

ITT and the Strategies of Interpreting Fixed Expressions in Arabic–English Simultaneous Interpreting

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Abstract: *This paper aims to shed light on the strategies used by interpreters to render fixed expressions in Arabic–English simultaneous interpreting depending on the Interpretive Theory of Translation (ITT). Two main parameters, which are comprehensibility and transferability, are derived from the ITT to investigate the participants' strategies to render fixed expressions in their interpretations. A qualitative data represented in a practical experiment of 12 interpreters (holding Diploma in English–Arabic Interpreting & Translation) is analyzed to boost the investigation of this paper.*

The results show that in practice, interpreters tend to use the full omission strategy, especially with culture-specific fixed expressions, or the equivalence strategy for common fixed expressions like titles, honorifics and some opening and closing remarks, and mainly paraphrasing strategy was used while rendering fixed expressions which have a religious sense.

Key words: *Fixed Expressions, Simulations Interpreting, Strategies, Interpretive Theory of Translation.*

I. A Bird's Eye View on Interpreting

Interpreting is an ancient activity which refers back to the Pyramids' Period when interpreters' role was to mediate between the Nubians and Egyptians (Pöchhacker and Shlesinger, 2002). Thus, it is not a new born activity. The main role of interpreting is to enhance communication. Interpreting is described as “interlingual, intercultural oral or signed mediation, enabling communication between individuals or groups who do not share, or do not choose to use, the same language(s)” (Pöchhacker and Shlesinger, 2002, p. 3). Years later, interpreting has started to develop aiming to assist many different forms of modern life, such as courts, medical sectors, businesses, and conferences. Therefore, the need to investigate interpreting theoretically and practically has also expanded.

One of the main types of interpreting is the Simultaneous Interpreting (SI), which is identified by Seleskovitch (1978, p. 125) as:

“In simultaneous interpretation, the interpreter is isolated in a booth. He speaks at the same time as the speaker and therefore has no need to memorize or jot down what is said. Moreover, the processes of analysis-comprehension and of reconstruction-expression are telescoped. The interpreter works on the message bit by bit, giving the portion he has understood while analyzing and assimilating the next idea”.

Despite the fact that many studies have been concerned with many aspects of simultaneous interpreting, no attention has yet been paid to the ways and strategies of rendering fixed expressions orally.

The Arabic language in general, and the speeches of the Arab leaders in particular, tend to use fixed expressions, which are often full of emotive language and fixed expressions (Barkho, 1987, cited in Al-Hamad and Al-Shunnag, 2011), this paper focuses on the feasible ways in which fixed expressions can be rendered in simultaneous interpreting.

II. Fixed Expressions

Syntactically, Fillmore, Kay, and O'Connor (1988, p. 501) define fixed expressions as:

“...phenomena larger than words, which are like words in that they have to be learned separately as individual facts about pieces of the language, but which also have grammatical structure and interact in important ways with the rest of the language”.

According to Dufter, Flescher, and Seiler (2009, p. 241) a fixed expression is a “fixed pattern consisting of a participle and at least one preverbal word”.

When Ghazala comes across the translation of fixed phrases, he describes them as “phrase which always has one single grammatical and lexical form and word order that cannot be changed, interrupted or reversed” (Ghazala, 2008, p. 128). Baker explains that “fixed expressions behave very much like idioms. Unlike idioms however, fixed expressions and proverbs have fairly transparent meanings.” (Baker, 2011, p. 67). For example, ‘best wishes’, ‘God forbid’, السادة الحضور (Back translation: ladies and gentlemen) and أصحاب المعالي

والسعادة (Back translation: Excellencies) are all fixed expressions whose meaning can be deduced from the meaning of the words which comprise them. As with the idiom, a fixed expression constitutes an “essentially non-creative, stereotyped formulaic expression” (Carter, 1998, p. 66), and it is located at the opposite end of the fixedness scale from collocations. Some fixed expressions widely used in conferences, forums and international gathering include ‘it is an honor to join this gathering’, ‘اسمحوا لي أن أتوجه بعميق الشكر والتقدير للمشاركة في هذا الجمع المميز’, ‘Mr. President’, ‘سيد الرئيس’, ‘Thank you’, ‘ولكم جزيل الشكر’ and ‘is it a pleasure to be part of a conference that focuses on ...’.

Baker (2011, p. 68) sheds light on the significance role of fixed expressions in performing a stabilising function in communication: “A fixed expression evokes in the mind of the reader or hearer a range of associations connected with the typical contexts in which the expression is used”. Some fixed expressions used in everyday life illustrate this point, ‘for the sake of’, ‘to keep in mind’, ‘sorry to bother you’, ‘it is up to you’ and ‘it goes without saying’.

III. Functions of Fixed Expressions in Interpreting

In his investigation of narrative retelling in English as a second language (ESL), Wood identifies the essential function of fixed expressions in the development of speech fluency, noting that it facilitates “fluency in speech by making pauses shorter and less frequent, and allowing longer runs of speech between pauses” (Wood, 2006, p. 13). Opening phrases and welcoming expressions exemplify this point. Arab leaders, for example, used to start their speech with the Islamic greeting *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ* (In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate) and *السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته* (may peace be upon you). The wide use of these fixed expressions improves interpreter’s fluency as waste of time will be made to minimum when pausing to think about the sense or the intended meaning of these fixed expressions. Likewise, there are some repetitive fixed expressions that can help interpreters sound more fluent and natural, such as “شكراً على ترحيبكم الحار” which is “thanks for your warm welcome”, ‘أصحاب الجلالة والسيادة والسمو’, which is Your Majesties, Excellencies, Highnesses. In addition, Kuiper (2004) argues that fixed expression is essential not only in written discourse, but also in spoken discourse. He also notices that people who work under stress and require producing fluent speech under time pressure, such as auctioneers and sport announcers tend to use language that has more fixed expressions in nature. For instance, usually a commentator will start their comments with *سيداتي وسادتي أسعد الله أوقاتكم، معلقتكم لهذا اليوم هو...* (Ladies and gentlemen, good morning/evening, your commentator today is ...). Similarly, when airplane passengers are preparing for flight, they are usually welcomed by the captain or the hostess of the plane with ‘Good morning/afternoon/evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to flight (number of the flight) to (destination). This is your captain speaking....’.

Due to the fact that fluency is one of the main requirements for the professional interpreter (Bühler, 1986; Mead, 2002; Pöchhacker, 2004) and is widely demanded by interpreting agencies. Wilkins and Paton (2009) mention the importance of knowing fixed expressions in boosting the fluency of interpreters. In practice, the retrieval of ready-made chunks like fixed expressions is easy. Therefore, the interpreter’s lexical reservoir should be filled with ready-made chunks, such as collocations, idioms, and fixed expressions.

IV. Strategies of Rendering Fixed Expressions in Translation

Each language has its own characteristics that make it unique. Unlike English, Arabic tends to use many formulaic expressions and honorific terms such as fixed expressions in its folds (Al Daqs, 2012). Given that fixed expressions’ characteristics are more or less similar to those of idioms, the strategies suggested by Baker (2011) for rendering this type of formulaic language are similar to those for idioms in terms of looking at fixed expressions as one single lexical item and rendering the meaning of the expression as a whole. Therefore, the suggested strategies by Baker (2011) to render idioms in translation are to be mentioned:

- A. Finding an idiom with a similar meaning and form in the target language whenever possible. For example, ‘well done’ has an idiom with the same form and meaning in Arabic which is *أحسنتم صنعا*. If someone says ‘over my dead body’, which means he/she will do anything to prevent something from happening, then the Arabic version of this idiomatic expression will be something like *على جثتي*. By the same token, ‘between you and me’ is an idiom which is used to tell someone that what you are about to say should be kept secret; there is an Arabic idiom that is identical in form and meaning *بيني وبينك*. However, this strategy is particularly difficult to apply if the two languages are genetically unrelated, English and Arabic are a case in point. Indeed, Abu-Ssaydeh argues that “the number of English and Arabic idioms that demonstrate full correspondence is very limited” (Abu-Ssaydeh, 2004, p. 118). Moreover, Al Daqs (2012, p. 31) claims that it is sometimes “impossible and time-consuming to find the exact idioms in target language”. The 39th President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, provides a good example of this problem. Carter once replied idiomatically to a question by saying, ‘I don’t want to eat my porridge cold’. The interpreter was puzzled on how to interpret this idiom. Consequently, Carter soon reworded what he had idiomatically said; this time in simple English. Due

to this fact, this strategy sounds unfeasible for interpreters, especially when they are working under the pressure of assignment.

- B. The second strategy suggested by Baker (2011) is to use an idiom of similar meaning but with a dissimilar form. This strategy seems more practical for interpreters because under the stress of assignment, interpreters don't have time to find an identically correspondent idiom, as all of their energy is focussed on conveying the message and the sense of source speech (SS) as effectively as possible. This may explain why Sheikh Hamed Bin Khalifa Emir of Qatar's words in his speech at Doha Forum XII *أدأنا صاغية* 'ولو وجدت تلك الدعوات أدأنا صاغية', as a statement to describe the appeals for reforms which must precede the Arab Spring, are rendered by the interpreter as 'had such appeals found sympathetic ears' rather than 'had such appeals lent sympathetic ears'. Another example is the idiom 'he has a silver spoon in his mouth' *يولد وفي فمه ملعقة من ذهب*. The Arabic equivalent has a similar meaning and a different form.
- C. Another strategy suggested by Baker (2011) is borrowing the source language idiom. She adds "just as the use of loan words is a common strategy in dealing with culture-specific items, it is not unusual for idioms to be borrowed in their original form in some contexts" (Baker, 2011, p. 79). The example which is drawn by Baker (2011) 'Out of this World' illustrates this strategy. This idiom which found in leaflets of Manchester's Museum of Science and Industry has two meanings, it either means "wonderful" or "from another galaxy". This idiomatic expression was borrowed from the source language by the five translated versions of the leaflet (French, Italian, Spanish, German and Japanese) (ibid). This strategy is applicable in translation. However, Wallmach (2004, p.188) mentions that the main disadvantage of using a loan strategy in an interpreting assignment is that "it affects target language production negatively". The researcher agrees with Wallmach's point of view especially in dealing with Arabic and English, which are two unrelated languages. Therefore, this strategy may not be applicable in Arabic/English simultaneous assignments since interpreters in general try not to borrow foreign words, in order to ensure that their interpretations sound natural and understood by their audiences.
- D. The fourth method suggested by Baker (2011, p. 77) is to omit idioms. This strategy is applicable when an idiom "has no close match in the target language, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased for stylistic reason" (Baker, 2011, p. 77). For example, it is usually difficult to find equivalent English idioms for *يلى نداء ربه* (back translation: Meet the call of the Lord), *أدخل شعبان في رمضان* (Back translation: confused Shaaban with Ramadan), *على العين والرأس* and *بالحلال والحرام* (back translation: On the eye and the head). By the same token, Dickins et al. (2002) agree with the strategy of omission if the information is not important, or when Arabic does not afford a particularly elegant or stylistically normal way in expressing the concept of omission. For example, at the 24th Arab Summit, when King Abdullah II of Jordan says:

كما أتوجه بالشكر أيضاً الى فخامة الأخ الرئيس، جلال الطالباني، عافاه الله، والعراق الشقيق

(Back translation: I would also like to thank His Excellency President Jalal Talabani, God healed him, and brotherly Iraq)

The interpreter used the omission strategy to render this culture-specific underlined formulaic expression, especially this does not carry an important information, but it is used simply to wish someone a speedy recovery. Again, when former President of Egypt Mursi says before the 67th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations:

إن رؤية مصر الجديدة التي نسعى الى تحقيقها بإذن الله لوطننا مصر

(Back translation: The new vision of Egypt, which we seek to achieve, God willing, for our homeland Egypt)

تحول الصراع الى حرب أهلية لا قدر الله

(Back translation: Conflict turned into civil war God forbid).

سوريا الجديدة بعد مصر الجديدة إن شاء الله

(Back translation: Syria after the new Egypt, God willing)

الله يسمع ويرى

(Back translation: God hears and sees)

The interpreter omitted all of these underlined culture-specific idioms.

In some cases, the interpreter may face a fixed expression for which there is no equivalent in the target speech (TS), such as *لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله* (back translation: There is no power but from God), a fixed expression which has purely Islamic denotative and connotative meaning in the Holy Quran. This fixed expression is used to comment on something bad that happened or said by someone who was very angry. If the interpreter does not

find an equivalent in the TS, he/she can omit it. In this case, this could be done easily, since this fixed expression does not usually constitute an important part of a main conversation.

- E. Another strategy mentioned by Baker (2011) is paraphrasing, which can be adapted when there are no appropriate idioms on the spot. Conversely, Ghazala (2008) mentions that conveying the meaning without downplaying any elements, appropriate formulaic expressions can be used. Therefore, suitable wording, similes, proverbs, collocations are chosen to paraphrase the meaning couched in idioms. Gibbsetal(1989) argue that the participants were faster at paraphrasing idioms than using other strategies. There are several clear examples of this strategy. In a speech at Doha forum XII, Sheikh Hamed Bin Khalifa, ex- Emir of Qatar says:

إن الشعوب العربية بدأت تنفض عن نفسها غبار التراخي الطويل وأخذت تسعى من جديد للمساهمة في ركب الحضارة الإنسانية
The interpreter paraphrased the underlined idioms, aiming to convey the message of the SS by saying, “the Arab peoples are shaking off the long period of indolence and claiming back a role in the furtherance of human civilization”.

Moreover, as idioms are frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and that often carry meanings as Baker (2011) argues, the literal interpretation of idioms usually does not work. Instead, conveying the sense is more successful, and this applies also on translating fixed expressions. For example, it can be seen that the English idiom ‘to test the waters’ is rendered as يستطلع آراء الناس in Arabic. So, if the English fixed expression is rendered literally, the result of interpretation would be awkward. This is in support of Darwish’s view that “literal translation is an old legacy in Arabic translation” (Darwish, 2010, p. 230). By the same token ‘jump the gun’ is يستبق الأمور, ‘ruffle one’s feathers’ is يثير حفيظه. Similarly, ‘a pat on the back’ will have a completely different meaning if it is rendered literally, whereas these idioms and fixed expressions, when taken as a chunk, indicated praising and encouraging. Again, ‘second-hand’ never carries its real meaning literally; it refers to something that has already been used. Indeed, Aldahesh (2013, p. 28) describes that the literal translation of Arabic and English idioms is an “absolute distortion”.

Baker states that fixed expressions are unlike idioms in that the former have transparent meanings (ibid). This is true for some fixed expressions like السيدات والسادة ‘ladies and gentlemen’, الحضور الكرام ‘distinguished audience’, ‘in conclusion’ وفي الختام and ‘to tell you the truth’ لأخبركم بحقيقة الأمر. All of these fixed expressions are easily rendered into the TS. However, “in spite of its transparency, the meaning of a fixed expression or proverb is somewhat more than the sum meanings of its words; the expression has to be taken as one unit to establish meaning” (Baker, 2011, p. 67).

At the Doha Forum XI, ex Amir of Qatar says:

أرحب بكم في دولة قطر متمنياً لكم إقامة طيبة

The interpretation was “welcome to the state of Qatar, I hope you have a pleasant stay”. Another example is found in:

أود بمناسبة انعقاد الدورة الثانية عشر لمنندى الدوحة

This underlined fixed expression was interpreted into “I would like on the occasion of the twelfth edition of the Doha Forum”. In both cases, the interpreter used the equivalent fixed expression in the TS, treating it as one single lexical item and rendering the meaning of the fixed expression as a whole. Similarly, at the International Court of Justice, king Abdullah II of Jordan says:

“Thank you for your kind welcome”

The interpreter used the Arabic expression when he says الشكر لكم على ترحيبكم الرقيق (Back translation: Thanking you for your delight welcome). Again, such phrases are usually used as opening remarks at conferences, forums or international gathering; therefore, if interpreters know them ahead of time, it may facilitate their job and reduce their level of stress.

Since interpreters’ role is to overcome the aforementioned challenges and to preserve the original meaning of the SS, they will unconsciously find themselves seeking to convey the sense and the intended meaning, rather than the literal meaning of words while rendering fixed expressions.

V. The Interpretive Theory of Translation (ITT)

Generally, the Arabic language and the Arab leaders’ speeches specifically tend to use fixed expressions, which are embodied in emotive and honorific language (Barkho, 1987, cited in Al-Hamad & Al-Shunnag, 2011). Thus, the interpreters’ main concern is to render the intended meaning rather than focusing on the speaker’s linguistic element, and the former is the crux of the ITT. Based on this justification, the Interpretive Theory of Translation (ITT) is adopted as a theoretical framework of this paper. Moreover, the ITT is still valid and applicable in many translation and interpreting studies as a theoretical framework. Hanqing (2011), Qiaoying (2010), Henriksen (2007) and al-Zahran (2007) are cases in point.

The ITT has also been called the sense theory. It has also been labeled as an interpretive approach (Salama-Carr, 2011), the interpretive model (Lederer, 2003) and an interpretive theory (Pöchhacker, 2004).

Nowadays, the approach is more commonly known as the interpretive theory of translation (ITT). Since this study deals with translation and interpreting as discussed in the previous chapter, and because the ITT main focus is on simultaneous interpreting, this title of ITT is deemed most appropriate for this study.

The ITT was developed by Danica Seleskovitch in the late 1960s in relation to consecutive interpreting. In 1981, the theory was elaborated upon for simultaneous interpreting by Marianne Lederer. A distinction was drawn between linguistic meaning and non-verbal sense. In other words, the distinction between implicitness (what a speaker intended to say) and explicitness “what is actually written or spoken” is a pivotal point of the interpretive approach, as stated by Salama-Carr (2011, p. 145). Furthermore, the *raison d'être* of the ITT is based on the fact that there are various ways to express similar content in different languages. Therefore, the work of interpreting is creative and communicative, as the interpreter tries to focus on the communicative use of language in a particular situation, putting aside the semantic and syntactic rules of the source language (Pöchhacker, 1992).

According to Seleskovitch & Lederer 1995, the ITT is passing through three fundamental phases, namely, understanding sense, deverbalization and reformulation.

5.1 Understanding the sense: Cognitive Complements & Language Meaning

Seleskovitch (1977: 335) defines sense as:

“A cognitive construction made by the addressee on the basis of the sounds he received from the addresser’s mouth: he adds to them such cognitive remembrance as fits the sounds, and such additional knowledge, whether from his long or medium term memory that fits the whole of a clause or sentence”.

To make sense of a text, according to Seleskovitch and Lederer (1995), an interpreter must merge the linguistic meaning with his/her prior knowledge (extra-linguistic meaning). Consequently, the lack of relevant extra-linguistic knowledge may cause ambiguity regarding the intended meaning of the speaker (Seleskovitch, 1977), which is also known as implicit meaning.

Seleskovitch (1988, p. 87) defines cognitive complements as “the knowledge of things that changes language meanings into speaker’s meaning or sense” (cited in al-Zahran, 2007). Thus, cognitive complements include verbal, situational, cognitive contexts and world knowledge. Lederer (2003) perceives verbal context as appropriate meaning, while situational context refers to the situation, the participants and their roles. Situational context assists an interpreter in interpreting polysemic words. A clear example to clarify this point is the term ‘Mr. President’. The interpreter’s awareness of the status of the participant will remove any ambiguity as to whether ‘Mr. President’ is the president of a session or president of a state. Furthermore, Delisle (1988) mentions that an interpreter is obliged to convey the sense, and not the corresponding words, according to the cognitive complements and verbal context.

The cognitive context entails getting a full sense of what has been said previously and using it when searching for the appropriate wording. Additionally, the acquired knowledge of an interpreter is encyclopedic knowledge, which plays an essential role in understanding speech. Lederer (1990, p. 53) explains that:

“Background knowledge is a blanket expression covering of “cognitive complements” that help us understand speech. These include knowledge of the world, of time, place, of the circumstances out of which a speech arises, memory of things said previously, knowing who the speaker is and who the listener are.”

She adds “the broader the cognitive complements, the less ambiguity and polysemy there is in language, and the more thoroughly speech is understood” (ibid). For example, an interpreter who is interpreting in a conference should know that there are different titles for leader of states. Some countries have presidents like Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Sudan, while other countries have kings like Saudi Arabia and Jordan, Qatar has Amir, while the UAE has Sheikh. Addressing the leader of a state with the incorrect title is unacceptable, and this would reflect negatively on the interpreter’s performance and proficiency. Prior awareness of these differences may help interpreters to be fluent and accurate.

According to Seleskovitch and Lederer (1995), there is an interaction between cognitive complements and units of meaning, which are the fragments of sense that constitute the general sense. They (1995: 215) define units of meaning or segments of sense as “the synthesis of a number of words present in short term memory associating with previous cognitive experiences or recollections” (cited in al-Zahran 2007). For example, Lederer (2003) notices that if the recipient is familiar with the topic and the speaker’s position, the recipient does not have to wait for the utterance’s end to grasp it, while the opposite is true with an addressee unfamiliar with the topic and speaker. The reason of this discrepancy has to do with the prior knowledge of the addressee.

5.2 Deverbalisation

Seleskovitch (1977) defines deverbalisation as the process through which words of the source language lose their linguistic shape, generally within a few seconds, as the mind of the interpreter works to convey their non-verbal sense into his/her mother language. Thus, deverbalisation has to do with sense, and not with discrete lexis. Moreover, deverbalisation is “indispensable for an accurate and intelligible TL rendition of the SL message in interpreting, where at least two languages are involved” (Seleskovitch and Lederer, 1995, p. 25). Lederer (2003, p. 13) argues that “deverbalization may well be less obvious in translation than in interpreting but it is just as present”.

Deverbalisation is a natural and cognitive process that also occurs in monolingual communication. It is an intermediate phase between grasping the original sense and formulating that sense in the target language (Choi, 2003). This means that we remember the content of what has been said, not the exact words used to express that content.

Seleskovitch (1975) advises interpreters to write down proper names, numbers and scientific terms, as these are difficult to memorise during the assignment; in addition, writing them down will leave space in their memories.

5.3 Reformulation

Reformulation, re-deverbalisation and expression are terms used to refer to the third phase of the interpreting process, which involves searching for an idiomatic expression to render the general sense. Despite the interpreter’s conscious efforts while searching for the sense, the options for its expression are unconscious, as they depend on the interpreter’s syntactic competence and encyclopedic knowledge of the target language (Seleskovitch, 1977). Therefore, if the interpreter wants to be understood by listeners and achieve meaningful interpretation, he/she cannot merely focus on the syntax and semantics of the SS. Instead, the interpreter has to convey the semantic and syntactic sense in an acceptable form in the TS.

5.4 Advantage & Limitations of ITT

Salama-Carr (2011) and Pöchhacker (1992; 2004) shed light on the merits and advantages of the ITT. It represents the first attempt to develop the study of interpreting in terms of scientific investigation and cognitive research. The ITT has also played an essential role in setting up a theoretical framework for the training program at *École Supérieure d’Interprètes et de Traducteurs (ESIT)*, addressing issues in practice and providing prescriptive answers. Furthermore, due to the existence of the deverbalisation process, the ITT is inclined to reject word-for-word translation (Setton, 2003). Gile, one of the most vocal critics of Seleskovitch’s approach, acknowledged her contribution (Mouzourakis, 1996). By the same token, Moser-Mercer (1994) emphasises the coherence of the ITT and its applicability to training and teaching. Crucially, the prominence and potential of the ITT was revealed when Delisle (1988) succeeded in applying this theory to translation. Choi (2003) summarises the general applicability of the ITT, stating that it applies to any language combination: it has showed its validity for economic, political, technical and commercial discourse and it provides guidelines for addressing cultural features.

On the other hand, the ITT was criticized by Gile (1988) because of the absence of any systematic analysis of empirical data. Seleskovitch and Lederer (1995) succeed in responding to the aforementioned criticism by explaining this process takes place through acts of communication found in speeches, recordings and transcriptions. However, Gile (2009) argues that the ITT deals with conference-interpreting issues exclusively, and therefore has no roots or relevant models in translation. In addition, Kondo (2006, p. 4) argues that the ITT serves to bring out “lexicographical meaning and semantic meaning”. Accordingly, he encourages recognising multiple layers of meaning. Similarly, Baxter (2013) restated Sawyer’s (2004, cited in Baxter, 2013) description of two contradictory approaches to research, one “empirical,” the other “holistic”; the latter refers to the ITT.

All in all, despite some criticisms of the ITT, it has demonstrated applicability and has made remarkable contributions in the interpreting and translation disciplines.

VI. Methodology

The methodologies used in this study is qualitative. Williams and Chesterman (2002, P. 64) define qualitative methodology as “describing the quality of something in some enlightening way”. Qualitative study has various advantages: it enables close investigation and examination of cases; it avoids any misunderstandings between participants; and it enriches the research study. However, qualitative methods do not allow general conclusions to be drawn. On the other hand, in quantitative methodology participants may misunderstand questions, which can lead to erroneous results.

In this paper, we draw on the respective benefits of the aforementioned method, while simultaneously attempting to avoid its drawbacks. As a part of this, we are making use of past studies (e.g., al-Zahran, 2007;

Hanqing, 2011; Henriksen, 2007; Qiaoying, 2010) that adopted qualitative method within the same theoretical framework of the ITT. In other words, from the perspective of this research, qualitative methodology, for interpreting the experiment, helps us to examine and analyse the feasible strategies for interpreters to render fixed expressions.

VII. Collecting Data

The feasible way of collecting data was conducting an experiment on a group of 12 interpreters who have Diploma in English-Arabic Interpreting & Translation. Some variables were taken into account before conducting the experiment: a typical environment for the interpreters was created, any technical inconveniences were troubleshooted, and the natural speed of the speaker's speech was taken into consideration. Moreover, participants were previously informed about the text type, the mode of interpreting, and the direction of the language to be used in the experiment.

Concerning the strange accent, Cheung (2013, p. 43) illustrates that the delivered speech with a non-native accent may lead the participants to understanding that speech, and they will consequently present a "negative perception of SI quality". Therefore, a native Arabic speaker delivered the speech used in the experiment. The speech was a political one presented by King Abdullah II of Jordan at the 23rd Arab Summit in Baghdad on March 29, 2012. This speech was selected as it contains good examples of fixed expressions; in addition, it has not yet been investigated in other studies. As the original speech is quite long (1,750 words), and to accomplish the aim of this paper, the original speech was precised. Accordingly, the delivered speech contained 750 words. The speed of interpreting was 65-70 words per minute at the experiment. It was exactly the same pace of the original speech. The *Brähler interpretation system* was used to record the participants' interpretations to be systematically analysed and transcribed later.

VIII. Data Analysis

In terms of the theoretical framework, all recorded interpretations of the participants were analysed. Two main parameters, which are comprehensibility and transferability, were derived from the ITT to test the participants' strategies in rendering fixed expressions in their interpretations. Comprehensibility was used to assess the participant's competence in understanding the sense of the fixed expression, while transferability implies the linguistic and non-linguistic techniques used by the participant to interpret the fixed expression and convey the sense to the audience.

After transcribing the recordings of 12 participants, a microscopic analysis was achieved to reach the purpose of the paper. Random fixed expressions were selected as examples to avoid any bias.

8.1 Finding Equivalents

One of the strategies utilized by the interpreters was finding an equivalent when they encountered fixed expressions. According to Baker (2011, p. 9), an equivalence is a "word in the target language which expresses the same meaning as the source language word". This strategy coincides with Baker's first suggested strategy: Here are some examples of the SS fixed expressions and their equivalents in the TS.

With regard to rendering fixed expressions, on the one hand, all participants used the identical equivalent in the TS to interpret fixed expressions like:

أصحاب الفخامة و السمو

(Back translation: Excellencies and Highnesses)

This was rendered by all participants as 'your excellencies and highnesses' or 'your majesties, your highnesses'. By the same token, when King Abdullah II concludes his speech he says:

وختاماً، أكرر الشكر مرة ثانية

(Back translation: Finally, I repeat my thanks again)

The interpretations of this were often the equivalent in the TS: 'at the end, I repeat my gratitude to...', 'finally, I repeat my thanks to...', 'in conclusion, I would like again to thank ...', and 'to conclude, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to ...'

On the other hand, some fixed expressions were interpreted by adopting different strategies. One good example is found in:

السلام عليكم و رحمه الله و بركاته و بعد

(Back translation: Peace be upon you and God's mercy and blessings be upon you and after)

8 out of 12 participants tried to transfer this Islamic greeting expression into English saying: 'Assalamu Alaykum Wa Rahmatullaahi wabarakato' the interpreter here transliterates the SS, while one participant paraphrased it as 'Allah blessings be upon you', and 3 participants interpreted this formulaic expressions as 'Peace be upon you' using the equivalence strategy. The latter interpretation sounds more idiomatic in English, whereas 'Assalamu Alaykum' and 'Allah blessings be upon you' sound awkward in English. The latter in particular did not cope exactly with the source expression as 'Allah blessings be upon you'

means صلوات الله عليك. This is a clear example of the failure of transferability which requires reformulation to take place.

Given these results, the strategy of finding equivalents is widely used in rendering the most familiar and common fixed expressions, like greeting and concluding phrases. This strategy is also used mainly in rendering collocations in Arabic/English simultaneous interpreting (Mohammed, 2015). Adopting this strategy may often ensure success in terms of comprehensibility and transferability. Nevertheless, this is not the only way to ensure that the aforementioned parameters are taken into account. Interpreters may utilise other strategies and still have success with these parameters as we will see in the following sections.

8.2 Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is another strategy adopted by the participants to render fixed expressions. Here are some random examples extracted from the delivered text to clarify this strategy.

One of the most frequent ways to end a speech in Arabic is to use blessing and prayer expressions. This is part of the Arab culture. For example, when King Abdullah II concludes his speech, he says:

أسأل المولى عز وجل أن يوفقنا جميعاً لما فيه الخير لأمتنا وشعبنا

(Back translation: I ask God Almighty to guide us all for the good of our nation and our people)

This formulaic expression was paraphrased as ‘I pray to Allah to make what is good for our people and nation’, ‘I ask Allah the God to help us to bring all the good for our nation and our people’, ‘I ask the Lord to bless us all to do what is best for us and our nation’ and ‘I ask Allah the almighty that will give us luck and to help us in serving our people and nation’. As can be seen, this formulaic expression has no identical equivalent in English, so all participants tried to use a paraphrasing strategy to convey the sense which is purely religious and related to the Arab culture and they succeeded in their mission. In addition, the participants’ interpretations here are clear examples of what the ITT calls deverbalisation.

8.3 Full Omission

By virtue of the analytical study of the fixed expressions, and in view of the examples identified, it may be useful to distinguish full omission. The following examples show how the participants adopted these strategies to overcome some challenges.

An example of the full omission strategy was found with the fixed expression:

الصلاة والسلام على سيدنا محمد النبي العربي الأمين

(Back translation: Prayer and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad Arab and honest prophet)

This formulaic fixed expression was totally omitted by 7 participants, and was interpreted as ‘peace be upon our Prophet Mohammed’ by 5 participants.

Some telling examples from the research speech will illustrate this technique. In the case of,

أيه مواجهه بين إيران من جهة، و إسرائيل و الغرب من جهة أخرى – لا قدر الله – ستكون نتائجها كارثية على المنطقة وعلى العالم بأسره.

(Back translation: Any facing between Iran on the one hand, and Israel and the West on the other hand – God forbid – the results will be disastrous for the region and the entire world)

The underlined expressions are examples of formulaic language. To retain the sense of the whole phrase, the participants adopted a combination of strategies. One participant, for example, stated this as ‘any confrontation with Iran on one hand and Israel and the West on the other hand will have catastrophic consequences on the whole region and the whole world’. Here, the participant used the equivalent to render the fixed expression من جهة/من جهة أخرى, while the fixed expression لا قدر الله was fully omitted. On the other hand, different strategies were adopted by another student, who said ‘any conflict between Iran and Israel and the West; God forbid, will have disastrous consequences on the region and the whole world’. In this interpretation, the participant fully omitted the fixed expressions من جهة/من جهة أخرى, whereas لا قدر الله was interpreted as its equivalent in English ‘God forbid’. Similarly, another participant used full omission strategy rather heavily to avoid the problem of instant rendering of some formulaic expressions, saying ‘any confrontation between Israel and Iran and the West would have bad consequences on the region and on the whole world’. Here, the participant omitted the fixed expressions نتائجها كارثية and لا قدر الله.

By the same token, the phrase معالي الأمين العام لجامعة الدول العربية

(Back translation: His Excellency the Secretary General of the Arab League)

This formulaic expression was interpreted by all 12 participants into its standard equivalent in English: ‘The Secretary General of the Arab League’. Looking into the TS, it is clear that the word معالي was fully omitted by all participants, as this honorific term is culture-specific, used particularly for addressing a senior official; on the other hand, the title of ‘Secretary General’ was interpreted as its standard equivalent in English. Consequently, the combination of strategies used in the above example assured that both comprehensibility and transferability were achieved.

IX. Discussion & Conclusion

The results of the qualitative study, which was done based on the notion of keeping the sense of formulaic language, are summarized below:

Equivalence strategy might be used to render fixed expressions if interpreters know the formulaic expression, such as titles and some opening and closing remarks.

The strategy of full omission is often used when interpreters struggle to find a quick solution to address a difficult formulaic expression. In addition, full omission strategy is also used to get rid of formulaic language that has specific culture references. This strategy contradicts with the strategy of rendering collocations in Arabic/English simultaneous interpreting when the results show that partial omission strategy is used (Mohammed, 2015). Finally, paraphrasing strategy is utilised when fixed expressions hold religious sense.

Although the use of suggested strategies may vary according to the interpreter's knowledge and the context, the research showed that there is a direct link between the use of formulaic language and the competence of interpreters. The findings can help to draw another conclusion that if an interpreter knows the formulaic language before the assignment, he/she will not busy himself/herself to find the equivalent in the TL. On the contrary, the interpreter will tend to use ready-made chunks, which he/she memorized and be able to mobilise his/her knowledge to combine with speech requests an interpretive analysis to make sense.

To sum up, adequate interpreting of formulaic language requires not only language skills but also knowing the strategies of how to deal with it in order to go beyond words and see what fixed expressions mean to achieve or supposed to convey. Consequently, according to interpreters' experience and knowledge, they identify the appropriate strategy, whether to use the equivalent in the target speech (TS), omit the fixed expression fully, paraphrase it, or paraphrase it. In other words, when interpreters know the language skills and the strategy of dealing with this type of formulaic language, they can be able to convey the sense and do not get stuck with words.

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