

TRANSLATING IDIOMS

DEFINITION OF IDIOMS:

- They are words or phrases that aren't meant to be taken literally.
- Examples:
- If you say someone has “cold feet,” it doesn't mean their toes are actually cold. Rather, it means they're nervous about something.
- Don't **beat around the bush**. - Just say what you really mean.
- After some reflection, he decided to **bite the bullet**. - After some reflection, he decided to do the undesirable thing he was avoiding.
- I'm going to **call it a night**. - I'm going to bed.
- Don't **jump the gun**. - Don't do something before the allotted time.

- He decided to **let her off the hook**. - He decided to release her from her responsibility.
- He **missed the boat**. - He missed out on an opportunity.
- **Pull yourself together**, man! - Calm down.
- Getting fired turned out to be a **blessing in disguise**. - Getting fired (normally a negative event) turned out to be a good thing.
- Would you **cut me some slack?** - Don't be so hard on me.
- I'm going **back to the drawing board**. - I'm going to start over.
- I go out for walks **once in a blue moon**. - I go out for walks very rarely.
- There he is, **speak of the devil**. - There he is; we were just talking about him.
- That was **the straw that broke the camel's back**. - My patience has finally run out.

- Why are you so **bent out of shape?** - Why are you so upset?
- I'm feeling **under the weather.** - I'm feeling sick.
- **We'll cross that bridge when we get there.** - We'll solve that problem when the time comes.
- I'm sorry but I just can't seem to **wrap my head around it.** - I'm sorry but I just can't seem to understand.
- Wow, you can **say that again.** - I totally agree.
- Their fight was a **storm in a teacup.** - They made a big fuss over an unimportant matter.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF TRANSLATING IDIOMS

- Culture plays an important role in the course of the idiom interpretation. Only by having a solid foundation of the culture of the target language, the translator can catch the implied meaning. It, therefore, requires enhancing cross-cultural awareness and needs open-minded understanding of the culture of the second language from different aspects.

- It is believed that the qualified translator must have a good knowledge about the religious concepts such as Islamic, Christianity and many others.
- Moreover; the wide differences between the English social culture and the Arabic social culture have a prevailing impact on the expressions used in both languages. By way of illustration, consider the following factors:

THE SOCIAL CULTURE:

- The social factors of the Arabic and English cultures have their influence on the Arabic and English. They have a clear impact on their perception of social experiences that include every aspect of life: customs, morals, feelings, emotions, beliefs, interpersonal relationships and friendship, family life, marriage, and economics, etc.
- To explain this crucial fact of translating precisely, consider the following Arabic examples:

Arabic Idiom	English literal Meaning	English Equivalent Meaning
ضع أيدك بماء بارد	Put your hand in cold water	Do not worry/ Be certain

Arabic Idiom	English literal Meaning	English Equivalent Meaning
- ظهره مسنود	-His back is supported.	-He is backed up.
- مقطوع من شجرة	-Cut off from a tree.	-He has no relatives.

Arabic Idiom	English literal Meaning	English & Arabic Equivalent Meaning
إذا القاضي راضي!	If the judge is satisfied!	Keep away please. Used to push aside an intruder, or when you don't want to interfere or get involved. يستعمل عندما لا يريد شخص التدخل أو التورط في قضية ما.
مكلل بالغار	Crown of Garland	Symbol of glory. The Garland (plant) crown used in medieval time to celebrate a hero after returning from victorious war. رمز للنصر. وتاج نبات الغار كان يستخدم في العصور الوسطى للاحتفال ببطل عند عودته منتصرا من الحرب.
أفل نجمه	His star faded.	Said when one's fame or reputation fades away. To no longer be popular. يقال عندما تتلاشى شهرة أو سمعة شخص ما.
اشكال والوان	Shapes and colors.	Many kinds. عدة أنواع

RELIGIOUS CULTURE

- Arab world is dominated by Islamic culture and religion, while English-speaking world is dominated by Christian culture and religion. This difference in culture has its effect on the language. Consequently, idioms used in Arabic and English will be affected according to the principles of culture and religion in these two languages.

Arabic Idiom	English literal Meaning	English Equivalent Meaning
رمضان كريم	Ramadan is generous.	Excuse me for not offering something to eat or drink for it is fasting time
اسم الله عليك	God's name be upon you.	God protects you
-البيت الحرام، -البيت العتيق، -بيت الله .	-The forbidden home. -The old house. -God's home	The Ka'ba The Ka'ba The Ka'ba

STRATEGIES FOR TRANSLATING IDIOMS

- **Using a parallel idiom in the TL:** The translator should attempt to come up with a parallel idiom in the TL that conveys roughly the same meaning as that of SL, in addition, consists of equivalent lexical items. For example, “the straw that broke the camel’s back .
القشة التي قصمت ظهر البعير.”
- **Using similar meaning but dissimilar form:** The translator should try to convey the intended meaning while presenting the idiom effect of the original, i.e. to find an idiom in the TL that has the same meaning to that of SL but consists of different lexical items. For example, "Jack of all trades but master of none .“ سبع صنایع والبخت ضایع
- **Paraphrasing the idiom:** This is the most common way of translating idiom, if the previous two strategies fail in which the translator can opt for neutral term in order to convey the implied meaning of the idiom expression without maintaining its idiomatic quality. For example, مثل الاطرش بالزفة can be translated into "having no idea about what is going on".

- **Using notes:** The best way of translation is that allows translator to use notes. EÖekhari (2008: 5) states that "employing 'notes' in the translation, both as a translation strategy and a translation procedure, seems to be essential so that the foreign language readership could benefit from the text as much as the ST readers do".
- **Consulting informant:** There are many idioms in the Holy Quran and the Bible but sometimes those who read or hear these idioms cannot understand the intended meanings. Therefore, it is of great help to have someone (informant) teaches those idioms to translators of this type of translation, whether that is done in person, or Holy Quran & Bible footnote, through a book or another resource tool.

TRANSLATE THE FOLLOWING INTO
ENGLISH

1. سَمِعْتُهُ يَكْذِبُ فَفَارَ دَمِّي.
2. سَلِيمٌ لَا حَوْلَ لَهُ وَلَا قُوَّةَ. اِطْلُبْ مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ.
3. وَاللَّهِ مَا تَدْفَعُ، عَلَيَّ حِسَابِي.
4. هَذِهِ الْبِنْتُ طَوِيلَةٌ لِسَانٍ.
5. مُمْتَازٌ يَا سَلِيمُ، ضَرْبَةٌ مِعْلَمٍ.
6. بِسَبَبِ الْمَشَاكِلِ، طَارَ عَقْلُ سَلِيمٍ.
7. عِنْدِي إِمْتِحَانَاتٌ شِدَّ حِيلِكَ.
8. بَعْدَ الزَّوْاجِ، انْقَلَبَ سَعِيدٌ رَأْسٌ عَلَى عَقَبٍ.
9. سَالِي وَسَالِمٌ سَمْنٌ عَلَى عَسَلٍ.
10. أَنْتَ خَفِيفٌ دَمٌ زِيَادَةٌ.
11. خَالِدٌ ثَقِيلٌ دَمٌ.
12. لَنْ تَسْتَمِرَّ الْحَرْبُ إِلَيَّ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ.

1. اِعْمَلْ يَا صَاحِبَ! كَيْ تَحْصُلَ عَلَيَّ لُقْمَةَ الْعَيْشِ.
2. هَذَا التَّلْفُونُ آخِرُ صَيْحَةٍ.
3. أَنَا أَبْحَثُ عَنْ بِنْتِ الْحَلَالِ هَذِهِ الْأَيَّامِ.
4. أُرِيدُ مُسَاعَدَتَكَ، لَكِنْ مَا بِالْيَدِ حِيلَةٌ.
5. جُونُ صَاحِبِ وَجْهَيْنِ، لَا تُصَدِّقْهُ.
6. رِيَالٌ مَدْرِيْدٌ فَازَ بِشِقِّ الْأَنْفُسِ.
7. ضَاقَ صَدْرٌ مِنْ ضَاقَتْ يَدَاہِ.
8. لَا يَفْلُ الْحَدِيدُ إِلَّا الْحَدِيدَ.
9. الْبَعِيدُ عَنِ الْعَيْنِ بَعِيدٌ عَنِ الْقَلْبِ.
10. مَنْ شَبَّ عَلَى شَيْءٍ شَابَ عَلَيْهِ.
11. مَا حَكَّ جِلْدَكَ مِثْلَ ظَفْرِكَ.
12. فَرَّقَ تَسَدٌ.
13. الْأَقْرَبُونَ أَوْلَى بِالْمَعْرُوفِ.