



**The Problems of Translating Some Iraqi
Arabic Proverbs to English: A Cultural
Equivalence Perspective**

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This research focuses on cultural equivalence in proverb translation, and the significance of understanding cultural nuances for effective translation. It hints at the specific challenges faced when translating Iraqi Arabic proverbs into English. The current research aims at answering the research question: What are the problems and challenges encountered in translating the Iraqi proverbs and idiomatic expression into English. The current research found that proverbs contribute to a sense of cultural identity and continuity. When individuals use and understand the same proverbs, they establish a shared connection to their heritage. The familiarity with proverbs helps individuals feel a part of a larger cultural community and fosters a sense of belonging. The translation of some Arabic proverbs is problematic due to the unavailability of a cultural equivalent in the target language whereas few of proverbs have direct and indirect equivalence. The researcher suggests some cultural equivalent examples for the challenging and problematic translations.

Keywords: Arabic Proverbs, Cultural Equivalent, literal translation, indirect equivalent

1.1 Research Background

Proverbs have long fascinated scholars due to their central role in traditional societies. Even the most educated individuals find value in these concise nuggets of wisdom, as they allow us to distill complex experiences and observations into succinct, relatable contexts that mirror life itself. Proverbs readily offer insights into personal relationships and societal matters (Moosavi, 2000).

Recognizing the cultural and rhetorical significance of proverbs, scholars like Bartlotti (2000) emphasize the need for continued proverb collection, especially in regions like Asia and Africa. Moreover, Samover et al. (2009: 29) assert that a society can be assessed by the quality of its proverbs. These brief expressions of wisdom, often containing only a few words, encapsulate a culture's core values and beliefs, offering a profound understanding of its essence.

Given their vital role in culture, Moosavi (2000: 8-10) suggests several uses for proverbs. They can serve as book titles or titles for literary works, adding depth and resonance to the content. Proverbs frequently find their way into press headlines or news articles, effectively conveying the essence of a news story. Statesmen and government officials often employ proverbs in their speeches during various occasions. Additionally, proverbs can capture consumers' attention in both commercial and political advertisements, leveraging their cultural significance to convey messages effectively.

The aim of this paper is to explore the challenges encountered when translating Iraqi Arabic proverbs into English, specifically focusing on the difficulties related to achieving a cultural equivalence between the two languages. The current research aims at answering the research question: *What are the problems and challenges encountered in translating the Iraqi proverbs and idiomatic expression into English.*

This research question seeks to investigate the specific obstacles and complexities that arise during the process of translating Iraqi Arabic proverbs into English, particularly in the context of maintaining both the literal meaning (direct equivalence) and the intended cultural nuances and implications (indirect equivalence) of these proverbs. The study could delve into the linguistic structures, idiomatic expressions, cultural connotations, and contextual factors that contribute to the difficulties encountered in achieving accurate and culturally relevant translations of these proverbs.

2.1 Literature Review

2.2 Proverbs in Arabic

Proverbs hold immense significance in Arabic culture and play a vital role as carriers of cultural wisdom and linguistic expression. Proverbs play a pivotal role in shaping the culture and identity of a nation, reflecting the depth of its cultural wealth and the level of advancement and progress it has achieved (Alsaïdi, 2014). The significance of proverbs stems from the fact that wisdom, expressed through these sayings, permeates people's lives and is intimately connected to them. Essentially, proverbs can be seen as the collective wisdom of a nation, universally embraced by the community (Farahani & Ghasemi, 2012). Proverbs and synopses are the reservoirs of insights from unknown intellectuals of the past, surviving through history, often preserved in documents like scrolls and historical manuscripts (Shastri, 2012). These sayings encapsulate the thoughts and viewpoints of nations, which are inevitably influenced by their societal conditions.

Proverbs and concise narratives serve as intellectual gems, ready to support speakers and illuminate their intentions in moments when logical arguments in broader discussions might be vague or imprecise. These expressions succinctly convey profound meanings, aiding speakers to communicate their message effectively (Dabaghi et al., 2010). Proverbs are repositories of accumulated cultural knowledge, reflecting the values, beliefs, and traditions of Arabic-speaking societies across generations.

Many proverbs in Arabic culture carry moral lessons and ethical values. They guide behavior, offering guidance on topics like honesty, respect, humility, and generosity. By using proverbs, individuals reinforce these values and remind themselves and others of the cultural expectations for virtuous behavior. Proverbs reflect cultural norms, social etiquette, and accepted ways of interacting within Arabic society. They serve as a guide to appropriate behavior and provide individuals with insights into how they should navigate various situations. Proverbs are often used in storytelling, anecdotes, and anecdotes, enriching narratives with cultural depth and moral insights. They enhance the oral tradition of passing down stories and lessons from one generation to another (Dweik & Thalji, 2015)

2.3 The Linguistic and Cultural Features of proverbs

Arabic proverbs exhibit linguistic artistry through their rhythmic patterns, rhyming schemes, and clever wordplay. Their poetic nature not only makes them memorable but also contributes to their appeal as linguistic expressions. Arabic proverbs often carry layers of cultural nuances and emotional depth that might not have direct equivalents in other languages. They reflect the intricate relationship between language, culture, and emotion, making them challenging to translate accurately. In Arabic culture, much like in various other cultures, proverbs and maxims have endured over time due to their significant role in rhetoric and public speaking. These sayings are deeply entrenched in folklore and share connections with other forms of folk literature, like riddles and fables, originating from the oral tradition (Badr, 2012).

In fact, some linguists, as mentioned by Muntean (1969:37), propose that proverbs could stem from diverse genres of folk literature, including stories, jokes, songs, nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and anecdotes. Over time, specific set phrases and expressions, closely resembling proverbs, have evolved to become independent from the original literary context. Despite this diversity, proverbs maintain a simple poetic structure, embodying essential prosodic features such as rhyme, alliteration, rhythm, and more.

Proverbs can share similar occasions and connotations across different cultures, but disparities in their conceptualization might arise. Translators shouldn't solely rely on directly borrowing or mimicking proverbs. Al-Budayri (2015:4) notes that while universal features might exist in proverbs, mistranslations and misunderstandings can still occur due to differences in how audiences grasp the implied meanings. He emphasizes that translators shouldn't exclusively depend on borrowing or imitation when dealing with proverbs. Given that cultural values are deeply embedded in regional proverbs and shape their identity, thorough explanation is essential to bridge the gap between the source language and the target language.

Arabic speakers are known for their motivational and expressive language use, driven by the inherent power of Arabic itself. Hitti (1958:90) observes that Arabs possess a unique passion for literary expression and are profoundly influenced by spoken and written words. This influence of the Arabic language on its users is unparalleled. This study examines several proverbs commonly used by Jordanians, highlighting the contexts in which they arise. It also delves into challenges encountered during the translation of these proverbs into English.

Although translating proverbs has been a focus for linguists and translation scholars, there remain certain linguistic and cultural aspects related to proverbs that warrant further investigation. What complicates the translation of these proverbs is their embedded social, cultural, and linguistic references that might not evoke the same sentiments in the target language. In essence, this study addresses the cultural difficulties associated with translating proverbs from colloquial Jordanian Arabic into English (Al-Azzam, 2018).

2.3 Translating Proverbs

Balfaqeeh (2009) conducted a study aimed at determining which translation approaches (domesticated or foreignized strategies) were preferred by Arab readers when translating idioms and culturally-bound expressions. The study gathered idioms and culturally-bound expressions from various sources. It employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. Interviews consisting of eleven questions were conducted in two phases, with the first phase involving five females and one male, and the second phase involving six in-depth interviews with three males and three females. Additionally, a questionnaire was distributed to 121 individuals in Jeddah and Riyadh, asking them to choose the best-translated expression from multiple options

for idioms, culturally-bound expressions, and culture-related concepts. The collected data were analyzed quantitatively, revealing that domesticated translation strategies were more favored by Arab readers. Arab readers tended to prioritize the core message and appreciated translations that used Arabic equivalents for idioms and cultural expressions, although literal translations and omission had some minor preferences.

Farahani and Ghasemi (2012) investigated the strategies employed in translating idioms and proverbs from English into Persian and identified the most frequently used strategies. They analyzed 200 idioms and 9 proverbs translated from English to Persian, sourced from the novel 'The Adventures of Pinocchio.' The study aimed to identify prevalent strategies and assess whether the translation of idioms and proverbs was both idiomatic and natural. Their findings indicated that the following strategies were commonly used for translating idioms: paraphrasing (43%), using idioms with similar meanings but different forms (40%), omission (11%), and employing idioms with similar meanings and forms (6%). Regarding the translation of proverbs, the study found that they were often replaced with equivalent local proverbs (66.66%), explained in nonfigurative terms (22.22%), or the meaning was provided through the words following the proverb (11.11%). In summary, the study demonstrated that the translator succeeded in rendering idioms and proverbs in a manner that was both idiomatic and natural.

Syzdykov's work in 2014 involves the translation of English and Kazakh folk proverbs, which serve as artistic expressions reflecting diverse aspects of life, societal knowledge, perspectives, unique artistic inclinations, and aesthetic values. This study concentrates on educational practices that prioritize students' strengths rather than their shortcomings. It critically examines how students' experiences can be harnessed as a valuable learning resource. The focus is on identifying the most effective pedagogic approaches that facilitated the translation process. Furthermore, the article evaluates the practical and methodological significance of incorporating proverbs into English classroom instruction (Syzdykov, 2014).

Azzam's study (2017) focuses on identifying cultural challenges encountered when translating Jordanian proverbs into English. The study's significance lies in its emphasis on the societal, informal, and folkloric usage of proverbs, which contributes to their multifaceted meanings. The study recognizes the central role of the overall proverbial context in constructing these proverbs, aiding both the speaker and the audience in grasping their meanings. The complexity of translating these proverbs is heightened by their colloquial nature, which embeds them with substantial semantic, societal, and cultural significance. These values are integral and cannot be disregarded or omitted in the literal translation of the proverbs.

Rong's study (2013) examines various cultural patterns, with a particular focus on comparing American and Japanese cultures. Through the lens of power distance, the study highlights disparities in perceptions of equality between Arab and American cultures, while also delving into the underlying cultural traditions that shape these differences. Despite the emphasis on cultural diversity as a means of highlighting distinctions, the study also acknowledges the presence of shared elements among these cultures.

Anosheh et al. (2013) provides his definition of a proverb: "A proverb, much like other forms of expression, is a brief statement in prose or verse that conveys moral, social, advisory, or instructive principles for life. Proverbs are referred to as the language of a culture, representing a strong and intellectual structure. They are an integral part of a people's culture, passed down from one generation to the next. These sayings hold immense significance, often seen as a mark of wisdom intrinsic to an entire nation. Proverbs can occasionally reflect historical or social events; they possess the potential to transcend their original subjects."

Translating can give rise to numerous challenges and complexities. Yowelly and Lataiwish (2000:107) note that the magnitude of these difficulties tends to escalate in proportion to the cultural divide existing between the source language and the target language. Translations between Arabic and English, for instance, serve as illuminating examples, highlighting the disparities between countries that speak these languages. These differences encompass various cultural aspects, including geography, religion, history, language, and more. To truly understand a language, one must acquaint themselves with the culture, traditions, and customs of its speakers. The cultural factor can be an inseparable component of the overall meaning of words or phrases, and this is most evident in idiomatic and proverbial expressions. These expressions heavily rely on images, traditions, or practices that are distinctive to a particular culture.

In essence, the cultural divergence between languages can introduce significant complications during translation, particularly when idiomatic and proverbial expressions are involved. These expressions encapsulate the unique aspects of a culture, often rendering direct translations inadequate in conveying their intended meanings.

2.4 Methodology and Data Analysis

The data analysis involves 13 Arabic proverbs which are the most common in the Iraqi cultures. The procedure of analysis starts with showing the semantic translation for each proverb and then its pragmatic meaning is revealed. The challenges and problems of translating each proverb is shown and argued.

١- وفي الليلة الظلماء يفقد البدر

The Arabic phrase "وفي الليلة الظلماء يفقد البدر" translates to "In the darkest night, the full moon is missed" in English. This phrase is often used to convey the idea that something becomes more appreciated or valued when it is absent or in scarce supply. It emphasizes the contrast between the darkness of the night and the brightness of the full moon, suggesting that the beauty and significance of something are more apparent in its absence or scarcity.

Translating the Arabic phrase "وفي الليلة الظلماء يفقد البدر" into English poses some challenges because it is an idiomatic expression with cultural and poetic nuances. The main issue with translating it lies in capturing the richness and depth of its meaning. These challenges are:

- Idiomatic Nature:** The Arabic phrase is idiomatic, and idioms often have meanings that are not directly inferred from the individual words. Finding an equivalent idiom or expression in English that conveys the same sentiment can be challenging.
- Cultural Specificity:** The phrase is deeply rooted in Arabic culture and poetic tradition. The imagery of the full moon in the darkest night has cultural connotations that may not have an exact equivalent in English-speaking cultures.
- Poetic Nuance:** The Arabic phrase has a poetic and metaphorical quality to it. Translating it too literally may lose the poetic nuance and emotional impact it carries.
- Linguistic Structure:** The phrase's structure is distinct in Arabic, with its repetitive and rhythmic pattern. Translating it while preserving this structure can be difficult.
- Cultural Sensitivity:** Depending on the context, a direct translation may not fully convey the intended sentiment or may not be culturally sensitive to English-speaking audiences.

To address these challenges, translators often aim to capture the essence and sentiment of the phrase rather than providing a literal translation. This may involve finding an English expression or idiom that conveys a similar idea of appreciating something more when it's scarce or absent, even if it doesn't mirror the exact structure or imagery of the original Arabic phrase.

While there isn't a direct English equivalent idiom that mirrors the structure and imagery of the Arabic phrase "وفي الليلة الظلماء يفقد البدر," there are some English idiomatic expressions and sayings that convey a similar sentiment of appreciating something more when it's absent or in short supply. These expressions are:

- "You don't know what you've got till it's gone": This phrase emphasizes the idea that people often fail to appreciate something until they no longer have it.
- "Absence makes the heart grow fonder": This saying suggests that being apart from someone or something can intensify one's feelings or appreciation for them.
- "The grass is always greener on the other side": This idiom implies that people tend to think that other situations or possessions are better than their own, only to realize their true value later.
- "Familiarity breeds contempt": This expression suggests that the more familiar or common something is, the less it tends to be valued or appreciated.

While these idioms capture the concept of valuing something more in its absence, they do not directly mirror the poetic imagery of the Arabic phrase. The choice of which English expression to use may depend on the specific context and the nuances of the sentiment you want to convey.

٢- رجعت حليمة لعادتها القديمة

The Arabic phrase "رجعت حليمة إلى عادتها القديمة" can be translated to "Halima returned to her old habit" in English. This phrase is typically used to convey that someone has reverted to a previous behavior or habit that they had previously abandoned or changed. It implies that the person has gone back to their familiar ways or routine. The phrase can be employed in various contexts, such as describing personal behaviors, routines, or even broader societal changes.

Translating the Arabic phrase "رجعت حليمة إلى عادتها القديمة" into English ("Halima returned to her old habit") involves several potential challenges and problems:

- Cultural Nuances:** The name "Halima" might not be common or well-known in English-speaking cultures, and the significance of the name in the proverb's context might be lost.

- 2- **Personal Names:** Translating personal names can be problematic. Some names have culturally specific meanings or connotations that might not carry over directly to another language.
 - 3- **Specificity:** The phrase is specific to Halima and her old habit. Translating it directly could make it less relatable to English speakers who are unfamiliar with the specific context.
 - 4- **Idiomatic Expression:** While the concept of reverting to an old habit is universal, the way it's phrased idiomatically in Arabic might not have a direct equivalent in English.
 - 5- **Gender Agreement:** Arabic verbs and pronouns are often gender-specific, but English lacks the same level of gender agreement. The English translation might not capture the gender nuance if it's important in the original context.
 - 6- **Cultural Background:** The proverb might reference cultural elements or assumptions that don't hold in the target culture, potentially requiring additional context for English readers to understand it fully.
- To address these challenges, translators often need to find a balance between preserving the core meaning of the proverb while making necessary adjustments to fit the linguistic and cultural context of the target language. This might involve using a different name that is familiar in English, rephrasing the expression to make it more idiomatic, and providing additional context if needed. The goal is to convey the essence of the proverb in a way that English speakers can easily understand and relate to.

٣- تجري الرياح بما لا تشتهي السفن

The Arabic phrase "تجري الرياح بما لا تشتهي السفن" translates to "The winds blow as the ships do not wish" in English. This expression conveys the idea that external forces or circumstances can impact one's plans or actions, often in ways that are unexpected or unfavorable. It emphasizes the unpredictability of life and how events beyond one's control can influence outcomes. It's a reminder to adapt to changing circumstances and be resilient when faced with challenges or unexpected events.

Translating the Arabic proverb "تجري الرياح بما لا تشتهي السفن" into English as "The winds blow as the ships do not wish" can present some challenges because of the cultural and linguistic differences between the two languages. Here are a few potential issues:

- 1- **Cultural Nuance:** The proverb is deeply rooted in Arabic culture and may not have a direct cultural equivalent in English. The concept of winds affecting the course of ships may not carry the same connotations or imagery in English-speaking cultures.
- 2- **Literal vs. Figurative Interpretation:** In Arabic, the proverb is often used figuratively to convey the idea that external forces or circumstances can disrupt one's plans. In English, a literal interpretation involving ships and winds may not make immediate sense in many contexts.

To overcome these challenges, translators often aim to capture the essence and meaning of the proverb in a way that is more familiar and idiomatic to English speakers. A common English equivalent that conveys a similar idea is "The winds of change," which suggests the influence of external forces or circumstances on one's plans or life. However, it's important to note that no single translation can perfectly replicate the nuances and cultural context of the original proverb.

The cultural equivalent in English for the Arabic proverb "تجري الرياح بما لا تشتهي السفن" is "When it rains, it pours." This English saying conveys a similar idea, suggesting that when one unfortunate event occurs, it tends to be followed by more unfortunate events, or that difficulties often come all at once. Both proverbs highlight the unpredictable nature of life and how events can unfold unexpectedly and sometimes unfavorably.

٤- سبع صنایع والبخت ضایع

The Arabic proverb "سبع صنایع والبخت ضایع" can be translated to "Seven crafts, and luck is still lost" in English. This proverb reflects the idea that someone might possess a multitude of skills or talents, represented by the "seven crafts," but if luck or fortune is not on their side, their efforts and abilities might not lead to success or favorable outcomes.

We present here a breakdown of the proverb's components and its underlying message:

- 1- **"سبع صنایع" (Seven crafts):** This refers to the idea of having a diverse range of skills or abilities. The number seven is often used metaphorically to indicate a variety or completeness. The implication is that the person is capable and talented in multiple areas.
- 2- **"والبخت ضایع" (Luck is still lost):** This part of the proverb emphasizes the role of luck or fate in achieving success. "بخت" (luck) is an important concept in many cultures, including Arabic-speaking ones. The word "ضایع" (lost) suggests that luck is not working in the person's favor, despite their skills and efforts.

In essence, the proverb highlights the significance of luck or fortune in determining the outcomes of one's endeavors. It underscores the idea that even though someone might be highly skilled and knowledgeable in various fields, the element of luck plays a crucial role in achieving success. Without favorable circumstances or luck, their efforts may not yield the desired results.

This proverb can serve as a reminder of the unpredictable nature of life and the recognition that success often requires a combination of skill, effort, and the right circumstances aligning in one's favor. However, the translator could avoid the problems of translating this proverb by referring to its English cultural equivalent which is "Jack of all trades, master of none".

٥- القرد في عين أمه غزال

The Arabic proverb "القرد في عين أمه غزال" can be translated to "In his mother's eyes, a monkey is a gazelle" in English. This proverb illustrates the idea that a mother's perspective of her child can be biased and overly positive, regardless of the child's actual qualities or shortcomings.

1- "القرد في عين أمه" (**In his mother's eyes, a monkey**): This part of the proverb highlights the concept that a mother's love for her child can sometimes lead her to see only the positive traits and overlook any negative qualities. In this case, even if the child is compared to a monkey, which is not typically associated with positive qualities, the mother's affection can make her view the child favorably.

2- "غزال" (**gazelle**): A gazelle is often used metaphorically to represent grace, beauty, and positive qualities. In this context, it's a comparison point to emphasize the stark contrast between the child's actual attributes and how they are perceived by their mother.

In essence, this proverb illustrates the strength of a mother's love and her tendency to view her child through a lens of affection, sometimes blinding her to the child's flaws. It's a reminder of the unconditional love and bias that can exist within a parent-child relationship.

Nonetheless, the translation of this proverb can be less problematic since there is a cultural equivalent in English.

The English equivalent for this Arabic proverb could be: "In a mother's eyes, her child is always a beauty." This English proverb captures the essence of the Arabic proverb by conveying the idea that a mother's perception of her child is often influenced by love and tends to be overly positive, regardless of the child's actual appearance or qualities.

٦- شمرة عصا

This expression is used to indicate covering a brief distance or walking a short distance. The English terms used to refer to "شمرة عصا" in Arabic are "short distance" or "short walk."

Translating the Arabic idiom "شمرة عصا" into English as "short distance" or "short walk" can sometimes be problematic because it may not capture the full cultural and linguistic richness of the original phrase.

The Arabic idiom "شمرة عصا" carries cultural connotations that may not be fully conveyed in the English translation. It reflects a common cultural practice of preparing to embark on a short journey, which may involve some simple preparations like rolling up sleeves or grabbing a walking stick. Translating it as "short distance" or "short walk" omits this cultural nuance.

The cultural equivalent for the Arabic phrase "شمرة عصا" in English would be "a stone's throw." This phrase is often used to describe a short distance or something that is very close or nearby. It's a common idiom in English that conveys the idea of a brief or easily reachable distance. "Two shakes of a lamb's tail" is another English idiom that is culturally equivalent to the Arabic phrase "شمرة عصا." Both expressions indicate a very short period of time or a quick and easy task. They are used to describe something that can be done rapidly or a distance that can be covered quickly.

٧- حاميتها حراميها

The Arabic phrase "حاميتها حراميها" translates to "He who protects it is its thief" in English. This phrase is often used to describe a situation where someone appears to be safeguarding or protecting something but is, in fact, taking advantage of or exploiting it for their own benefit. It conveys the idea that the one who is supposed to protect or watch over something may actually be the one causing harm or taking advantage of it.

Translating the Arabic phrase "حاميتها حراميها" into English can present a challenge because it is an idiomatic expression deeply rooted in Arabic culture. The main problem with translating it lies in finding an equivalent phrase in English that conveys the same meaning and cultural connotations. In English, there may not be a direct cultural equivalent, but a similar concept can be expressed using idiomatic phrases like: (a) "The fox guarding the henhouse". This English idiom implies a situation where someone with malicious intent is in charge of something, similar to the idea behind "حاميتها حراميها". (b) "The wolf in sheep's clothing". This

expression refers to someone who appears harmless or trustworthy on the surface but is actually deceitful or harmful, akin to someone who is supposed to protect but ends up exploiting.

٨- المبلل ما يخاف من المطر

The phrase "المبلل ما يخاف من المطر" can be translated literally to "The wet doesn't fear the rain". This expression is used to indicate that someone or something that is already wet doesn't fear getting wetter, implying that they are already in a situation or condition that makes them unaffected or unafraid of a particular circumstance.

Translating the Arabic proverb "المبلل ما يخاف من المطر" directly as "The wet doesn't fear the rain" in English would convey the literal meaning of the proverb. However, the issue with this literal translation is that it might not be immediately clear to English speakers what it implies, as it's a culturally specific saying.

The English language has its own set of idiomatic expressions and proverbs that convey similar meanings. While "The wet doesn't fear the rain" does make sense, it might not carry the same cultural or contextual weight as the Arabic proverb. In such cases, it's often more effective to use an equivalent English proverb or expression like "Water off a duck's back," which conveys a similar idea but is more readily understood by English speakers.

٩- اسمه بالحصاد ومنجله مكسور

The proverb "اسمه بالحصاد ومنجله مكسور" literally means "His name is in the harvest, but his sickle is broken" in English. This proverb is used to describe someone who appears to be involved in important tasks or responsibilities but lacks the seriousness or capability to complete them successfully. It implies that the person may talk about their involvement or interest in certain matters, but they do not take the necessary actions to fulfill their commitments effectively.

A cultural equivalent proverb in English that conveys a similar idea of someone who talks a lot but doesn't take action is "All talk and no action." It's a common way to express the idea of someone who lacks commitment or effectiveness in their endeavors.

The translation "His name is in the harvest, but his sickle is broken" is a more literal translation of the Arabic proverb "اسمه بالحصاد ومنجله مكسور." While it accurately conveys the intended meaning, it may sound somewhat formal or less idiomatic in English. "All talk and no action" is commonly used and effectively captures the same concept. It's worth noting that some proverbs and idioms do not have direct one-to-one equivalents in other languages, so a literal translation might be the most straightforward way to convey the original meaning.

١٠- مثل القطه، لها سبعة ارواح

The Arabic proverb "مثل القطه، لها سبع ارواح" translates to "Like a cat, it has seven lives" in English. This proverb is similar to the English saying "A cat has nine lives," which means that cats are believed to have multiple lives or are incredibly resilient in the face of danger or adversity. It's a metaphorical way of expressing someone's ability to survive or endure challenging situations.

In this case, the metaphor is used to convey the idea that someone or something is exceptionally resilient or can endure multiple challenges or dangers, just like the mythical belief that a cat has multiple lives. So, the metaphorical comparison of a person or thing to a cat with multiple lives is a form of figurative language used to emphasize the ability to overcome adversity or survive difficult situations. Translating the Arabic proverb "مثل القطه، لها سبع ارواح" into English as "Like a cat, it has seven lives" is a relatively straightforward translation, and there are no major linguistic problems with the translation itself.

Proverbs often have idiomatic variations in different languages. In this case, English has its own version of the proverb, "A cat has nine lives," which is more commonly used. Therefore, using the Arabic proverb in an English context might sound less familiar to native English speakers.

While there are no inherent problems with translating this proverb, translators should be aware of the slight differences in the number of lives mentioned and consider the cultural context and idiomatic variations when using it in an English-speaking context. It may be more effective to use the English equivalent, "A cat has nine lives," to ensure better understanding among English speakers.

١١- امشي شهر ولا تعبر نهر

"Calmly walk for a month rather than crossing a river" is a proverb used to emphasize the importance of prudence and deliberation in decision-making and actions. It suggests that it's better to think carefully and plan thoroughly before taking any significant step or making a decision, rather than rushing, acting hastily, or taking risks without proper consideration. This proverb encourages caution and deep thought before taking any action that requires careful management.

The translation "Calmly walk for a month rather than crossing a river" attempts to capture the essence and meaning of the Arabic proverb, but it faces a few challenges:

1. **Cultural Nuances:** The Arabic proverb and its intended message may have cultural nuances that are not easily conveyed in English. The metaphor of walking for a month versus crossing a river might not resonate with English speakers in the same way it does with Arabic speakers.
2. **Literal vs. Figurative Language:** The Arabic proverb uses figurative language involving a river and walking for a month to symbolize caution and deliberation. In English, a more direct and literal translation may not effectively convey the intended meaning.
3. **Idiomatic Differences:** Arabic and English are different languages with their own idioms and expressions. Translating proverbs or idiomatic expressions often requires finding an equivalent expression in the target language that carries a similar message, which can be challenging.
4. **Length and Clarity:** The English translation is longer and less concise than the Arabic proverb. Proverbs are typically concise and pithy, and translating them while preserving their brevity and impact can be difficult.

Ultimately, translation is not just about finding a direct word-for-word equivalent but also about conveying the underlying meaning and cultural context. Translators often need to strike a balance between literal accuracy and the effective communication of the intended message in the target language. In English-speaking cultures, there's a similar proverb that conveys a similar message of caution and careful consideration: "Look before you leap." This proverb advises people to think carefully about the consequences of their actions before taking a leap or making a decision. It emphasizes the importance of foresight and planning to avoid potential problems or regrets. While not a direct translation of the Arabic proverb, it carries a similar cultural message in English-speaking contexts.

١٢- اعطي الخبز لخبازته

The Iraqi proverb "اعطي الخبز لخبازته" translates to "Give the bread to its baker" in English. This proverb is used to emphasize the importance of leaving things to the expert or the person who knows how to handle them effectively. It suggests that when there is a specific problem or task that requires special understanding or skill, it is better to leave it to the person who knows how to deal with it best.

Translating proverbs from one language to another can be challenging due to several factors, including cultural nuances and differences in expression. When translating the Arabic proverb "اعطي الخبز لخبازته" ("Give the bread to its baker") into English. Some potential problems and challenges are:

1. **Cultural Context:** Proverbs are often deeply rooted in the culture and context of their language of origin. Translating them directly may not capture the cultural connotations or historical significance they carry. In this case, the concept of "baker" and the importance of specialization might need to be explained in English.
2. **Idiomatic Differences:** Arabic and English have different idiomatic expressions. The literal translation might not convey the intended meaning accurately. Translators must find an English equivalent that carries a similar message about relying on experts in their field.
3. **Length and Clarity:** The Arabic proverb is concise, while a literal translation may result in a longer English phrase. Maintaining brevity and clarity while conveying the intended message is a challenge.
4. **Interpretation:** The Arabic proverb may have multiple interpretations or connotations, and the challenge lies in choosing the most suitable English expression that aligns with the intended message.
5. **Audience Understanding:** The translated proverb should be understandable to the English-speaking audience without the need for extensive explanations.

To address these challenges, translators often strive to capture the essence and underlying message of the proverb in a way that resonates with the target culture while maintaining clarity and conciseness. Additionally, providing a brief explanation or context, when necessary, can help bridge the cultural gap and ensure the proverb's meaning is understood by the English-speaking audience. In English, a similar concept can be expressed with the proverb: "Let the cobbler stick to his last." This proverb means that a person with expertise in a particular field should stick to that field and rely on their knowledge and skills within that domain.

١٣- لا يلدغ المؤمن من جحر مرتين

The Arabic proverb "لا يلدغ المؤمن من جحر مرتين" translates to "A believer is not bitten from the same hole twice" in English. This proverb conveys the idea that a wise person, after experiencing a negative or harmful

situation, should learn from it and avoid making the same mistake again. It emphasizes the importance of learning from past experiences and being cautious to prevent recurring problems.

Translating the Arabic proverb "لا يلدغ المؤمن من جحر مرتين" ("A believer is not bitten from the same hole twice") into English presents a challenge because it involves religious and cultural nuances that may not have direct equivalents in English. The following are some specific challenges:

1. **Religious Context:** This proverb is deeply rooted in Islamic culture and may not have an equivalent concept or saying in English that carries the same weight of faith and belief. Translating religious expressions can be challenging because they often have unique cultural and theological dimensions.
2. **Cultural Specificity:** The proverb assumes a level of familiarity with Islamic beliefs and principles, making it less accessible to non-Muslim audiences. Translating it into English while preserving its religious connotations can be challenging.
3. **Idiomatic Differences:** The proverb uses metaphorical language, comparing a believer's experiences to being bitten from the same hole. Finding an idiomatic expression in English that conveys a similar message may require creativity and adaptation.
4. **Maintaining the Essence:** It's crucial to capture the essence of the proverb, which is about learning from past experiences and avoiding repetition of mistakes. The challenge is to do this effectively in English while retaining the original meaning.
5. **Brevity and Clarity:** Proverbs are typically concise, and maintaining brevity and clarity in the translation is essential. Finding an English expression that is both concise and faithful to the original meaning can be challenging.

In summary, the challenge in translating this religious Arabic proverb into English lies in conveying its deep cultural and faith-related meanings while maintaining clarity, brevity, and relevance for an English-speaking audience. Translators must consider the cultural and religious context to ensure the proverb's message is accurately and effectively conveyed.

The Arabic proverb "لا يلدغ المؤمن من جحر مرتين" ("A believer is not bitten from the same hole twice") doesn't have a direct equivalent in English that captures the same religious and cultural nuances. However, there are several English proverbs and expressions that convey a similar message of learning from past mistakes and avoiding repeated errors. One such equivalent expression in English is: "Once bitten, twice shy." This English proverb means that when someone has a negative experience or makes a mistake, they become more cautious and are less likely to repeat that mistake in the future. While not a direct translation, it carries a similar concept of learning from past experiences to avoid repeating them.

2.5 Conclusions

The translation of proverbs is an intricate and multifaceted process, particularly when attempting to bridge the gap between languages and cultures. This study has delved into the challenges of translating specific Iraqi Arabic proverbs into English from a cultural equivalence perspective, shedding light on the complexities of cross-cultural communication through language.

Our examination of the selected proverbs has revealed that direct translations often fall short in capturing the rich cultural nuances and connotations inherent in the original expressions. These proverbs, deeply rooted in the historical and cultural fabric of Iraq, offer a window into the unique identity and values of the society they originate from. Attempting to render them into English requires careful consideration of the target audience's cultural familiarity and the inherent limitations of linguistic equivalence.

Throughout this exploration, it has become evident that successful proverb translation necessitates not only linguistic proficiency but also a profound understanding of the cultural contexts from which these proverbs emerge. The translator's role extends beyond language; it encompasses the responsibility of preserving and conveying cultural richness, nuances, and the essence of the proverbs themselves.

In light of the challenges encountered, this study suggests that translators and researchers prioritize a cultural equivalence perspective in proverb translation endeavors. This approach involves not only striving for linguistic accuracy but also immersing oneself in the source culture to comprehend the subtle cultural connotations of proverbs. Additionally, it underscores the importance of collaboration between linguists, cultural experts, and native speakers to achieve more accurate and culturally resonant translations.

This study has undertaken a comprehensive exploration of the challenges inherent in translating a selection of 10 Iraqi Arabic proverbs into English, focusing on the crucial aspect of cultural equivalence. Throughout our analysis, we have unraveled the intricate nature of cross-cultural communication through proverb

The selected proverbs, deeply embedded in the cultural and historical context of Iraq, have offered valuable insights into the unique identity and values of the society from which they originate. Our findings demonstrate that direct translations of these proverbs often struggle to encapsulate the richness of their cultural nuances and connotations.

Considering using these challenges, our study underscores the necessity of adopting a cultural equivalence perspective when engaging in proverb translation. This approach transcends mere linguistic accuracy; it entails immersing oneself in the source culture to fully grasp the subtleties of each proverb. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of collaboration between linguists, cultural experts, and native speakers to ensure more accurate and culturally resonant translations.

With the selection and analysis of these 13 Arabic proverbs as our focal point, this research has illuminated the complexities of proverb translation, highlighting the intricate interplay between language and culture. As a result, we advocate for a deeper appreciation of cultural sensitivity in the translation process to bridge linguistic worlds and enable diverse audiences to access and appreciate the rich tapestry of global proverbs.

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