



## Functional Equivalence: A Top Priority in Translating Jordanian Culture-bound Expressions

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### Abstract

Despite the progress in information technology, artificial intelligence as well as all kinds of machine translation software, we found that to dynamically capture the essence and the spirit of the cultural item, one needs to resort to the human mind rather than to the machine that only decodes words away from their shades of meaning. The objective of the current study is to highlight the equivalence that must be used in translating 14 proverbial expressions randomly selected from Jordanian Vernacular Arabic, mainly from the elderly speech and people's daily discourse. To achieve this objective, the current researchers resorted to an analytical method that aims at comprehending the items in question in light of their contextual debate, and then each item was examined in light of equivalence parameters of formal, ideational or functional equivalence. It was found that text typology was a top priority in the rendition of culturally-bound-expressions. It was also found that a semantic miscue is bound to occur if a translator resorts to formal and/or ideational equivalence. While formal equivalence could be an excellent equivalence in case the text is universally recognized, functional equivalence still can be the best resort when dealing with culture-specific expressions. Ideational equivalence, nonetheless, may cause great content distortion of the original message. A major limitation of the current study is its being restricted to vernacular culture-specific expressions rather than the standard one. It is highly recommended that another study is conducted on standard Jordanian culture-specific expressions.

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## Introduction

Translation, by definition is an art, a specialty and a science (Levy, 2011). It is an art because no piece of translation is accepted unless it is well-presented and wholly captured. It is presented as a specialty when translators stick to internationally recognized theories to convey their translations (Leighton, 1990). Most importantly, it is considered a science to refute all suspicions claiming that translation could be done based on one's meticulous effort rather than based on theories of translation (Muminovna, 2023). This means that translation can never be a random and/or a haphazard activity that fully depends on people's expertise. This suggests that translation is not a mechanical procedure where people would replace a word for word, but it is a very scientific and coherent procedure where semantic units are conveyed as were originally intended by the original speaker and/or the source. It is a fact that none of the machine translation services, google translate, ChatGPT, or any other translation software, will be able to translate the 'unsaid' emotive expressions, especially culture-bound expressions such as proverbs. This is because translators need to be faithful to the source language text (SLT) and also to the process of translation in general (Bolaños Cuéllar, 2007; Sager, 1997). That is why we need to remind readers that translators should have a good background in both languages that are used in translation. It is not only significant to be competent in one. To succeed in translating the whole semantic meaning of the original text, a translator needs to be bilingual, familiar with two languages and s/he needs to master both of them.

When it comes to equivalences used in translation, it is worth mentioning that there are certain pragmatic categories, most of which could be used with certain text typologies (Humbatova, 2010; Panou, 2013). Some translators have stressed the significance of these pragmatic and/or functional equivalence for the sake of communication as well as translation. On the other hand, a few competent translators would prefer functional equivalence rather than ideational equivalence, especially when the objective is to preserve the cultural bound expressions like proverbs and other rhetoric tools (Belkhir, 2022). Moreover, it is necessary to understand the semantic contextual debate of proverbs in translation to avoid any ambiguity. Hence, the major challenge in translating culture specific expression like proverbs, the semantic unit of meaning is significant. it is not well understood, a semantic distortion of the original message might happen.

A major objective of the current study is to highlight the best translation equivalence that suits Jordanian culture-specific expressions and/or proverbs when used in people's daily discourse. This study comes in response to many questions that arise and/or that face translators, whether beginners or competent, when they are involved in translation related matters. So, they are bombarded with questions even from ordinary illiterate people whether or not some of the culture-specific expressions people communicate with in their daily discourse are translatable or not especially of the much progress in the world of AI and machine translations. So, the rationale of the current study is to prove that these expressions can be translated but they need to be cooked pretty well in the kitchen of translation equivalence with the help of theories of translation. For the current study, Arabic proverbs were used as the Source Language Text (SLT) which were translated into English, the Target Language Text (TLT).

## Statement of the Problem

Definitely, any confusion, ambiguity or unfamiliar expression in the SLT will force translators to search for a reasonable comprehension of the item in question. It is axiomatic that a translator needs to be fully aware of the two languages and cultures in which s/he translates, the SL and the TL. In other words, s/he needs to both bilingual and bicultural, respectively. However, it happens that some expressions are very deeply culture-oriented; over the passage of time some had been subject to modification and change to the extent that they have become very challenging for translators. For example, the proverb, [تذكروا عاترك ما انتوا امثالهم يا زفرين] [Speak of the Turks! You can't be compared to them! Oh! Nasty people!] is highly challenging to translate because of the figurative language in it. Very few people may understand the intended message of this proverb, which literally translates into [Speak of the Turks! You can't be compared to them! Oh! Nasty people!]. In fact, to successfully translate the proverb in question, a full comprehension of this proverb needs to be provided. The apostrophe in the proverb is sarcastically addressing and comparing nasty people who criticize the Turks when in fact the Turks are way better than they are. The verb speaks of actually means to criticize rather than to say something.

Another challenge before the translators is that any translation which does not render the exact message above is doomed to be a failure. Hence, literal translation is not a strong equivalence here, due to the musicality and the deep meaning of the SL. Therefore, translators cannot venture resorting to ideational equivalence because the content of the item in question can be sacrificed. Cultural equivalence is also the best resort because it does capture the function of the proverb, even at the expense of form and structure. In the end, the intended message of the original proverb will be captured. In fact, much scholarship has been conducted on translation, translating cultural expressions, proverbs, proverbial expressions and idiomatic expressions, which might be difficult and challenging to translate due to the ambiguities that encompass them. Yet, very few studies, if any, have tackled Jordanian culture-specific expressions that are chosen from people's daily discourse.

## Literature Review

Translation is defined as the process of decoding words, phrases and expressions of a target text, (semantic, cultural and pragmatic components), into another language with a major condition of preserving the intended message of the original message. However, “translating [...] culturally-bound expressions has been a challenge for translators as they are culture-bound and involve many cultural elements” (Ibrahim, Al Rushaidi, & Al Rushaidi, 2016). In other words, translators must convey the lexical meanings of the source language into the target language (Almjlad, 2023). Translators accordingly need to be highly-qualified, competent and educated. To succeed in their translation professions, they need to be equipped with many features and qualities that make their translation compressible, understandable and faithful to the original text. A few researchers argue that any translator without any theoretical background will always be highly criticized because the output will always be subject to change and modification (Ahtif & Gandhi, 2023) thus lacking accuracy and consistency (Jabak, 2022). The first important feature translators need to have is to be bicultural, a feature that is more important than being bilingual. This is simply because one can deal with all linguistic problems even if they are unfamiliar. However, when it comes to cross-cultural matters, it is evident that delving in both cultures is a must to come up with a satisfactory translation that renders the speaker's intended message. For example, if an Arabic translator translates a culture-laden text like proverbs, s/he should realize that to translate such text into English, it would not be an easy task. If s/he wants to translate the text literally, s/he will be met with lots of confusing expressions that may not have a proper equivalence in the target language (Abdulrazaq, 2022; Hmaidan, 2024; Jabak, 2022) .

When professional and/or competent translators converse about problems of equivalence in translating texts, many key terms need to be thoughtfully addressed, namely Target Language Text (TLT), Source Language (SLT), Equivalence (E), Intended Message (IM) and the Message Conveyed (MC) (Sharifa, 2024). Accordingly, translation in general is a wide-ranging process through which a translator needs to capture the implicit and/or ‘the unsaid’ intended message of the original phraseology in the target language (Ilkhomovich & Muhtasar, 2024). Ibrahim et al. (2016) reviewed the semantic and the pragma-cultural impact on a translated text. They referred to what they termed a “stumbling block” in translating culture-laden expressions. A very similar study was conducted by Ali, Jarrah, and Al-Jabri (2024), in which they showed that the translation of religious culture laden common expressions can be best translated pragmatically. The best resort is to use functional equivalence rather than literal or ideational ones given that their semantic content is largely marginal to the meaning of the accompanying utterance (Ali et al., 2024). Shhaiber and Haider (2023) investigated a number of Strategies of Subtitling Egyptian Idiomatic Expressions and Proverbs into English. In their study, they discussed the strategies used to overcome the challenges subtitlers face when they attempt to translate the culture-specific Egyptian phraseologies, such as idiomatic expressions and proverbs into English. They employed Baker, Hardie, and McEnery (2006) taxonomies as a method of identifying the idiomatic expressions, proverbs and/or proverbial expressions. They found that “paraphrasing,” as a translation equivalence, was the most frequently used in translating proverbs. “Mistranslation” was detected in some cases, most likely due to the lack of the target culture knowledge and not finding appropriate equivalence.

Mounadil (2023) was also relevant to the role of pragmatic equivalence in translating culturally-bound items used in translation. Likewise, Al-khawaldeh and Abu Rahmeh (2022) discussed the significance of both the communicative as well as the pragmatic sense of translating the expressions of opinion and its strategies specifically in Jordanian Arabic (JA). Similarly, Ali (2022) conducted a study in which was explored the relationship between culture and translation and how to translate some cultural expressions. The study aimed to capture the most accurate translations that match with the original texts of the SL. The study provided some translation strategies that needed to be taken into consideration and to find which ones were the most frequently used. Drawing upon the same theme, Al-Khatib (2021) revolved around how diverse people might well negotiate meanings and translations of emails and their interactions. The study infers that there is major role for “pragmatic and intercultural communication” in capturing similar meaning like that of the original texts. Dweik and Thalji (2016) investigated the translatability of culturally-bound items in proverbs and idiomatic expressions, being essential to everyday communication aspects of life. They found that, in match with the current study, that literal translation might distort the intended meaning of the source language text due to the cultural gaps that exist within the shadows of the culture-specific item. Thalji and Dweik (2015) conducted a study that aimed at exploring the obstacles that Jordanian novice translators encounter when translating proverbs. It also aimed at exploring the strategies they use when translating proverbs from Arabic into English and vice versa. Similar to the argument of the current study, it was found that the pragmatic equivalence better suits translating any proverbial expression that has a taste of culture.

Dweik (2013) conducted a study on university students that attempted to measure the level of translatability of cultural and literary expressions by university English majoring students. To do so, twenty students were asked to translate a few culture-specific expressions in areas of literature and

culture. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and was found that the students performed very poorly in translating the items, thus indicating that the lack of comprehension, ignorance about theories of translation and little knowledge in translation have been very influential for their poor performance. Other studies like Hermans (1999) supports the view that translation should be recognized in terms of a culture practice, Al-Azzam (2013) argues that the process through which translating a set of selected proverbs and/or proverbial expressions into English might well collide with many challenges, especially ones relevant to colloquialism, or what we refer to in the current study as culture-specific expressions. A feature, according to him, gives the proverbs “semantic, social, cultural values that cannot be stripped or ignored in the literal translation of the proverbs” (Al-Azzam, 2013). Such challenges definitely force the competent translator to search for the appropriate equivalence through which s/he captures the embedded meaning of that colloquial and/or culture specific proverb.

## Methodology

### *Research Design*

A qualitative research design was utilized with linguistic and analytic approach to evaluate 14 Jordanian culture-specific proverbs and/or proverbial expressions, within their contextual debate. The main question framed for the study was: Can proverbial expressions in SL be exactly translated in the TL as originally intended by the original speaker? A major commonality among all the expressions sampled was that they all have a sense of peculiarity and that very few people would use them due to being culture-specific. The major purpose of providing them is to highlight the dilemma of translating Jordanian culture-bound expressions within people’s daily discourse.

### *Sampling*

A sample of 14 culture-laden-expressions was used to conduct this study. Only half of them were comprehended and translated. It is recommended that the remaining proverbs would be examined in a further analytical study. A translation equivalence, however, was proposed to support the theoretical background about each proverb.

### *Instrument and Procedure*

It is significant to point out that the current study required no instrument as it highly depends on the analysis of the contextual debate of the proverbs and/or the proverbial expressions. The procedure is analytical since it explores the idea of the original item under consideration; compares it to its literal rendition and then concludes in light of the level of translation equivalence.

### *Data Analysis*

The data were collected via observation and communication with the elderly people in Jordan. So, most of the items were collected by some semi-structured personal interviews with some people in the street and in public gatherings while talking to them in a friendly way about life topics. These data were collected and examined in light of their contexts. The level of comprehensibility of these expressions was decided upon the professional judgement of the researchers who have grand expertise in the field of translation studies.

## Results and Discussion

In order to examine equivalences in translation, it is necessary to devise certain categories, most of which could be used with certain text typologies. However, some equivalences could be used twice with no distortion expected on the source language text. Belkhir (2022) comments on a twofold equivalence: foreignizing translation and a sense-for- sense equivalence. While the former functions as a substitute of the original source language item, the latter captures the soul of the item in question rather than the form and the structure. Similarly, Schleiermacher and Bernofsky (2021) elaborates on two approaches: Foreignized text and domesticated text. Schleiermacher eloquently explicates the relationship between the text and the reader. By referring to the translator, he states that “either the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer towards him (40-50). The translator uses distinctive means to reimburse the reader’s failure to understand the original language. In the second case, the author-reader relationship leaves the reader and moves the author towards him or her so as to make the text very familiar. Likewise, Newmark (1988) theorizes about functional equivalence, as a counterpart of Schleiermacher’s domesticized equivalence. He states that “functional equivalence, when applied to cultural words, requires the use of a culture-free word, sometimes with a new specific form; it therefore neutralizes or generalizes the SL word” (1988, 29). The discussion below shows half of the proverbs that are being examined in the current study. Table 1 provides a list of all specific 14 proverbs or proverbial expressions sampled for this study.

**Table 1: Jordanian Culture Specific Proverbs.**

No	Proverb (Arabic)	English equivalent	Meaning in English
1.	أول الرقص حنجلة	A tip of an iceberg	
2.	أعط الخبز لخبازه	Give no task to less than expert	Give tasks to people who can excel in doing them
3.	أهل البقر بدهم من عند أهل الحمير روبه	Cows' breeders ask for the essence of yogurt from those who bring up donkeys	Non-possessors cannot be givers
4.	جبنا نحذي الخيل مد الفار رجله	We came to shoe horse to find that the mouse has stretched its legs	It is a virtue to know your own status and social weight
5.	اطلع على العنزة واطلب منها حليب	Look before you leap, or Look at the she-goat and then ask for milk	One needs to look at things considerably and thoughtfully
6.	الخال مخلصي والعم مولى	Paternal uncles have no authority like that of the paternal uncles	Paternal uncles have more authority over maternal ones
7.	اول الغيث قطرة	A good omen of blessing and glad tidings	Small signs are indicative of larger ones
8.	جيزة حمزة براس المعناه	an act of instant marriage	Sudden events with no planning
9.	اللي بدري بدري واللي ما بدري بقول كف عدس	Appearances are deceptive; never judge a book out of its cover	Never judge people by appearances
10.	اللي بالقدر بتطولة المغرفة	Knowing the material in the bowl could only be via a spatula	What is hidden inside will appear very soon
11.	اللي على راسه بطحه بتحسبها	If one suspects themselves, they remain scared forever	Criminals revolve around their crimes
12.	لو دامت لغيرك ما وصلت لك	None is eternal; no one remains in the same position forever.	Things can never last forever
13.	تحكوا عالترك ما انتوا امثالهم يا زفرين	Blaming honored people though the ones who blame them are way less respectable than them.	Never curse others unless you are better than them
14.	من قلة ارجال صار الاعور قيده	Due to lacking courageous men, even the cross-eyed	Due to lack of lacking manhood behaviors, each has asked to become a leader

The first proverbial expression is: أول الرقص حنجلة [It is a tip of an iceberg]. This is a very common proverb in the Jordanian culture which is apparently very culture-laden. The phraseology “very culture laden” is meant literally. That is, if a large number of people are asked about the exact meaning and message of the proverb, very few may well know it or even capture its message. Only the elderly and the very sociable people might provide a good comprehension of the proverb but they definitely will not be able to explain its lexical item. This proverb could have a variety of semantic and cultural nuances and shades of meaning depending on the context. In other words, it can carry different functions such as, threat, abundance, continuity, stages, etc. In fact, this proverb has many colloquial meanings but they are used dysphemistically. A common phraseology used in the previous context is “ba3d al-khara wara” which literally translates into “more shit is yet to come,” thus predicting and pointing out to some more expected bad consequences. Definitely, resorting to an equivalence like word-by-word or formal equivalence will definitely come up with a distortion of the original intended message of the proverb.

The word حنجلة (hanjalah) literally means the woman who walks in a very artificial way especially at the beginning of the dance, a meaning that provides no relevance to the message of the original proverb. This pragmatic meaning can only be captured by a functional equivalence; one that encapsulates the unexpectedness of much more bad consequences in the upcoming days. Our argument is based on our deep knowledge in the source language text proverb because of age and also because of socializing with the elderly who repeatedly use this proverb when they want to express any upcoming events, especially that which do not sound good and/or above people's expectations. A translation like “it is just a tip of an iceberg” in terms of its literal meaning might seem to have no relevance to the proverb in question, but the function of it definitely informs the recipients with the intended message. This suggested translation in English is also a proverb and /or an idiomatic expression which is highly used to refer to different meanings i.e., unexpectedness of bad consequences, or sudden and unscrupulous acts to come. In this regard, we refute the claims that formal equivalence is always a major resort to translating proverbs and /or proverbial expressions. It can be inferred that this can be true in case the proverb under discussion is of a universal value such as, “Save your white penny for a black day,” a proverb, which if uttered or used in any culture, will definitely be understood with no further explanations.

The second culture-laden expression that supports the argument about sense-for-sense equivalence, which matches with functional and/or pragmatic equivalence, is أعط الخبز لخبازه [Only bakers are allowed to bake bread!]. This proverb is internationally recognized in terms of justly assigning professions to people who

master them. In fact, it has many cultural synonyms that carry the same meaning, like the poetic verse, *باري يا باريها القوس اعط القوس تظلم ينصفها لا ليس بريا القوس* [Give no task to less than an expert]. Here, the two proverbs have one commonality: One needs to assign a task to a professional person who is capable of achieving the mission easily and professionally without having any simple deficits. It is axiomatic that people of the same culture will definitely understand the literal translation of the proverb in case it is literally translated as, “you give the bread to Mr. Baker!” However, this translation will definitely fail to match with the intended message of the original proverb, which is to only assign professional missions to special people. Undoubtedly, if literal translation is employed in this context, the first expected reading that unfamiliar readers are expected to infer is to “return the bread to its baker” rather than to generalize a fact, which is every special mission requires special professional people to achieve. Otherwise, the mission will definitely not be appropriately done.

Here, professional translators need to capture the function of the proverb rather than the structure of it. In this particular point, the content is more important than the structure of the proverb. So, a suggested translation will be: Give no task to less than an expert. This translation, in general, is acceptable because it functionally corresponds to the message that denotes to hearers to choose those who master their professions perfectly. Resorting to this equivalence will disseminate the cultural sense of the proverb and make it more comprehensive. That is to say, the proverb is not only intended to be specific to bakery stuff; it can be generative to refer to general themes like distinction, professionalism, innovation, and specificity. At this point, formal equivalence and/or word-for-word translation will definitely fail the expectations of the translator. To pragmatically capture the proverb, it is a must to resort to functional equivalence.

The next Arabic proverb is: *أهل البقر بدهم من عند أهل الحمير رويه* [the cow breeders ask for the essence of yogurt from those who bring up donkeys]. This proverbial expression is another example of a culture-specific expression. This proverb is highly relevant to the previous one in terms of its pragmatic function: the necessity to give priorities to people of specialization rather than to people who have no knowledge. This proverb is full of sarcasm where people who are supposed to be mastering a special skill are asking people who have nothing about that special skill. Further, the proverb is used to explain that people sometimes confuse others by asking them to perform things that do not belong to them. In this context, the proverb, which translates into, the cows' breeders ask for the essence of yogurt from those who bring up donkeys. Measuring the level of recognition and comprehensibility among Jordanian people will definitely provide us with unexpected level of mistranslations and consequently miscomprehensions. In addition to being very funny, this proverb seems to be very unfamiliar even for the vast majority of Jordanian people. People would normally use this proverb in different situations, especially when someone, who is not a specialist and/or whose experience is very little in a specific field, is asked to get over a special work. That is, people of experience and knowledge are asking people who have no experience or background. For example, it is bizarre when a carpenter is asking a teacher to fix his door. In this context, the proverb is uttered to convey a message of wonder, surprise, and sarcasm. So, for translators to convey this proverb very literally they definitely will be bombarded with some difficulty.

Literal translation will definitely fail to pragmatically capture the function of the proverb because people do not normally recognize the relationship between cow breeders and donkey breeders. Another cultural ambiguity in this regard is that the cultural sense of asking for the ‘essence of yogurt’ is still unclear and normally mysterious. This is simply because the hearers would not normally recognize the purpose of the asking for the essence of the yogurt, which is of course to help change the boiled milk into fresh yogurt again. At this point, a professional translator needs to resort to an equivalence that makes the task easier for the hearer, namely, functional equivalence and/or what Schleiermacher terms ‘domesticated translation’. A translation like A non- possessor cannot be a giver is a better resort than formal equivalence. This translation standardly encompasses the idea that if someone does not have a certain skill, a profession or experience, s/he will not be able to provide any kind of help. Only people of experience and talent are capable of offering help. Although this translation does not capture the sarcastic sense embedded in the original proverb, it still renders the intended idea. Such equivalence will undoubtedly make it feasible for other cultures to grasp the idea and communicate accordingly.

Another proverb that sounds both weird and less frequently used within the Jordanian social cycles is *جينا رجليه الفار مد الخيل نحذي* [We came to shoe horse to find that the mouse has stretched its legs]. This proverb literally says that “We came to shoe horse to find that the mouse has stretched its legs”. Pragmatically speaking, a literal translation definitely will not capture the intended message present in the original proverb. The message in short means that some people always compare themselves to others when they do not have the same qualities. In other words, those who are equipped with qualifications, high education and excellent experience cannot be compared with those who have none of these privileges. In this case, if you want to honor the first group of people, the other group will object and ask for equal treatment although they do not have the same qualifications, expertise and education. Resorting to literal translation makes the text ambiguous if left unexplained. Although both the horses and mice are animals, it will be unfair to draw a comparison between them. While the horse enjoys being highly respected because of its symbolic values of originality and pride, the mice represent meanness, disgust and nastiness. So, any translation that compares between two items with mismatching similarities will definitely capture the translation of the proverb. It should be mentioned that the Arabic culture is abundant with similar cultural proverbs that are relevant to the theme

namely الفرق بين السماء والارض [difference in between the sky and the earth] and الفرق بين الثرى والثريا [difference in between the soil and the jewels]. The last proverbial expressions support our previous argument. So, a translation that pragmatically and/or functionally translate the gist of the proverb will be considered a success. A suggested translation in this regard is, having heard of Miss universe's race, the haggard lady ran with a quick pace. Here, it is very clear that the translation makes a lot of sense and that the thematic debate is very captured eloquently.

The next proverb اطلع على العنزة واطلب منها حليب [Look at the she-goat and then ask for milk] literally translates into Arabic as, "look at the goat and then ask for milk". In fact, a proverb like this needs no scientific evidence to prove that literal translation and/or any formal equivalence may not well render the idea of the intended message. Hearers of the proverb will definitely not be able to understand the relationship between the two clauses. The first clause, 'look at the goat' which has one crystal-clear request and therefore accepts only one interpretation i.e., to look at the goat; the other clause is the main clause in which the addressee is requested to later ask for milk based on his/her sight of the goat. Normally, if the goat is well-fed, it is expected to milk good amount, but if it is skinny and her breast is shrinking, then little, if any, milk is expected. In this regard, unless the translator is bicultural, s/he will not definitely be able to capture the entrenched message of the proverb. The proverb, as a matter of fact, is normally uttered when someone wants someone else to check out the circumstances that encompass a certain situation, especially that appearances might be deceptive. In other words, it is used to show that one sometimes does not need to delve deep to explore certain truths because everything looks very clear and no ambiguity is bound to take place.

It is axiomatic that formal equivalence or any other equivalence that utilizes form and structure away from culture will be doomed to a pragmatic failure. Major themes that are related to the proverb in question are: readiness, appearances, experience, common sense, and intuitions. The word-for-word translation provided above does not convey any of the themes above. Similarly, any translation that is based on the idea i.e., ideational equivalence, will also pragmatically fail to render the same idea. So, a functional translation like "Look before you leap" might be a wonderful resort. Apparently, the lexical items of the suggested proverb look very universal with no ambiguous components of any complicated cultural segments. Translating a proverb from the source language (SL) with a proverb from the target language (TL) that has a commonality (clear and expected conclusions here) means that the translator has successfully valued functional equivalence to formal and/or ideational one.

The last proverb in the current study is مولى مخلى والعم الخال [Maternal uncles have no authority like that of the paternal uncles]. The proverb above is a complete challenge for translators to both comprehend and translate. First of all, the musicality (rhyme) of the proverb indicates that any translation that ignores the sense of relation between *3am* [translated into the paternal uncle] in Arabic and *khal* [translated into the maternal uncle] will be doomed to pragmatic failure, and therefore to a semantic miscue. The problem above lies in distinguishing between the two parts of the equation. These two key nouns in English are synonymous and will both be translated into uncle. This means it is hard for hearers to distinguish between them. While *khal* is related to the brother of one's mother, *3am* is related to the brother of the father. So, both have different reference in terms of kinship and blood. It should be noted that in the Jordanian culture there is a high sensitivity in terms of the comparisons drawn between the paternal uncle and the maternal one.

Undoubtedly, literal translation and ideational translations will not be able to render the clear relationship between the two segments of the proverb. The proverb literally means that because of the blood kinship between the people who belong to the same blood, they must take responsibility and charge of immature people who belong to them. It is very normal that the vast majority of boys would like their relatives from the mothers' side more than the relatives of the father's side. This is due to the fact that kids, since birth, are wholly attached to their mothers. Nevertheless, that mothers normally belong to different tribes make them willing to let fathers take kids' responsibility. In this regard, to literally translate the proverb in question without understanding the function of the proverb will come up with ambiguous and incomprehensible translation, like the uncle is abandoned and he takes responsibility. However, to translate the proverb successfully one needs to distinguish two different kinds of uncles: paternal and maternal. Apparently, successful translations need to consider the sociocultural background of the proverb. Suggested translations are: Ideationally: Paternal uncle takes responsibility, maternal uncles are ignored; while functionally, it is blood is thicker than water.

## Conclusion

It can be argued that despite the progress in information technology, artificial intelligence as well as all kinds of machine translation software, we found that to dynamically capture the essence and the spirit of the cultural item, one needs to resort to the human mind rather than to the machine that only decodes words away from their shades of meaning. Apparently, as far as text typology is concerned and in an attempt to maintain some aspects of originality, competent translators would normally resort to functional equivalence rather than ideational equivalence, especially when they aim at preserving the cultural value of the culture-specific proverb.

It is very clear that understanding the semantic contextual debate of the proverb and/or the proverbial expression is very important in translation because if the translator pragmatically fails to convey the original message of the SLT, a semantic meaning is bound to occur. Here, the major challenge in translating proverbial expressions is the semantic unit of meaning which, if not well understood, will cause a distortion of the original message. A semantic miscue is bound to occur in case translators resort to formal and/or ideational equivalence.

Further, another challenge that might face translators when they translate cultural texts with proverbs is their lack of understanding the function of the item in question. For example, if the translator is not bi-cultural, s/he will not be able to understand the function of the proverb, thus becoming unaware of what equivalence to employ. It is also found that text typology is a top priority in the rendition of text-culture-expressions and that formal equivalence is an excellent equivalence in case the text is universally recognized whereas functional equivalence is the best resort when dealing with culture-specific expressions. However, ideational equivalence may cause great content-distortion of the original message. One of the major limitations of the current study is that it tackled only culture laden Jordanian expressions; it didn't tackle standard ones as standard ones may be easily translated via machines translations and AI strategies. However, it is highly recommended to conduct a similar study on a back translation of the suggested proverbs of the current study and to make sure whether or not the subjects' responses would be similar to the original ones.

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