

Differences between English and Arabic Body Idioms

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Abstract

An idiom is a form of speech that contains a hidden meaning. Culture had an important role in translating idioms. Therefore, a translator needs to be aware of the culture of both languages. This research was conducted to clarify the importance of body-related idioms in our daily life and how to use them to communicate easily with others. The problem that the researchers were studying was that the idioms are not literally translated, but we understood them from the context of the speech. The result of this study showed the appropriate use of idioms in the Arabic language and their equivalent in the English language. Also, the same body part words were used in both Arabic and English idioms but each one of them had a different meaning. The obtained results might enable teachers and EFL students of translation to know when and how to use body idioms.

Keywords: English, Arabic, Body Idioms

INTRODUCTION

In general, idioms are types of informal language. They are phrases or groups of words that are related to each other and give hidden meanings that are different from the actual meanings of the word itself. Sometimes idioms are fun ways to use language. Also, they have a different kind such as idioms about books, food and body parts. In the Arabic language, idioms are called metaphors. Idioms that are based on the human body parts convey a different meaning from the other parts, and each part has more than one idiom.

Idioms of body parts are important in our daily life due to using them many times to convey the purpose of the speech briefly, add some fun and suspense in the speech. They also provide an opportunity to express the meaning in different ways and make the context of speech more clear, energetic and exciting. The findings of this research will help translators and users of both languages English and Arabic to use the correct equivalent idioms of a specific body part in the other language. In addition to understanding the meaning of idioms and use it in appropriate way. Also, to explain that

each body parts contain more than one meaning depending on the context. At the end urging readers to know a lot of different terms.

The purpose of the study was to examine the differences between Arabic and English idioms, specifically those that include the names of body parts. This study addresses the following research question:

- What are the differences between Arabic and English idioms that involve body parts?

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Glucksberg (2001) "Idioms are a subset of fixed expressions in a language community". Al-Shawi (2012) states that "An idiom is an artistic expression of the language". Hussein (n.d.) states that "An idiom is a phrase or expression whose meaning cannot be understood from the ordinary meanings of the words in it. The meanings of words are arbitrarily stipulated in memory".

Al-Shawi (2012) explored the difficulty faced by the translator in translating idioms and gave the solution by following strategies to help the translator translate in the style that appropriate for the target language with the close meaning of source language, taken in consideration of the cultures and religions differences. The purpose of this study was to overcome the obstacles faced by the translators in the translation of social and religious idioms from Arabic to English and vice versa. The methodology of collecting the data in this research had two sources to collect the idioms the live sources such as films and radio programs and written sources such as dictionaries and newspapers. The result of this research may provide some solutions that translators can use to solve the problems of translating idioms. Al-Shawi's strategies used by translators were using a parallel idiom in the TL, using similar meaning but dissimilar form, paraphrasing the idiom, using notes and consulting informant.

Howwar (2013) examined the nature of Idioms in English and Arabic meanings. The translator should avoid literal translation when translating the idioms and must deal with form and meaning of idioms to find equivalent in both Arabic or English language depending on cultural differences. The purpose of this study was to analyze the idioms in both English and Arabic languages focused on the bound of culture and context to discover the type of idioms by using one technique that deals with the equivalence. In this research, the structure of specific idioms were used such as dialogue expression, the narrative expressions and the rhetorical questions. The results of this study was that the translator and learner should seek the appropriate equivalence in the source language to the target language. So, they should focus on the translation techniques and the context of the language they used.

The comparison of these studies is Howwar's study was different from the others because it focused on the structure of idioms. Al-Shawi's study gave the strategies of translation to translate social and religious idioms. This research focused on idioms that include body parts.

ENGLISH AND ARABIC IDIOMS

In the Arabic culture body parts idioms have different meanings from other cultures. In general, idioms found in the Arabic language are abbreviated and give complete meaning. Most of the Arabic idioms are spoken more than written. In the English culture body parts idioms have different meaning from other cultures. In English culture the meaning of idioms can change over time. Idioms in English help people to improve their understanding in English language.

METHOD

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers searched for the studies that were similar to their study or at least they contained a part of their study. Also, they identified the similarities and differences between the previous studies and the present study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section consists of three tables that contain examples with explanations.

Table 1. Examples of body-parts idioms in Arabic with their equivalent in English

	Arabic Body Part Idioms	English Body Part Idioms
1	بلع لسانه	Bite his tongue
2	خف رجليك	Shake a leg
3	كُلي أذان صاغية	Lend an ear
4	خلي عينك عليه	Keep an eye on
5	على لساني	On the tip of my tongue
6	مرسوم على وجهك	It's written all over your face

In the Arabic language an idiom (بلع لسانه) and in English, they use (bite his tongue) that mean do not say what you want to say keep your mouth shut. Also, (خف رجليك) in Arabic and (shake a leg) in English are used to tell someone hurry or move quickly. Besides when they say (كُلي أذان صاغية) in Arabic and (lend an ear) in English for listening to someone carefully. As well (خلي عينك عليه) in Arabic and (Keep an eye on) in English mean take care of and watch in order to protect. Also, in Arabic (على لساني) and in English (On the tip of my tongue) mean about to be said or almost remembered. Last but not least, in Arabic they use (مرسوم على وجهك) and in English they use (It's written all over your face) mean it is clear what you are feeling by the expression on your face.

Table 2. Examples of body-parts idioms in Arabic with their equivalent idioms in English without using of body part word.

	Arabic Body Part Idioms	English Idioms
1	ضع يدك بماء بارد	Do not worry
2	أقطع ذراعي	I will eat my hat
3	أعطي بيده	Throw in the towel
4	أريد يد ابنتكم	Pop the question

This table have examples of Arabic body parts idioms with their equivalent in English idioms. First, the Idioms (ضع يدك بماء بارد) and (do not worry) used for trying to make someone less upset or nervous and telling someone that you do not need to do something. The second example, (أقطع ذراعي) and (I will eat my hat) mean I will be very surprised. The third example,

(أعطي بيده) and (throw in the towel) mean to give up, admit defeat or failure. The last example, (أريد يد ابنتكم) and (pop the question) to ask someone to marry you.

Table 3. Examples of the same body-parts in Arabic and English idioms with their meaning

	Arabic Body Parts Idioms	Meaning	English Body Parts Idioms	Meaning
1	ذراعك اليمين (your right arm)	Refer to trustworthy person	Cost an arm and a leg	Very expensive
2	الظفر ما يطلع من اللحم (the nail is not coming out of the meat)	The family should not become enemies	Point the finger at someone	To blame someone
3	وريبي عرض أكتافك (show me your shoulders)	To fire someone	Have a chip on your shoulder	To be angry because you think you have been treated unfairly
4	يده طويله (his hand is long)	Thief	Give somebody a hand	To help someone

This table explains using the same body part idiom in both Arabic and English languages with a different meaning in each language due to the cultural differences.

In brief the findings of this research are in agreement with the results of previous studies in helping teachers and students of translation to know the appropriate way to translate idioms. The difference between this research and previous studies are that the present study focused on the Arabic body parts idioms and their equivalent in English body parts idioms with the same meaning, and with English idioms without body parts word, but with the same meaning. Also, idioms in the Arabic and English using the same body parts, but each language has its own meanings depending on the cultural differences. The result in Al-Shawi's study was to give some strategies to translate idioms, but Howwar's study focused on the structure of idioms.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to clarify the differences between idioms of body parts in Arabic and English, and the equivalent meanings of the Arabic to English and vice versa. From this research, we discovered that body parts idioms are too many and have a variety of hidden meanings. We found that sometimes Arabic body parts idioms and their equivalent in English idioms both of them used the same body part with the same meaning. Also, we found that sometimes Arabic body parts idioms have the same meaning with their equivalent in English idioms without using body parts word. The

specific word of body part idiom sometimes has a variety of meaning in both Arabic and English languages, and it is intended a different purpose than the other language.

The results of this research are especially useful for those who teach and study translation in the use of different body parts idioms and how to translate it into the correct way to avoid literal translation. Each idiom has a specific meaning in each language. It also explains that some idioms have the same meaning in their equivalent language.

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