quality translation that mostly depends on translation using Persian equivalents, they praise the quality and comment on the ease of reading and the smooth flow of sentences.

6. Conclusion

Translation is a complicated process by itself, let alone the translation of idioms which is a problematic issue for almost all translators. Moreover, idioms are culture-specific items and need further awareness on the part of translators. In order to preserve such acriterion, the translator should work hard, not only to avoid literal translation regarding idioms, but also to try hard to provide the TL readers with idiomatic translations in which not only the intended meaning is presented, but also the cultural specificity is enclosed in.

There are four different strategies proposed by Baker (1992) for translating idioms. In this study, the most popular strategy was "translating the SL idioms with omitting them in the TL" in these two movies.

In this study, more than 57% (i.e., 57.14%) of the idiomatic expressions were translated through the fourth strategy, that is, "omission." Then, "translating the SL idiom with an idiom similar in meaning, but

different in form” received the next highest frequency, that is, 22.85%. “Translating the SL idiom with an idiom similar in both meaning and form in the TL” had the third high frequency, that is, 18.57%. Finally, “paraphrasing the SL idiom in the TL” had the least frequency among all other strategies, that is, 1.42%.

Moreover it was concluded that the used strategies were not distributed equally among the movies according to the chi-square results in Table 4.8. The Phi and Cramer’s results were not significant, either.

Therefore, the results showed that the mostly used translation strategy by the translators in the *Bring It On!* (2009) and *Mean Girls* (2004) movies was “translating the SL idioms with omission,” and compensating this loss in the meaning by totally omitting the idiom or even by replacing it by another meaning.

To conclude, although there are a number of studies exploring the kind of strategies used for translating the SL idioms into the TL, there still seem to be some gaps between the original SL idioms with the translated versions in the TL because not all the time proper translation is possible.

This conclusion is applicable in the case of idioms and culturally-specific expressions. In other words, if direct equivalents for idioms or cultural expressions are not available, “omission” would be used as another strategy for target audience.

Furthermore, it can be inferred that this research can aid translating movies, idioms, and cultural expressions, using equivalents from the TL in an effective and acceptable way.

This research would be conducted more effectively, were it not restricted to the translated subtitles only. In other words, a more comprehensive approach to the research would include insights and reflections of what viewers tend to receive as the final product. It would also enhance

the methodology if the research tested different translations of specific numbers of idioms and culturally-bound expressions, using different translation strategies to see which strategy is more effective and more acceptable.

Future research can be done on the accuracy of the translated subtitled text from the SL to the TL. The used strategies in the translation of the subtitled movies can be tested and compared with the TL, and the accuracy and acceptance of these strategies would be understood. Moreover, by increasing the number of movies, a more comprehensive study would gain better results.

Moreover, further research can investigate how translators tend to translate idioms and cultural expressions, and the reasons behind choosing one strategy rather than the other. Besides, another study can carry on the research based on the viewer’s feedback on the acceptability of translation.

Finally, more research on the demands of the local market in terms of translated materials would contribute to any kind of research that aims to explore the best practices and the effective strategies in dealing with translation problems, especially translating idiomatic expressions.

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