

Idiomatic Expressions in Translation: The Case of J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*

Wafa Ali ALWAN¹, Gibreel Sadeq ALAGHBARY², Baleid Taha SHAMSAN³

¹Department of English, Faculty of Administrative and Human Sciences,
University of Science and Technology, Aden, Yemen

²Department of English Language and Literature, College of Languages and Humanities,
Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

³Department of English, Faculty of Administrative and Human Sciences,
University of Science and Technology, Aden, Yemen

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Abstract

Idioms are structurally fixed expressions whose semantic content is both opaque and culture-bound. The culture-specific meanings of idiomatic expressions pose a challenge to translators. In translating idioms, translators need to be familiar with the two languages and cultures, work out the denotative meaning of the idioms and work out their illocutionary force. Adopting Nida's theory of equivalence (1964), this paper explores translation equivalence in an Arabic translation of Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye*. In particular, we examine the local procedures used to translate idiomatic expressions in the novel to investigate whether or not the translator maintains the core meaning and conveys the cultural and emotional overtones of the translated expressions. The selected idiomatic expressions have been identified based on Fernando's theory (1996) and classified following Nida and Taber's procedures (1969) under Nida's theory of equivalence (1964). Analysis reveals a preference for functional equivalence over formal equivalence in translating idioms, which has enabled the translator to maintain idiomaticity and reproduce the cultural connotations and pragmatic force of the ST idioms.

Keywords: Culture, formal equivalence, functional equivalence, idioms, Salinger, translation

ملخص

إن التعابير الإصطلاحية هي تعابير ثابتة بنيوياً ذات محتوى دلالي مرتبط بالثقافة تشكل تحدياً للمترجمين. ففي ترجمة التعابير الإصطلاحية، لا يقتصر الأمر على تمكن المترجم من اللغتين فقط لتحديد المعنى الدلالي لها، بل يجب أيضاً فهم الثقافتين أيضاً لفهم قوتها التعبيرية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تكافؤ الترجمة في الترجمة العربية لرواية الحارس في حقل الشوفان للكاتب ساليانجر. وعلى وجه الخصوص، تهدف الدراسة إلى تحديد الإجراءات المستخدمة لترجمة التعابير الإصطلاحية في الرواية للتحقق مما إذا كان المترجم قد حافظ على المعنى الأساسي، ونقل الدلالات الثقافية والعاطفية للتعابير المترجمة. وقد تم تحديد التعابير الإصطلاحية بناءً على نظرية فرناندو (1996) وتصنيفها وفقاً لإجراءات نيدا وتابر (1969) ضمن نظرية التكافؤ لنيدا (1964). وقد خلص التحليل إلى تفضيل المترجم للتكافؤ الوظيفي على التكافؤ الشكلي في ترجمة التعابير الإصطلاحية، وبهذا استطاع المحافظة على الطابع الإصطلاحي وإعادة إنتاج الدلالات الثقافية والتداولية للتعابير في النص المصدر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الثقافة، التكافؤ الشكلي، التكافؤ الوظيفي، التعابير الإصطلاحية، ساليانجر، الترجمة

Emails: ¹wa_al@yahoo.com, ²g.alaghbary@qu.edu.sa, ³b.taha@ust.edu

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Introduction

In a globalized world where cultures are increasingly coming into closer contact, translation plays a crucial role in intercultural communication. As an active player, a translator is an intermediary between the source and target cultures. The translator's job is to decode the message and communicative intentions in the original text and then encode them into a semiotic system that the target audience can understand. With the help of translators, linguistic and cultural meanings are communicated across languages and cultures, thereby bridging linguistic boundaries and cultural gaps. Translation, therefore, is a mediator between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Translation scholars have proposed different definitions of translation most of which have at their core the concept of equivalence. Catford (1965), for example, defined translation as the process of replacing textual material in a Source Language (SL) with an equivalent text in a target language. Nida and Taber (1969) added that translation is the act of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style, and that there should be a high degree of equivalence of response for the the translation to accomplish its purpose.

Vermeer (1987) shared this concern but underscored the importance of the purpose of translation. For him, a translator should seek "to produce a text in the target setting for a target purpose and a target addressee in the target circumstances" (p. 29). For example, translating fictional texts, and literary texts by extension, represents a real challenge for translators. Since each language is the product of social and cultural factors, a translated text must be appropriate to the target reader and the cultural context of text reception. Fictional texts, and novels in particular, can contain different kinds of figurative language, intertextual references and idiomatic expressions that require linguistic and cultural competence so that translators can provide equivalent expressions that convey the intended meaning and effect.

Translation is not an easy task, especially when it comes to idiomatic expressions, as they "not only ensure that our communication is coherent and cohesive, but they also produce discourse that is socially acceptable as well as precise, lively and interesting" (Fernando, 1999, p. 25). What are idioms and fixed expressions? Although these two concepts are quite popular in the literature, it is not easy to define them. Dictionary definitions suggest that idiomatic expressions are groups of words with a fixed order whose meaning is non-compositional. Translation scholars have contributed similar definitions. For Ghazala (2003), idioms are phrases and expressions that are fixed, invariable in form, and can only be understood metaphorically. Carter (1998) addressed the concept of idiomaticity. Under the umbrella term *idiom*, Carter included proverbs, stock phrases, catchphrases, allusions, idiomatic similes and discourse expressions. Baker (1992) classified multiword expressions into three main groups: collocations, idioms and fixed expressions. She defined idioms and fixed expressions as frozen patterns of languages that allow slight variation in form and carry noncompositional meanings. Fixed expressions, therefore, behave in the same way as idioms.

In this article, we adopt Fernando's definition of idioms (1996). For her, the term *idiom* is used mainly as a cover term for conventionalized multiword expressions and refers to "indivisible units whose components cannot be varied or varied only within definable limits" (p. 30). Fernando's definition of an idiom (1996) rests on three concepts, viz., institutionalization, compositeness, and semantic opacity. She uses the term *institutionalization* to mean that idiomatic expressions that are fixed and conventionalized are recognized as

idioms. By *compositeness*, she means that idioms are multiword expressions serving a purpose similar to single-word idiomatic expressions. Also, semantic opacity means that they are regularly non-literal. Despite the broadness of the definition, Fernando classifies idioms into three sub-classes: pure, semi and literal idioms.

Pure idioms for Fernando are conventionalized non-literal multiword expressions (1996). In other words, they must be well-established and conventionally fixed to qualify as idioms. For instance, the idiom *to spill the beans* is pure because its real meaning has nothing to do with beans. It consists of words whose literal meanings do not contribute to the whole meaning of the idiom. In semi-idioms, there is at least one component with a literal meaning and another with a non-literal meaning (1996). For example, in the idiom *to foot the bill*, the literal component comes from the word *bill* whose literal meaning conveys the meaning of the idiom partially. In this case, the word *bill* refers to a statement of fees or charges, while the word *foot* is interpreted nonliterally because it does not contribute to the meaning of the idiom. Literal idioms are semantically less complex, which makes them easier to understand. However, they qualify as idioms because they are either completely invariant (e.g., *on foot* and *Happy New Year*) or allow only limited variation (e.g., *in order that* and *for example*). They are regarded as transparent as they can be interpreted based on their parts (Strakšiene, 2009).

Idiomatic expressions pose serious challenges for translators. The opaqueness and culture-specificity of the meanings of idioms make their translation problematic, requiring knowledge of the two languages and cultures and translation procedures that are suitable for conveying the intended meaning (Dweik & Thalji, 2016). A translator must first recognize the expression as idiomatic, work out its semantic content and pragmatic force, and then find an equivalent expression that conveys the same denotative and connotative meanings. For Baker (2018), a fundamental issue in idiom translation is the ability to correctly identify and comprehend an idiom. Another issue is the difficulty in translating distinct components of meaning that such a concept conveys into the target language. Translating idiomatic expressions is a challenge, according to Newmark (1988) and Larson (1984), who believed that it should be accomplished by avoiding literal translation. Similarly, Baker (1992) contended that idioms and fixed expressions containing culture-specific items are not untranslatable. The difficulty is in the meaning and its association with culture-specific context.

In line with this concern, the present study seeks to determine the effectiveness of translating the semantic content and pragmatic function of idiomatic expressions in J. D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye*. Fernando's theory of idioms (1996) will be used to identify the idiomatic expressions, and Nida and Taber's (1969) procedures for translating idioms will be used to uncover the translation strategies the translator used. Although previous research has extensively explored the translation of idiomatic expressions (e.g., Baker, 1992) and focused on different text types, including literature (Yousef, 2024), religious texts (Warren-Rothlin, 2023) and political texts (Almrayat et al., 2024), little research has explored the translation of idiomatic in *The Catcher in the Rye*. The present study explores this area and seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) To what extent is Fernando's theory of idioms effective in identifying the type of idiomatic expressions found in the TT?
- 2) What translation procedures have been used in translating idiomatic expressions?
- 3) Which kind of equivalence, formal or functional, is the translator's choice in the translation of idioms?

Literature Review

Idiomatic expressions have been a topic of interest for many researchers with different research objectives. Some studies have focused on how cultural nuances affect the meaning and translation of idioms from one language into another, such as English and Arabic (Alotaibi, 2020), Arabic and English (Bataineh & Al-Shaikhli, 2020), English and Indonesian (Adelina & Suprayogi 2020, and English, Ukrainian and Chinese (Fomenko et al., 2020). Researchers have also offered in-depth linguistic analysis of idiomatic expressions to identify their pragmatic, semantic, and structural characteristics (e.g., Hamdan & Hammouri, 2022; Chanda, 2019).

In the context of translation, several studies have investigated idiomatic expressions in nonliterary texts (Al-kaabneh & Abdullah, 2023; Al-Qahtani & Al-Qahtani, 2021; Sutrisno et al., 2023; Sari & Setiawan, 2018). For example, Al-kaabneh and Abdullah (2023) offered an analysis of translated metaphors and idioms in the political speeches and discussion papers of King Abdullah II of Jordan, published on his official website. Using Nida's theory of equivalence, the objective is to highlight the degree of equivalence provided by the Royal Court translators in translating metaphors and idioms from English into Arabic. The findings indicate that translators apply Nida's formal and functional equivalence in translating them.

Al-Qahtani and Al-Qahtani (2021) offered an empirical survey of animal idioms. The objective is to examine problems and strategies for translating animal idioms from English into Arabic based on Nida's strategies. Using a mixed-method approach, the study reveals that the most frequent problem was a lack of experience and cultural background in the SL to adequately infer the idioms. It also indicates that the most common strategy Saudi translators use is translating an idiom into a non-idiom, even when a corresponding idiom is available in Arabic.

Sutrisno et al. (2023) investigated movie subtitles, specifically the translation of idiomatic expressions in the subtitles of the *Beauty and the Beast* movie. The subtitles are from Subscene.com in two versions: English and Bahasa Indonesia. The study's objective is to identify the types of strategies used by the translator and the meaning of idiomatic expressions found in the movie. Adopting Baker's idiomatic translation strategies, the findings of this analysis reveal a preference towards natural expressions to express the message of the source language idiomatic expression, to avoid confusing the target readers and the most preferred idiomatic translation strategies are by paraphrase and by similar meaning and form.

The translation of idiomatic expressions in literary texts has also received due scholarly attention (Mounadil, 2023; Ba Sarahil et al., 2022; Lafta, 2015; Azizah, 2023; Krisandini & Sutrisno, 2021; Valizadeh, 2021). Mounadil (2023), for example, analyzed the translation strategies of idioms and proverbs from English into Arabic in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Adopting Baker's strategies for translating idioms and Nida's model of equivalence, the results indicate that the most used techniques of translating idiomatic expressions are four: the omission of the whole expression, paraphrasing the idiom, translating an idiom using an idiom of similar meaning and form, and translating an idiom by using an idiom of similar meaning but different form. The analysis also reveals that some techniques are unsuitable for translating the idiomatic expression, such as the translations by omitting parts of the expression.

Another research conducted by Ba Sarahil et al. (2022) identified the strategies that he used in translating idiomatic expressions in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The study seeks to examine if there is any loss of meaning post-translation, referring to its Arabic rendition. The

data was analyzed using Baker's (2018) taxonomy and Nababan et al.'s (2012) model. According to the results, four strategies were employed: paraphrasing, total equivalence, literal translation, and partial equivalence. The study concludes that the idiomatic expressions were mostly rendered effectively, with instances of loss of meaning.

Azizah (2023) focused on negative polarity idioms in the novel *The Hate U Give* from English into Indonesian using Baker's theory and Nababan et al. model to assess the translation quality. The objective is to examine the strategies for translating idioms and their impact on the quality of the translation in terms of accuracy and acceptability. The results show that the strategy of translation using an idiom of similar meaning and form produces a more accurate translation but results in a less acceptable translation. Also, it reveals that translation by paraphrase contributes to more adequate translation.

More relevant to our concerns, Krisandini and Sutrisno (2021) classified idioms in the novels *Harry Potter* and *the Half-Blood Prince* translated from English into Indonesian. Analyzing 270 idioms using Fernando's (1996) classification, the study reveals that half the idioms (50.9%) were pure, followed by semi-idioms (26.4%) and literal idioms (22.7%). Analysis of the idioms using Baker and Newmark's strategies reveals that the most frequently applied strategy is translation by paraphrase with 222 idioms (82.2%) and that the least frequently used strategy is omission, found in 4 idioms (1.5%).

Previous research on the translation of literary works has drawn heavily from Baker and Newmark's translation strategies. It has also focused extensively on canonical literary works. The present study examines a non-canonical literary work, namely, J. D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, using Fernando's theory of idioms to identify the idiomatic expressions and Nida and Taber's (1969) procedures to translate them to determine the effectiveness of the translated expressions in terms of their semantic content and pragmatic function.

Theoretical and Analytical Framework

In this section, we offer a brief outline of Nida's theory of equivalence, focusing on formal and dynamic, or functional, equivalence. The section also outlines Nida and Taber's (1969) 'technical procedures for semantic adjustments' in translating idioms.

The concept of equivalence, according to Nord (1991), is one of the most ambiguous concepts in translation studies, which has been interpreted in different ways. According to Nida (1964), such approximative comments on equivalence can be made because he does not equate *equivalence* with *sameness* or *identity*, nor does he believe that there could be exact equivalence between languages. The term *equivalence* must, therefore, be understood as having essentially the same function although never possessing an identical function (Nida & Ward, 1986).

Different approaches have addressed the concept of equivalence in relation to the translation process (e.g., Nida 1964; Catford, 1965; Newmark, 1981, Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995). The present study adopts Nida (1964) – a seminal theoretical framework for analyzing translation procedures. Nida's is a function-oriented approach that prioritizes semantic content and pragmatic effect during the transfer from the source culture to the target culture. However, Nida asserts that there are two different kinds of equivalence: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence, or what he later called functional equivalence. Formal and Functional equivalence are two different translation approaches used to achieve different levels of meaning between the source and target languages.

Formal equivalence, argues Nida (1964), focuses on the message itself, in both form and

content. It is source-oriented, i.e., designed to reveal as much as possible of the form and content of the original message. It seeks to match as closely as possible the grammatical units, word choice, and meanings of the source text. In Nida's own words, "The message in the receptor culture is constantly compared with the message in the SC to determine the standards of accuracy and correctness" (p. 159). This should help the reader understand the customs, manners of thought, and means of expression in the source culture.

Nida (1964) asserted that a translator's first choice is to preserve formal equivalence without affecting the appropriateness and natural transmission of meaning and spirit. If meaning and spirit are restricted by form, then form equivalence can be ignored, i.e., meaning first, form second. Formal equivalence, therefore, emphasizes the structure and content of the message, which entails translating each SL term into its TL equivalent, making it more faithful to the source language.

When formal equivalence results in message distortion, Nida argues, translators should seek functional equivalence. Dynamic or functional equivalence is based on what Nida calls 'the principle of equivalent', where the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that between the original receptors and the message (Munday, 2008). In this approach, adaptations of grammar, lexicon, and cultural differences are essential to achieve naturalness.

Nida (1964) described dynamic or functional equivalence as the closest natural equivalent to the SL message. Three components are vital to this assertion: equivalent, natural and closest. *Equivalent* points towards the source-language message, *natural* points towards the receptor language, and *closest* binds the two orientations together based on the highest degree of approximation. All of these points aim to provoke a similar response between the source text readers and the target text readers.

Dynamic or functional equivalence in translation must consider the receptor language and culture to make the translated message intelligible and natural to the target language receptors. It allows the translator to render idiomatic expressions in accordance with the culture of the target language; it also requires the translator to focus on contemporary expressions since lexical ones change as time passes (Venuti, 2004).

To address the difficulties that emerge from the lack of equivalence and differences in the context of use and style, Nida and Taber (1969) propose 'technical procedures for semantic adjustments'. They insist that idioms are apparent candidates for semantic adjustments because it is unlikely that the same type of form will have the same meaning in another language. They suggest three procedures for translating idioms.

The first procedure is from idioms to non-idioms. In the absence of an equivalent idiom during the translation process, idioms are shifted to nonidioms that express the same idea. The content must be preserved (Nida & Taber, 1969). For example, *to heap coals of fire on his head* is transferred to *make him ashamed*.

From idioms to idioms is the second procedure. In some cases, it is possible to find an equivalent idiom. For example, the idiom *to have a hard heart* can be transferred into the idiomatic equivalent *his ears have no holes*. Here, the source language idiom is replaced by a target language idiom with the same meaning and function as that of the target language and culture.

The last procedure is from non-idioms to idioms. Although all translation exercises always result in the loss of certain idioms, Nida and Taber (1969) suggested that some idioms

may also be obtained. Translation is not always about losing meaning and impoverishing the language; in some cases, something can be gained. They clarify that such idiomatic renderings do much to make the translation come alive. For example, it is possible to translate the term *peace* into *to sit down in the heart* in African languages.

Methodology

Data

The data for the present study is the idiomatic expressions extracted from the original novel *The Catcher in the Rye* by Salinger and its translated Arabic version. The ST was written in English and published in New York in 1951 by Random House, Inc. Its Arabic translation by Ghaleb Helsa, *الحارس في حقل الشوفان*, is the only translated version and was published in 2007 by Al-Mada Publishing House in Syria. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* has been selected for its intriguing language, which presents a rich source of idioms and fixed expressions. The novel is "an example of the teenage vernacular in the 1950s and a significant historical linguistic record" (Costelo 1959, p.127).

Methods

This study offers a content descriptive analysis of the selected idiomatic expressions. The Farlex Dictionary of Idioms Online, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, Baalbaki's *Almawrid: A Modern Arabic-English Dictionary* and Dawood's *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Idioms in the Arabic Language* are used as reference points to validate the meanings of the idiomatic expressions identified. Fernando's classification of idioms (1996) is used to identify the idiomatic expressions extracted from the novel. After identifying and classifying the idiomatic expressions, Nida and Taber's (1969) procedures are used to offer an analysis of the semantic content and pragmatic function of the translated idioms. Additionally, the type of equivalence in terms of Nida's (1964) formal or functional equivalence is determined for each idiomatic expression in translation.

Results

From idioms to non-idioms

Idioms frequently become non-idioms throughout the translation process when the translator cannot find equivalent idioms in the ST. In light of this, translating from idioms to non-idioms would include understanding the meaning of the idiom and then translating it into the TT under Nida's formal or functional equivalence. Thus, it is unsurprising that translating the idiom with a non-idiomatic expression is the most often used translation procedure for idioms and fixed expressions. Nida and Taber (1969), for example, stated that most frequently, source language idioms are shifted to target language non-idioms, even though it is better to find a TL idiom that preserves the SL idiom's meaning. Below are some examples extracted from our corpus.

Example 1

ST: but I could never *see eye to eye* with him on a lot of stuff.

TT: ولكننا لم نكن على اتفاق حول كثير من الأمور

See eye to eye is a pure idiom in Fernando's classification of idioms. This idiom consists of words whose literal meanings do not make up the idiom's meaning. The meaning of *see eye to eye* has nothing to do with eyes; it means to have the same opinion or attitude as somebody

else (about a particular issue, problem, etc.). To render *see eye to eye* in Arabic, the translator opts for the procedure of idioms into non-idioms. In the novel, the idiom is used by Holden to express his opinion of Arthur, viz., that they do not share the same opinion on many things in the Bible. In line with the context, the translator renders, *but I could never see eye to eye with him on a lot of stuff* into a non-idiom using the true meaning of the idiom into *ولكننا لم نكن على اتفاق حول كثير من الأمور* which also has the sense of disagreement. Even though the TT is not in the form of an idiom, it still delivers the actual message in the ST. The translator uses Nida's functional equivalence, thus making the Arabic translation sound natural.

Example 2

ST: She was probably watching me *out of the corner of her crazy eye*.

TT: *تراقبني من طرف عيناها*

The idiom *out of the corner of her crazy eye* is literal since its meaning is clearly understood from its linguistic components. *The corner* and *her crazy eye* together make up the expression's idiomatic meaning. The idiom *out of the corner of one's eye* means *looking sideways at something rather than directly*, according to the online Farlex Dictionary of Idioms. The translator here uses the procedure of idioms to non-idioms. Its translation as *من طرف عيناها* gives the meaning of looking at somebody with displeasure, which is in line with the context of defining Phoebe's actions after she gets angry and refuses to look at her brother, Holden. Therefore, *من طرف عيناها* is the functional equivalent to the ST idiom since it preserves the basic meaning of the ST idiom, rather than a literal translation of every single word in the ST idiom. Additionally, the translated idiom elicits the same reader response as the original text and uses simple language, thereby successfully communicating the author's intended message.

Example 3

ST: It just about *drove me crazy*.

TT: *وكان هذا يثير جنوني*

This idiom *drove me crazy* can be seen as a semi-idiom under Fernando's classification of idiom because it includes two words: non-literal *drove* and literally *crazy*. The word *drove* is non-literal because the meaning of this lexical word is *to force a person or animal to go somewhere*, but it means *impelling or moving* in the ST. The idiom *to drive someone crazy* means *to force someone into a state of insanity or mental instability* based on the online Farlex Dictionary of Idioms. In translating the idiom *drove me crazy* into Arabic, the translator uses the procedure of idioms to non-idioms *يثير جنوني* because the ST has no match in the TT, making it easy for the reader to understand. In the novel, the idiom *drove me crazy* is said by Holden talking with Mr. Antolini when his teacher asks his students to make a spontaneous speech; if the student digresses, the rest are supposed to yell 'digression'. Therefore, the translator uses *يثير جنوني*, which is a functional equivalent conveying the same emotional effect.

Example 4

ST: Then I tried to get them in a little intelligent conversation, but it was practically impossible. You had to *twist their arms*.

TT: *وحاولت أن أجتذبهن إلى حديث فيه بعض الذكاء ولكن ذلك كان مستحيلا تماما، كان عليك أن تقسرنهن على الحديث*

The idiom *twist their arms* is a pure idiom. If this term is interpreted literally, it means bending or turning their arms. However, the term *to twist (one's) arm* means to pressure or

force one into doing something, but not by using physical force. This term is as a pure idiom since the idiomatic meaning, and the literal meaning are different and have no connection at all. To convey the meaning of this idiom *twist their arms* in Arabic, the translator uses the procedure of idioms to non-idioms *تقسرهن على الحديث* as the TT lacks an idiom that is similar to the ST and is suitable to the context. Despite this, the idiomatic meaning is not distorted in the TT, which also has a sense of force. This idiom *twist their arms* is used in the novel to define Holden's actions when he joins some women in the Lavender Room and maintains a steady stream of conversation, but they are uninterested in talking. Using a functionally equivalent translation helps communicate the same emotional effect of the ST idiom.

Example 5

ST: I'll *drop you a line*, sir.

TT: سوف أكتب لك رسالة.

The idiom *to drop you a line* is a pure idiom as the lexical meanings of its constituents do not reflect the meaning of the idiom as a whole. The idiom *drop (one) a line* means to contact someone, usually with a letter, note, or phone call. The ST idiom *drop you a line* is translated as *أكتب لك رسالة* in Arabic, using the procedure of translating idioms to non-idioms. This idiom was used by Holden to his teacher, Mr. Spencer, as he was saying goodbye to him. The translator renders the ST idiom by non-idiom using the true meaning of the idiom into *أكتب لك رسالة* in Arabic, which also has the meaning of writing someone a letter. Despite being a non-idiom, the TT here still conveys the same message in the ST and has a natural form of expression. The translator conveyed the meaning of the ST idiom instead of translating every word using Nida's functional equivalence to communicate the function of the ST effectively.

Example 6

ST: *No wonder* you're flunking the hell out of here.

TT: أنا لا أستغرب أنهم سوف يطردونك من هذا المكان.

The idiom *No wonder* is a literal idiom since its constituent terms reflect the meaning of the entire idiomatic expression, which means not surprising or unexpected. To translate the idiom *No wonder* into Arabic, the translator uses the procedure of idioms to non-idioms. In the novel, the idiom is used by Stradlater when he reads Holden's composition asking him to do so, and he becomes annoyed, asserting that it has nothing to do with the assignment and that it's no wonder Holden is expelled. In the TT, the Arabic expression *أنا لا أستغرب* has the meaning of "not astonished", which is the same as the ST idiom. The translator could have opted for *عجب*, which is its Arabic equivalent. By adding the term *أنا* to the translated expression *لا أستغرب*, the translator has drifted away from formal equivalence to arrive at a functionally equivalent expression.

Example 7

ST: I'd just about *broken her heart*.

TT: لقد حطمت قلبها.

The English idiom *broken her heart* is an example of a semi-idiom under Fernando's classification of idioms. The idiom means to cause one a feeling of intense sadness, regret, or pity. The word *break* here is the figurative element since its meaning is not related to the idiomatic meaning, while the word *heart* is the literal one which is used here in its literal sense.

Also, it has been translated into the Arabic non-idiom *حطمت قلبها*. Understanding the context in which the idiom is used in the ST can help understand what he is trying to stress and what his purpose is. The idiom *broken her heart* is used in the novel after Holden lies to one of the women obsessed with spotting movie stars in the hotel bar about having just seen Gary Cooper. She is too upset not to see him. The translator keeps the meaning, form and context intact in the TT. Every single word of the ST idiom is translated into its exact corresponding equivalent in the TT, so the translation is a kind of formal equivalence according to Nida's theory. The result is a text with the same emotional effect as the ST. The translator shows loyalty to the ST idiom because its meaning and form are preserved in the TT expression without distorting the idiomatic meaning.

From idioms to idioms

Translating an ST idiom into a TT idiom is the procedure scholars recommend for translating idioms, even though they admit that this is frequently not achieved. For example, Nida and Taber (1969) comment that if conveying the same semantic in the receptor language in a similar form is possible, we preserve the form, but in practice, the form has to be transformed to safeguard the content. Thus, translating an ST idiom into a TT idiom enables the translator to imitate the style and spirit of the ST, especially when the ST uses vivid language and contains figurative expressions. The following idioms have been translated using this procedure in the corpus.

Example 8

ST: It was too short for me, the couch, but I really could've slept standing up *without batting an eyelash*.

TT: كانت الأريكة قصيرة جداً، ولكنني في واقع الأمر كنت أستطيع النوم وأنا واقف دون أن يطرف لي جفن

The idiom *without batting an eyelash* is classified as a pure idiom because there is no connection between the meaning of the whole idiom and the meaning of individual constituents: *batting* means hitting the ball with a bat in baseball, and *eyelash* refers to the tiny hair that grows along the edge of the eyelid. The idiom means *without having any emotional response, especially to that which would typically elicit such a reaction*. The second procedure of translating idioms to idioms is applied by the translator in translating *without batting an eyelash* into *دون أن يطرف لي جفن*. Both idioms have the same semantic content in both languages. It is suitable in its context when Holden says that Mr. Antolini invites him over and prepares a couch for him to sleep on because he is so exhausted that he could have slept standing up. Following Nida's functional equivalence, it is clear that the intended meaning of this idiomatic term has been effectively conveyed into the receptor language because it matches the connotative meaning of the ST without translating each word literally. The translator has used functional equivalence to retain the meaning and effect of the ST idiom.

Example 9

ST: Stradlater's *all right*. He's not too bad, I said. You don't know him, that's the trouble.

TT: سترادليتر لا غبار عليه، ليس رديئاً للغاية، المشكلة أنك لا تعرفه معرفة كافية

The idiom *all right* is translated into its equivalent Arabic idiom *لا غبار عليه* in the TT. In the novel, Holden uses the expression to defend his friend, Stradlater, in front of others. A closer look at its Arabic equivalent in the TT *لا غبار عليه* reveals that the translator uses

functional equivalence. This choice serves to clarify the translation for the TT reader; the translator does not translate every word literally but conveys the same cultural and emotional effect as the ST idiom. This allows the translator to convey the message effectively and maintain the meaning and function of the ST idiom.

Example 10

ST: She knows the whole goddam movie *by heart*,

TT: انها تحفظه عن ظهر قلب

The pure idiom *by heart* means *completely*. It is used to refer to something that one has memorized or knows very well. It is translated into another idiom in the TT, applying the second procedure of translating idioms proposed by Nida and Taber - from idioms to idioms. The idiom *by heart* is used to describe how unusually smart Phoebe is for her age; Holden takes her to see a movie and she memorizes it. The English idiom *by heart* and its Arabic equivalent *عن ظهر قلب* have the same meaning. The translator adopts functional equivalence to convey such cultural expression. By doing so, the TT maintains the effect of the ST idiom.

Example 11

ST: I'm a goddam spendthrift *at heart*. What I don't spend, I lose.

TT: وأنا في حقيقة الأمر مبذر، ومالا أبذره يضيع مني.

The idiom *at heart* is another pure idiom because the lexical meanings of its constituents do not reflect the meaning of the idiom as a whole. It means *fundamentally or intrinsically*, according to the Online Farlex Dictionary of Idioms. It is translated into another idiom *في حقيقة الأمر*. The expression is used by Holden to describe himself as a spendthrift, even though he may seem different. The Arabic equivalent conveys the same meaning as the SL idiom, which means basically or fundamentally, and it provides an effective and natural equivalent to the English idiom. By doing so, the translator follows functional equivalence because he produces a natural equivalent to the ST idiom.

Example 12

ST: I'm always saying Glad to've met you to somebody I'm not *at all* glad I met.

TT: أن أقول لشخص ما إنني سعيد بلقائه، بينما أنا لست سعيدا بذلك على الإطلاق

The literal idiom *at all* is translated into its equivalent Arabic idiom *على الإطلاق* in the TT. In the novel, Holden uses the expression to describe himself when he is lonely. He wants to hang out with others, but as soon as he engages in conversation with someone, he becomes very uncomfortable with them and cannot stand their company. The translator effectively communicates the meaning of the ST idiom and maintains its pragmatic force.

From non-idioms to idioms

Considering the significant function that idioms and fixed expressions play in language, especially in literary works, it is essential to think carefully about how to handle these inevitable idiomatic losses. In other words, it is crucial to consider possible translation changes for a source language text with figurative language and non-compositional expressions. Idioms and fixed expressions contribute significantly to making the text lively, so different procedures for dealing with such problems should be considered.

Adding target language idioms to the text is one way to cope with these losses. Nida and Taber (1969), identified this as a possible procedure to compensate for various types of translational losses. Therefore, even in cases where an idiom from the ST cannot be translated into the TT, it can be made up for elsewhere in the text. In the following examples, the translator adds target language idioms where non-idioms exist because not all English idioms can be replaced by equivalent Arabic idioms.

Example 13

ST: *Happily*, some of them kept records of their troubles.

TT: *و من حسن الطالع أن بعضهم قد سجل مآعاناها.*

The ST non-idiomatic expression *Happily* is rendered idiomatically as *حسن الطالع* in the TT, which means *fortunately* in Arabic. The translator chooses an idiomatic translation to give the TT an amplifying rhetorical flavor about having unexpected good fortune. Nida's functional equivalence is applied by the translator to convey the meaning of the ST effectively. The translator focuses not only on the meaning of the ST expression but also on the context in which it is used and puts it into a TT idiom that enhances the text's fluency and effectiveness.

Example 14

ST: She was really *witty*

TT: *كانت خفيفة الظل فعلا*

Witty, which is non-idiomatic in ST, is translated into an idiom in the TT *خفيفة الظل*. The idiomatic expression *خفيفة الظل* has a meaning similar to that of the ST expression *witty*. Both mean using words cleverly and amusingly. The translator translates *witty* idiomatically, in line with the context, which makes the TT sound more natural. The TT is a functionally equivalent translation that considers the expression's meaning and the context in which it has been used.

Discussion

The present study posed three research questions. The first question sought to determine how effective Fernando's theory of idioms is in identifying the type of idiomatic expressions in the TT. Analysis has revealed that *The Catcher in the Rye* contains three different types of idiomatic expressions: pure idioms (e.g., *see eye to eye*), semi-idioms (e.g., *drive me crazy*), and literal idioms (e.g., *no wonder* or *all right*). The theory has proved effective in offering an organized framework and classifying the idiomatic expressions neatly according to compositionality and fixedness levels, thereby strengthening the accuracy of the claims this study arrives at. Previous research corroborates this conclusion (e.g., Mounadil, 2023; Krisandini & Sutrisno, 2021; Valizadeh, 2021; Lafta, 2015), which has also reported accurate identification and interpretation of idioms.

In answering the other research questions, analysis has revealed that the translator takes into consideration the cultural and emotional effect in rendering idiomatic expressions by adopting different procedures based on Nida and Taber's procedures for translating idioms to achieve the equivalence in terms of Nida's theory of equivalence. The procedure of translating the idioms into non-idioms is the most frequent choice of the translator. This finding is consistent with Nida and Taber's (1969) claim that idioms are frequently shifted to non-idioms. It also corroborates with the findings of other researchers, including Al-Qahtani and Al-Qahtani (2021) and Sari and Setiawan (2018), who have studied the translation of idioms and found that

the procedure of idioms to non-idioms is the most preferred strategy for translating the idioms. The second popular procedure is to translate the ST idioms into corresponding TT idioms. To preserve the aesthetic aspects of the ST idioms, the translator employs the procedure of translating non-idioms by TT idioms. While this procedure is used as frequently, it is utilized when the translator believes that such a procedure will serve to transmit the connotative meaning and the aesthetic impact in the TT. Culture and emotion play a significant role in translation, particularly in literary texts. The translator has to deal with textual manifestations of culture and emotion. This is what Ghaleb Helsa has done, namely, maintaining the color of the source text in the target text by using expressions with similar cultural and emotional effects. Only by grasping the cultural and emotional elements rooted in the texts can the translator produce an equivalent translation.

Translating idiomatic expressions is a difficult task because the translator has to be culturally and emotionally aware of the target readers to achieve equivalence. For example, in rendering *drove me crazy* into *يثير جنوني* or *twist their arms* into *تقصرهن على الحديث*, the cultural and emotional effects in the target text are taken into consideration. The translator is careful not to translate them directly; he tries to carry the same emotional impact from the source text to the target text. This contributes to a suitable ambience in dealing with two different languages and cultures to facilitate cultural understanding. Helsa uses functional equivalence to communicate cultural nuances and emotional effects, ensuring that communication between the receptor and the message is substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message (Nida, 1964). By doing so, he has successfully produced the right impact on his readers. Such expressions as *عن ظهر قلب* *by heart*, *لا غبار عليه* *all right*, *دون أن يطرף لي جفن* *without batting an eyelash* help promote communication between the reader and the target text. Helsa may be described as a functional equivalent translator as he sets himself to recreate the meanings of such idioms from English into Arabic to ensure fluency of translation and maximize impact.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine equivalence in translating idiomatic expressions in the translation of the novel *The Catcher in the Rye* from English into Arabic by Ghaleb Helsa. The novel has been shown to contain pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms, Fernando's theory of idioms (1996) has proved effective in offering an organized framework and classifying the idiomatic expressions, and the procedure of translating the idioms into non-idioms was revealed to be the most frequent choice of the translator.

Although the research questions have been answered adequately and an empirical gap partly addressed, the study is not without limitations. A major limitation of the study is its focus on only one fictional work and, even more, a few purposively selected instances of translated idiomatic expressions. The small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings. Further work in the area is needed to examine a larger sample size, preferably comparing the patterns uncovered in the present study with patterns by other translators of the same novel, other works by Salinger, and other English fictional works. While the present study has answered the research questions proposed, it has brought forward several other research questions worthy of investigation. Is functional equivalence in translating idioms into non-idioms a recurrent pattern? What factors condition the directionality of translating idioms in general and in translating the works of Salinger in particular?

About the Authors

Wafa Ali Alwan is a lecturer at the University of Science and Technology, Aden, Yemen. Her research is in the area of translation studies, with a focus on the interplay between language and culture, aiming to enhance cross-cultural communication and accessibility through translation.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-5308-8075>

Gibreel Sadeq Alaghbary served as a Fulbright post-doctoral fellow and adjunct faculty at San Diego State University, USA, in 2013. He is the author of *Introducing Stylistic Analysis* (2022) by Edinburgh University Press and *Ideological Positioning in Conflict* (2019) in the *Routledge Handbook of Language in Conflict*. **ORCID ID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8531-2913>

Baleid Taha Shamsan specializes in 19th and 20th-century novels and his research covers consecutive and simultaneous interpretation. He has supervised and examined MA and PhD theses at Taiz University, Yemen, and is chairman of the English Department at the University of Science and Technology, Taiz, Yemen. **ORCID ID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4125-7016>

Declaration of AI Refined

This document has benefited from the application of AI-driven tools, including Grammarly and Scholar AI Chat, to refine its linguistic aspects. These tools were utilized to correct grammar and spelling and improve the overall writing style. It is acknowledged that the use of these technologies may introduce certain AI-generated linguistic patterns. However, the core intellectual content, data interpretation, and conclusions presented remain the sole work of the authors.

Statement of Absence of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to the research, findings, or recommendations presented in this paper. All conclusions drawn are independent and unbiased.

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