

Proposed Taxonomy of Strategies for Translating English Proverbs into Arabic

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• Received: 23.05.2022

• Accepted: 01.07.2022

• Published: 17.07.2022

Abstract: The present study aimed to provide a proposed taxonomy of strategies for translating English proverbs into Arabic. The proposed taxonomy classified the strategies for the Arabic translation of English proverbs into five, depending on the form and meaning of proverbs and the availability of equivalent proverbs in Arabic. The strategies are an exact match between English and Arabic proverbs, a match except for key culture-specific and environment-specific words, a complete mismatch in form with intact meaning, equivalent lines of Arabic poetry to some English proverbs and literal translation with or without an explanation. The taxonomy was applied to a sample of English proverbs with their Arabic equivalents per the classification of translation strategies suggested in this study.

Keywords: translation; proverbs, taxonomy, strategy, English, Arabic

1. Introduction

Proverbs are a common cultural element in all languages and cultures (D'Angelo, 2009; Doyle, Mieder & Shapiro, 2012). They can be defined as "special, fixed, unchanged phrases which have special, fixed, unchanged meanings" (Ghazala, 1995, p. 138). They aim to give people life lessons which seem to cover all aspects of life (Mieder, 2011). They have also been a hot translation topic for numerous research studies across the world as they are an essential component of culture and a challenging area for professional translators and language learners (e.g., Bekkai, 2010; Al-Jabbari et al., 2011; Al-Sohbani et al, 2013; Shehab & Daragmeh, 2014; Abo Al Timen, 2015; Dweik & Thalji, 2016; Mohammed, et al, 2018). In addition, proverbs have some common distinctive features such as brevity of expression, use of imagery, rhyming words, parallel phrases and literary or poetic language, to mention few (Seitel, 1984; Mieder, 2004; Zolfaghari & Ameri, 2012; Viljoen, 2015; Stewart, 2015) which are some salient features of poetry as well. The knowledge of proverbs in the working languages of any professional translator is a great advantage as it will enable him/her to both understand proverbs in the source language and provide equivalent proverbs or good translations for them in the target language. The study of proverbs which is known as paroemiology is interdisciplinary as proverbs can be interpreted and analyzed from different perspectives and in different contexts.

The researcher compiled over one thousand English proverbs and translated them into Arabic in a book entitled *One Thousand and One English Proverbs Translated into Arabic* (Jabak, 2020). He

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realized a striking similarity between English proverbs and Arabic proverbs. He looked for patterns and he could see some in a big number of proverbs in both languages. He identified strategies behind the patterns and proposed a taxonomy of the strategies for translating English proverbs into Arabic. The taxonomy comprised five strategies: a perfect match between an English proverb and an Arabic equivalent proverb, a match except for one or more culture-specific and environment-specific words, a mismatch in terms of words and form, an English proverb with a line of Arabic poetry as its equivalent and finally an English proverb with its literal translation into Arabic. Despite linguistic and cultural differences between English and Arabic, it is incredibly interesting that some common proverbs in English have almost identical equivalent proverbs in Arabic. This striking similarity tempts one to assume the similarity of thought and expression in both languages and cultures. Or one can be tempted to also assume that one language must have borrowed such identical proverbs from the other, which is very hard to prove historically. Some other English proverbs differ from their Arabic counterparts in one or two words which are both culture-specific and environment-specific. Still, Arab readers and listeners with knowledge of English can provide the right Arabic proverbs for this group of English proverbs. A third group of English proverbs have Arabic counterparts which are so different in vocabulary and form that one can hardly guess their meaning or think of their Arabic counterparts as equivalents to them. A fourth group of English proverbs have famous Arabic lines of poetry as their equivalents which Arab readers or listeners can understand easily. A fifth group of English proverbs which do not fit under any of the previous categories can be translated into Arabic literally with or without an explanation.

1.1. The objective of the study

Although there have been a considerable number of studies on the translation of proverbs from one language into another language, including English and Arabic in both directions of translation, most of these studies seem to focus on literal and non-literal strategies for translating proverbs. The lack of a well-defined taxonomy of strategies for translating English proverbs into Arabic stimulated the researcher to propose the present taxonomy and share his insights into this important aspect and challenge of translation. Thus, the main objective of the present study is to provide a proposed taxonomy of strategies for translating proverbs from English into Arabic. Towards that effect, the study will provide examples of English proverbs along with their Arabic equivalents exemplifying each proposed strategy.

1.2. The proposed taxonomy

The present study proposed a taxonomy of strategies for the translation of proverbs from English into Arabic. The proposed taxonomy suggests five strategies. The first strategy for translating proverbs from English into Arabic, as per the suggested taxonomy, is to provide an equivalent proverb in Arabic which matches the English proverb in both form and meaning. The second strategy for translating English proverbs into Arabic is to provide slightly different proverbs in Arabic which are different from their English equivalent proverbs in form only, but their meaning is the same as that of their English equivalent proverbs. The third strategy for translating English proverbs into Arabic is by providing an equivalent proverb in Arabic that is greatly different in form but similar or identical in meaning and effect to its English counterpart. The fourth strategy of translating English proverbs into Arabic is by providing a famous line of Arabic poetry which expresses the same meaning expressed in the English proverb since Arabic poetry is rich in lines expressing timeless wisdom. The fifth strategy is to follow literal translation with or without an explanation

where none of the above four strategies can be applied. Figure 1 below illustrates the proposed taxonomy further.

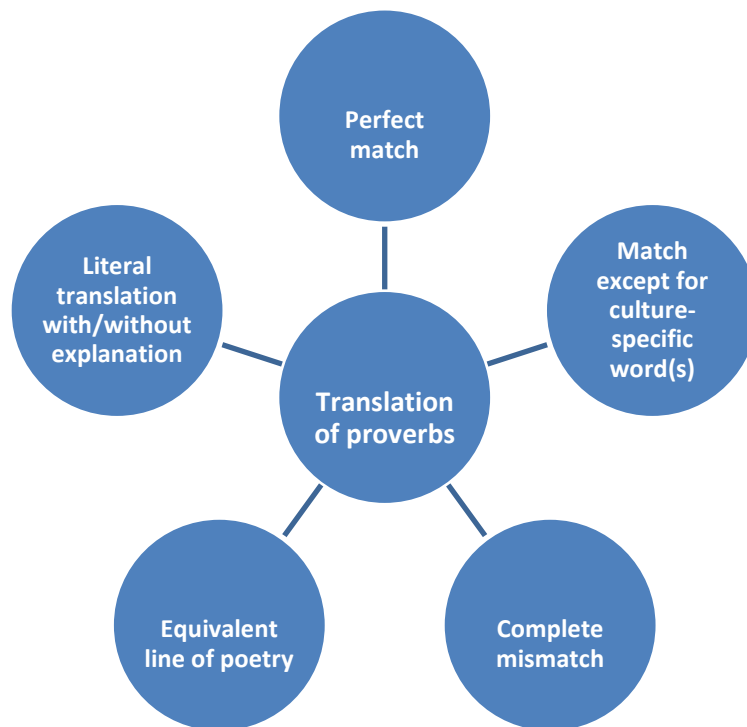


Figure 1. Proposed taxonomy of strategies for translating proverbs

2. Literature Review

Despite the fact that English and Arabic belong to two different families, there have been plenty of research studies on the translation of English proverbs into Arabic and the difficulties encountered by both professional translators and students in rendering English proverbs into Arabic. As there have been numerous studies on the translation of English proverbs into Arabic, the researcher will provide a critical review of a selected number of studies on topics closely related to the topic of the present study in observance of space constraints.

Alsaidi (2021) carried out a comparative study on the analysis of culture-specific proverbs from English into Arabic. He used three strategies for the analysis which he believed had to do with translating culture-specific proverbs. These strategies were Baker's (2011) cultural substitution, Venuti's (2008) domestication and Nida's (1964) functional equivalent. Although the study was meant to be comparative and aimed at applying the above-mentioned strategies for the translation of a select number of culture-specific proverbs from English into Arabic, the researcher could not help evaluating the translations and making personal judgements on whether they were very accurate or not which was not the aim of his research in the first place. As researchers, we have to stick to the main aim of our research and avoid making subjective, personal judgements. The above study tackled only one group of English proverbs, which are culture-specific, whereas the current study aimed to tackle all groups of English proverbs and propose a taxonomy of strategies for their translation into Arabic. With regard to culture-specific proverbs which was the focus of the above study, the present study suggested four strategies which were a match except for key culture-specific and environment-

specific words, a complete mismatch in form with intact meaning, equivalent lines of Arabic poetry to some English proverbs and literal translation with or without an explanation. Although the researcher of the above study rejected literal translation as a strategy for translating some culture-specific proverbs from English into Arabic, the current study proposed literal translation with or without an explanation as a valid translation strategy when other strategies cannot be followed and supported with it with a host of English proverbs along with their Arabic literal translations whose meaning would be clear to Arab readers as the ideas expressed were also clear.

Alfaleh (2020) undertook a study on quality assessment of the translation of English proverbs into Arabic with specific reference to Jabak's (2020) book *One Thousand and One English Proverbs Translated into Arabic*. The researcher thought that the author of the above book used three strategies for the Arabic translation of the English proverbs he compiled in his book. According to the above study, the strategies she could identify were "close equivalence, paraphrase and literal translation" (Alfaleh, 2020, p. 28). Since the author of the book is the researcher of the current study and the translator of the English proverbs into Arabic, he realized that he followed five strategies for translating English proverbs into Arabic. He developed a taxonomy including the five strategies he adopted for the translation of English proverbs, which were an exact match between English and Arabic proverbs, a match except for key culture-specific and environment-specific words, a complete mismatch in form with intact meaning, equivalent lines of Arabic poetry to some English proverbs and literal translation with or without an explanation. To illustrate each strategy, the present study provided ten English proverbs and their Arabic equivalents with a total of fifty English proverbs with their Arabic equivalents. Two of the three strategies identified in the above study were similar to two strategies proposed in the current study. These were "close equivalence and literal translation".

Dweik and Thalji (2016) conducted a study to explore strategies employed by twenty novice Jordanian translators (BA holders and MA holders) for translating some proverbs from English into Arabic. The researchers gave the participants a translation test consisting of only ten English proverbs and asked the participants to translate them into Arabic. The above study revealed that the participants followed four strategies for the Arabic translation of the English proverbs provided in the test: providing cultural equivalents, literal translation, paraphrasing and glossing. A major weakness of the above study is its data, which included only a small number of English proverbs, ten! It was not clear either where the researchers collected the ten English proverbs from and why they included only ten English proverbs! Another major weakness of the above study is the sample of the population which was not homogeneous (in terms of gender and qualifications) and also included novice translators who did not have any real experience in translation. With these two major weaknesses in mind, the validity and reliability of the above study and its findings are highly questionable. Moreover, the above study did not mention the source(s) of the strategies identified as such, while the present study proposed five specific strategies for the translation of English proverbs into Arabic based on a close examination of over one thousand proverbs.

Abo Al Timen (2015) conducted a study entitled '*An Analysis of Translation Methods for English Proverbs: Literal, Literary or Substitution*' in which she analyzed a host of English proverbs along with their Arabic equivalents. Based on her analysis, she suggested three methods for the Arabic translation of English proverbs which were literal, literary and substitution. Although she produced a very good article on a select number of English proverbs and how to translate them into Arabic from her own perspective, she did not mention how culture and the environment could contribute to the wording and meaning of proverbs. She did not examine English proverbs which have almost perfect Arabic proverbs as their equivalents but differ only in one or more cultural words related to

the environment of either English culture or Arabic culture. She did not talk about English proverbs which are completely different from their Arabic counterparts in terms of vocabulary, either. These proverbs are very hard for professional translators and English learners to understand, or provide equivalents to, in their native language. Finally, the researcher of the above study did not touch on the possibility of translating an English proverb into an Arabic line of poetry, although Arabic poetry abounds in proverbial lines which have become famous proverbs themselves. However, such strategies for translating English proverbs into Arabic will be dealt with in detail in the current study.

Ghazala (2014) divided proverbs into three groups each of which could be translated differently. The first group of proverbs had absolute equivalent proverbs in the target language. These proverbs can be translated by providing equivalent proverbs in the target language with similar form and meaning to those in the source language. This group is similar to the first strategy proposed by the current study. The second group of proverbs included source language proverbs with similar but not identical proverbs in the target language. This group is similar to the second strategy proposed by the current study, although the strategy states that proverbs can be translated into other proverbs in the target language, which are quasi-equivalents in form to the source language proverbs but differ in culture-specific and/or environment-specific words. The third and last group suggested by Ghazala included proverbs which could be translated into the target language as proverbs with similar meaning to that expressed in the source language proverbs but in a different form. This group is somewhat similar to the third strategy proposed by the present study. It is worth mentioning that Ghazala approached proverbs and their translation differently from the researcher of the current study. While Ghazala divides proverbs into three distinct groups, the current study proposed a taxonomy of five strategies for the translation of proverbs and supported each strategy with a select number of English proverbs along with their Arabic equivalents as per each proposed strategy to understand the proposed taxonomy better.

Al-Jabbari et al. (2011) carried out a diverse study on cultural gaps they believed existed between English and Arabic. Their study touched briefly on the difficulty of translating English proverbs into Arabic on account of the cultural differences between English and Arabic. Moreover, their study showed that literal translation was not an option for this kind of translation. They concluded their study with the following:

To overcome the obstacle of translating culture bound items into TL, a good background knowledge in terms of historical, traditional and even geographical aspects is required to establish the nearest equivalents to them in the TL Arabic culture (Al-Jabbari et al, 2011, p. 63).

Although the above study discussed the difficulty of translating English proverbs into Arabic, the suggestion that literal translation cannot be an option for translating proverbs is a sweeping statement which is not true for all proverbs. The current study proposed literal translation as an effective strategy for translating some English proverbs into Arabic and provided a table with a sample of such proverbs along with their Arabic literal translations. On a different note, it should be mentioned that the above study was very general and did not suggest any classification of strategies for the Arabic translation of English proverbs. In contrast, the current study proposed a well-defined taxonomy of strategies for the translation of English proverbs into Arabic and supported each strategy with a select number of English proverbs along with their Arabic equivalents as per the strategies proposed.

3. Methods

3.1. Data Collection

The data of the present study was collected from Jabak's (2020) *One Thousand and One English Proverbs Translated into Arabic* which is a compilation of the most common English proverbs and Arabic equivalent proverbs, wise sayings, lines of Arabic poetry and translations provided by the author. The researcher examined most of the proverbs in the book and was able to recognize five different strategies followed in the translation of the English proverbs into Arabic. Based on these strategies, he proposed a taxonomy of strategies for translating English proverbs into Arabic and supported it with ten different English proverbs with their Arabic equivalents for each strategy. So, he presented fifty English proverbs in total along with their Arabic equivalents, representing most of the proverbs in the above-mentioned book. Care was also taken with the fourth strategy, an equivalent line of Arabic poetry, to provide the poet's name in a footnote.

Following the taxonomy presented earlier (Fig. 1), the researcher developed five tables for the five strategies proposed for translating English proverbs into Arabic. Each table included ten English proverbs with their equivalents in Arabic. It is worth mentioning that the researcher could have included more proverbs for each strategy, but he tried to observe space constraints; otherwise, the article would be very long.

4. Results and Discussion

The following sections will discuss the five strategies proposed for translating English proverbs into Arabic. English proverbs with their Arabic equivalents exemplifying and representing each strategy provided in a table will be highlighted and explained further when necessary.

The first strategy proposed for translating English proverbs into Arabic is to provide an equivalent proverb in Arabic that matches the English proverb in both form and meaning. Table 1 below shows ten English proverbs with their Arabic equivalent proverbs that look identical in form and meaning. Each English proverb has an equivalent Arabic proverb as its perfect match. Readers with knowledge of English and Arabic would easily recognize these proverbs as such in both languages as the proverbs are very common in both cultures. Remarkably, this group of proverbs have literally Arabic proverbs as their equivalents, making one wonder how two different languages, English and Arabic, exhibit this similarity in thought and expression! To take one example, the first English proverb in the table below, "Misfortunes never come singly", is translated into Arabic as "المصائب لا تأتي فراداً" which is an equivalent proverb identical in vocabulary and meaning with the English proverb. To analyze it further, 'misfortunes' is 'المصائب', 'never' is 'لا', 'come' is 'تأتي' and 'singly' is 'فراداً'. The same goes for the rest of the English proverbs and their Arabic equivalent proverbs provided in Table 1 below. No further discussion will be provided as the striking equivalence existing between these proverbs sums it all up!

Table 1. Perfect match

English proverb	Arabic equivalent proverb
Misfortunes never come singly	المصائب لا تأتي فراداً
Haste is from the Devil	العجلة من الشيطان
Knowledge is power	المعرفة قوة

A wolf in a sheep's clothing	ذئب في زي خروف
As you sow so shall you reap	كما تزرع تحصد
Prevention is better than cure	الوقاية خير من العلاج
A sound mind in a sound body	العقل السليم في الجسم السليم
Dogs bark, but the caravan goes on	الكلاب تنبح والقافلة تسير
Don't count your chickens before they hatch."	لا تُعدّ صيصانك قبل أن تفقس
The drowning man clutches at a straw	الغريق يتعلّق بقشة

The second strategy proposed for translating English proverbs into Arabic is to provide slightly different proverbs in Arabic for the English proverbs. Table 2 below lists ten English proverbs with their Arabic equivalent proverbs that look somewhat identical in form and meaning except for one or more culture-specific or environment-specific words. Each English proverb below has an Arabic proverb as its equivalent. Educated readers with good knowledge of English and Arabic can recognize these proverbs in both languages as they are common and widely used in their respective cultures.

Table 2. Match except for culture-specific word(s)

English proverb	Arabic equivalent proverb
He who steals an egg steals an ox	من يسرق بيضة يسرق جملًا
Diamond cut diamond	لا يفِلّ الحديد إلا الحديد
Time is money	الوقت من ذهب
The devil lies in the details	العلّة في التفاصيل
Make hay while the sun shines	إذا هبت رياحك فاغتمها
One man's meat is another's poison	فوائد قوم عند قوم مصائب
Out of sight, out of mind	بعيد عن العين بعيد عن القلب
Cats have nine lives	القط بسبع أرواح
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush	عصفور في اليد خير من عشرة على الشجرة
Money does not grow on trees	السماء لا تُمطر ذهبًا

A close examination of the first English proverb 'He who steals an egg steals an ox' and its Arabic equivalent reveals a big similarity between these two proverbs except for one culture-specific and environment-specific word which is 'ox' in English and 'جملًا' in Arabic. The ox whose Arabic equivalent is 'ثور' is very common in the west, while 'الجمل' whose English equivalent is 'camel' is very common in Arab culture. The second English proverb 'Diamond cut diamond' has 'لا يفِلّ الحديد إلا الحديد' as its Arabic equivalent proverb which is identical to the English proverb except for one important culture-specific word 'diamond', whose Arabic equivalent is 'الماس'. Diamond is the hardest substance, and the English proverb echoes this meaning metaphorically. However, iron is believed by most Arabs to be the hardest metal, and this is reflected in the Arabic equivalent proverb 'لا يفِلّ الحديد إلا الحديد'. The third English proverb, 'Time is money,' along with its Arabic equivalent, illustrates another cultural difference between English and Arabic. While English culture measures time against money, Arab culture measures it against 'ذهب' (gold). Both proverbs are identical except for this culture-specific word. The fourth English proverb, 'The Devil lies in the details' uses the word 'devil' whose Arabic lexical equivalent is 'الشيطان' whereas its Arabic equivalent proverb uses the word 'العلّة' whose English lexical equivalent is "fault/defect". The two proverbs are identical except for one word whose use is determined by either culture. The fifth English proverb 'Make hay

while the sun shines' along with its Arabic equivalent 'إذا هبت رياحك فاغتنمها' makes it that the environment or nature plays a role in the wording or proverbs. Both proverbs are identical except for some environment-specific words. While English uses 'hay and sun', Arabic uses 'رياحك' (you winds).

The sixth English proverb 'One man's meat is another's poison' along with its Arabic equivalent 'فوائد قوم عند قوم مصائب' shows the influence of culture on the choice of words in each proverb. While English uses 'meat' to refer to an advantage or benefit, Arabic uses 'فوائد' (which means advantages or benefits in English) which is the implied meaning of the word 'meat' in the English proverb. English also uses 'poison' to refer to 'misfortunes', while Arabic uses 'مصائب' (which means misfortunes in English) which is the implied meaning of the word 'poison' in the English proverb. It can be concluded from these two equivalent proverbs that where English sometimes favors implication, Arabic favors explicit expression. The seventh English proverb 'Out of sight, out of mind' is different from its Arabic equivalent 'بعيد عن العين بعيد عن القلب' in one culture-specific word. While English uses 'mind' in this particular proverb, Arabic uses 'القلب' (which means 'heart' in English). It is commonly believed that the West tends to be more reasonable, while the East is believed to be more emotional. This might explain the use of 'mind' in the English proverb and the use of 'القلب' in the Arabic proverb. The eighth English proverb 'Cats have nine lives' along with its Arabic equivalent proverb 'القط بسبع أرواح' sheds more light on the influence of culture on the wording of proverbs. While English uses 'seven lives' to refer to the average life of cats, Arabic uses 'بسبع أرواح' (which means 'seven lives' in English) to refer to the average life of cats. This discrepancy in the use of a specific number does not mean that cats in English culture live longer than cats in Arab culture, but Arabic makes extensive use of number 'seven' as it is a distinctive or special number. The ninth English proverb 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush' is different from its Arabic equivalent 'عصفور في اليد خير من عشرة على الشجرة' in two things which are culture-specific. While English uses 'two' to emphasize satisfaction and contentment, Arabic uses 'عشرة' (which means 'ten' in English) to express the same idea. Besides, English uses a positive adjective 'worth' to emphasize satisfaction, whereas Arabic uses 'خير من' which is an equivalent to the comparative adjective 'better than' to overemphasize satisfaction. The tenth English proverb 'Money does not grow on trees' is different from its Arabic equivalent 'السماء لا تُمطر ذهباً' in some culture-specific and environment-specific terms. As trees are very common in the West compared to Arab culture, especially the Arabian Peninsula, the English proverb makes use of the environment and has 'trees' in it, while Arabic makes use of the open sky and rain which is very rare in the desert. As for the use of 'money' in the English proverb and the use of 'ذهباً' in the Arabic proverb, they were discussed earlier in the third pairs of proverbs on the table above.

The third strategy proposed for the translation of English proverbs into Arabic is by providing an equivalent proverb in Arabic which is completely different from its English counterpart in form but similar in meaning and effect. Table 3 below lists ten English proverbs with their Arabic equivalent proverbs which look completely different in form. Each English proverb has an Arabic equivalent proverb with completely different words. Average readers with general knowledge of English and Arabic may not be able to recognize these proverbs as equivalents in both languages as the proverbs are not very common, and their words do not refer to their meaning directly. It is remarkable that this group of proverbs have Arabic proverbs as their equivalents which makes one wonder how two different languages such as English and Arabic exhibit this similarity in thought!

Table 3. Complete mismatch

English proverb	Arabic equivalent proverb
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Once bitten, twice shy	لا يُلدغ المرء من جُحرٍ مرتين
A stitch in time saves nine	درهم وقاية خير من قنطار علاج
The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak	العين بصيرة واليد قصيرة
Charity begins at home	الأقربون أولى بالمعروف
Even a worm will turn	للصبر حدود
Other times, other manners	لكل مقام مقال
Save for a rainy day	وَقَرَّ قَرَشُكَ الْأَبْيَضُ لِيَوْمِكَ الْأَسْوَدِ
Every cloud has a silver lining	إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ¹
Call a spade a spade	يقول للأعور أعور في عينه
Brevity is the soul of wit	البلاغة إيجاز

To take one example, the first English proverb in the table above ‘Once bitten, twice shy’ is translated into Arabic as ‘لا يُلدغ المرء من جُحرٍ مرتين’ which is an equivalent proverb completely different in form from the English proverb. It can be said that both proverbs are culturally equivalent, while they are lexically different from each other like chalk and cheese. The lack of lexical equivalence makes such proverbs hard to understand and find equivalents to in the target language. The same goes for the rest of the English proverbs and their Arabic equivalent proverbs provided in the Table 3 above. No further discussion will be provided as the obvious disparity between the English proverbs and the Arabic equivalent proverbs sums it all up!

The fourth strategy proposed for the translation of English proverbs into Arabic is by providing a famous line of Arabic poetry which expresses the same idea expressed in the English proverb. Table 4 below lists ten English proverbs with lines of Arabic poetry as their equivalents. As suggested by some scholars (Clarke, 2004; Kerrigan & Favila, 2016), some famous lines of poetry have proverbial meaning and have themselves become proverbs in their own right due to their popularity among people. Longman (2006) believes that to read proverbs well and interact with them, one should know how to read poetry since both make use of some prosodic and rhetorical devices. Educated readers with good knowledge and appreciation of English proverbs and Arabic poetry can recognize the lines of Arabic poetry to be equivalent to the English proverbs in the table below.

Table 4. Equivalent line of poetry

English proverb	Lines of Arabic poetry
Easy come, easy go	ومن ملك البلاد دون حرب يهون عليه تسليم البلاد (Anonymous)
All are not merry that dance lightly	لا تحسبوا رقصي بينكم طرباً فالطير يرقص مذبحاً من الألم (Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī ²)
All are not hunters that blow the horn	وما كل من هز الحسام بضارب ولا كل من أجرى اليراع بكاتب (Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī ³)
Hope springs eternal in the human breast	أغلل النفس بالأمال أرقبها ما أصعب العيش لولا فسحة الأمل (Mu'ayyad al-Din al-Tughra'i ⁴)

¹ This is a verse in the Holy Quran which has become proverbial (Alsharh, 6)

² A famous Abbasid era Arab poet (915 – 965 AD).

³ A 14th century Arab poet (1278 – 1349 AD).

⁴ An 11th and 12th century Arab poet (1061 – 1121 AD)

He who hesitates is lost	إذا كنت ذا رأي فكن ذا عزيمة فإن فساد الرأي أن تترددا (Abu Ja'far al-Mansur ⁵)
He who is born a fool is never cured	لكل داء دواء يستطب به إلا الحمافة أعبت منم يداويها (Abū al-Tayyib al-Mutanabbī)
Full of courtesy, full of craft	يعطيك من طرف اللسان حلوة ويروغ منك كما يرغ الثعلب (Saleh bin adbul-Qaddous ⁶)
Empty vessels make the greatest (the most) sound	ملأى السنايل تتحني بتواضع والفارغات رؤوسهن شوامخ (George Elmacin aka Jirjis al-Makīn Ibn al-'Amīd ⁷)
Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven	جنة بالذل لا أرضى بها جهنم بالعزّ أفخر منزلاً (Antarah ibn Shaddad al-Absi ⁸)
Where ignorance is a bliss, it is folly to be wise.	ولما رأيت الجهل في الناس فاشياً تجاهلت حتى ظنّ أني جاهل (Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī ⁹)

It should be acknowledged that it is not easy to find Arabic lines of poetry which are semantically equivalent for English proverbs. This also requires Arabic translators to have profound knowledge of Arabic poetry which is, to some extent, a matter of interest. The English proverbs listed in Table 4 above are common and the lines of Arabic poetry provided as their equivalents tackle the same ideas which they express. To take one example, the first English proverb in the table above 'Easy come, easy go' is semantically equivalent to the Arabic line of poetry 'ومن ملك البلاد دون حرب يهون عليه' 'تسليم البلاد'. However, while the English proverb talks about things which can be lost easily when they come to people easily and without any efforts, its equivalent line of poetry in Arabic expresses more or less the same idea but uses a powerful image of a leader who is willing to give away his country to the enemy easily because he got it without a war or any fight. The other English proverbs included in this table express ideas which are semantically and functionally similar to the ideas expressed in their respective lines of Arabic poetry. For space constraints, no further discussion of this table will be provided.

Table 5. Literal translation with/without explanation

English proverb	Literal translation
A soft answer turns away wrath	الجواب الرقيق يذهب الغضب
A rich man's joke is always funny	نكتة الغني دائماً مضحكة
A tattler is worse than a thief	النّمّام أسوأ من اللص
Adversity is a great schoolmaster	المحنة مُعَلِّم عظيم
All bread is not baked in one oven	الخُبز لا يُخبز في فرن واحد فقط. (الناس ليست متشابهة)
Money talks	المال يتكلم (المال مُهم جداً)

⁵ The second Abbasid caliph (95 – 158 AD).

⁶ An Abbasid Arab poet.

⁷ A Coptic Christian historian (1205 – 1273 AD).

⁸ A pre-Islamic poet (525 – 608 AD).

⁹ An Abbasid Arab poet (973 – 1057 AD).

No man can serve two masters	لا يمكن للمرء أن يخدم سيدين
Patience is a virtue	الصَّبْرُ فضيلة
Poverty is no sin	الفقر ليس خطيئة
Pride goes before a fall.	الغرور يسبق السقوط

The last strategy proposed for the translation of English proverbs into Arabic is literal translation with or without an explanation. Table 5 above lists ten English proverbs with their Arabic translations following this strategy. Since the literal meaning of the English proverbs listed in the above table makes them easy to understand, literal translation into Arabic seems to work very well. The first proverb 'A soft answer turns away wrath' has no idiomatic or proverbial meaning besides its literal meaning; therefore, its literal translation into Arabic 'الجواب الرقيق يذهب الغضب' is both intelligible and clear to the Arab reader. However, when an English proverb has an idiomatic meaning other than its apparent literal meaning as in the fifth proverb 'All bread is not baked in one oven' and the sixth proverb 'Money talks', a literal translation into Arabic with an explanation in brackets is provided to expose Arab readers to the literal and idiomatic meaning of the proverbs. It should also be stressed that although literal translation is followed for the above English proverbs, the Arabic equivalent translations still ring as wise sayings to Arab readers. This means that the ethical and aesthetic effects which the English proverbs in the above table have on English readers are preserved in the Arabic translations. This leads to a logical conclusion that literal translation of such a group of proverbs is a valid and reliable strategy as it both conveys their meaning and preserves their functional and aesthetic effects on the target audience or readers.

5. Conclusion

The present study has proposed a taxonomy of strategies for the translation of English proverbs into Arabic and has provided examples illustrating and supporting the proposed strategies. The proposed taxonomy classified the strategies into five, depending on the form, meaning and availability of equivalent proverbs in Arabic. The first strategy was an exact match between English and Arabic proverbs in terms of structure and meaning. This strategy could be used when an English proverb has an Arabic equivalent proverb as its perfect match. Readers with general knowledge of English and Arabic would easily recognize these proverbs as such in both languages as the proverbs are very common. The second strategy was a match except for key culture-specific and environment-specific words. This strategy could also be used when an English proverb has an Arabic proverb as its equivalent which is almost identical in form and meaning except for one or more culture-specific or environment-specific words. Educated readers with good knowledge of English and Arabic can recognize these proverbs as such in both languages as the proverbs are common and widely used in their respective cultures.

The third strategy was a complete mismatch in form with intact meaning. This strategy could be used when an English proverb has an Arabic equivalent proverb with completely different words. Average readers with general knowledge of English and Arabic may not be able to recognize these proverbs as equivalents in both languages as the proverbs are not very common, and their words do not refer to their meaning directly. The fourth strategy was to provide equivalent lines of Arabic poetry to some English proverbs which expressed the same meaning. Educated readers with good knowledge and appreciation of English proverbs and Arabic poetry can recognize the lines of poetry to be equivalent to the English proverbs. The fifth and last strategy was literal translation with or without an explanation. Since the literal meaning of some English proverbs makes them easy to understand,

literal translation into Arabic works very well. Based on the proposed taxonomy of strategies for the translation of English proverbs into Arabic and the applicability of the strategies, the researcher recommends that large-scale research be carried out on the applicability of the proposed taxonomy to a large number of English proverbs. Besides, the researcher also recommends that the proposed taxonomy be applied to the translation of proverbs in another pair of languages other than English and Arabic to test its applicability to languages other than English and Arabic.

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