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# English-Arabic Translation of Idiomatic Expressions with Total Equivalence: An Optimality-Theoretic Account

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**ABSTRACT**: The purpose of this study is to apply the principles underlying optimality theory to the translation of English idioms into Standard Arabic. It specifically aims to generate the ranking of competing markedness and faithfulness constraints that Standard Arabic assigns to idioms translated from English into Arabic. The scope of this study is limited to the analysis of the idiomatic expressions with total equivalence. This article proposes that optimality theory can be incorporated to analyze translation processes since translation is also characterized by violable universal competing constraints in the decision making and meaning negotiation processes that translators employ to derive optimal outputs. From various possible translations, translators ideally aim to select the output that is linguistically and culturally accepted in the target language but it may violate some language rules or constraints that are ranked low in that language. Hence, the optimal output (target text) is always the candidate that satisfies higher-ranked constraints, yet may incur violations of lower-ranked constraints. This study concludes that the conflict between markedness and faithfulness constraints is resolved by the language-specific ranking that Standard Arabic gives to the conflicting constraints. It also discusses some implications to the teaching of translation adopting optimality theory.

*Keywords*: *English-Arabic translation, faithfulness, idiom, markedness, optimality theory.*

## I.    INTRODUCTION

Idiomatic expressions carry cultural meanings that cannot be decoded from the interpretation of their individual constituents. Being culturally bound, they are assumed to be hard to translate especially if the source and target languages do not belong to the same language family. This requires the translator to be equipped with both linguistic and cultural knowledge background to produce an optimal target text that is linguistically and culturally accepted in the target language system. Besides, the degree of equivalence that idioms in the source text share with the target language plays a critical role in the understanding and translation of idiomatic expressions.

In the translation process, idiomatic expressions in the source language either have total equivalence, partial equivalence or no equivalence in the target language. Idioms with total equivalence have the same form and meaning in both languages. This is usually the case of two languages that have similar cultural roots and belong to the same language family (Oualif, 2017 [1]). On the other hand, idioms with partial equivalence have the same meaning but a different form. Put differently, the target and source languages communicate the same meaning of the idiom but use different syntactic structures and lexical items (Oualif, 2017 [1]). The third situation is when the source language idiom has neither total nor partial equivalence, in which case paraphrasing is the only remaining strategy to translate the meaning of the idiom from the source to the target language. This paper considers the translation of the idioms with total equivalence from English into Arabic and how markedness and faithfulness constraints conflict to generate the optimal target text.

This article aims to approach the translation of idioms with total equivalence by adopting optimality theory (hereafter OT).  Any translation process requires meaning negotiation and compromise to produce a linguistically and culturally appropriate translated text in the target language. To do so, the translator needs to decide on the linguistic elements to be preserved, deleted, or added in the target text. Such a decision is grounded in the evaluation of any possible outputs or candidates 'translated texts', which is the function of the EVAL (short for Evaluator) in the framework of OT. By evaluating the produced translated texts, the translator attempts to select the most possible or optimal candidate among other candidates, which is again one of the main tenets in OT to derive the optimal candidate. These different accepted translations can be regarded as conflicting candidates and the resolution is language-specific. Two translators translating the same source text into two

different languages, more likely produce two different target texts due to the hierarchy of the universal constraints in the target language system. Therefore, this article claims that since translation is also characterized by violable universal constraints and as translators always endeavor to produce an optimal translation based on the interaction between competing constraints, OT can be incorporated as a theoretical framework to analyze translation processes.

In doing so, the remainder of this paper is organized as follows. The second section briefly discusses some deficits of rule-based theory, the central assumptions of constraint-based theory (OT), and the application of OT in translation. It is divided into three subsections: The first subsection reviews OT with reference to rule-based theory; it also defines and illustrates markedness and faithfulness constraints. In the second subsection, emphasis is placed on the adoption of optimality theory in translation with reference to some relevant previous studies, whereas the forth subsection tackles the translation of idiomatic expressions. Section three demonstrates the interaction of constraints as regards idioms with total equivalence. Finally, section four points out to some insights about the integration of OT in the teaching and learning of translation.

## II.          OPTIMALITY THEORY AND TRANSLATION
### 2.1. Optimality theory

Optimality theory (Kager, 2004[2]; McCarthy, 2002 [3]; Prince & Smolensky, 1993 [4]) originated first in phonology and morphology. It was first introduced to respond to the shortcomings of rule-based theories (e.g. Generative Phonology of Chomsky and Halle 1968 [5]; Auto-segmental Theory of Goldsmith 1976 [6]). In this respect, OT, for example, questions some issues in SPE's 'Sound Pattern of English' rewrite rules (A→B/X---Y) by Chomsky and Halle (1968). While Chomsky's rule-based theory is derivative in the sense that multiple transformational rules are applied to the underlying representation 'the input' to derive the surface structure 'the output', OT does not primarily underscore this sequential/cyclic application of rules but rather a parallel interaction between them. This shift in concern emanates from the fact that rules conspire, a generalization that is missing in rule-based theory. Therefore, the inadequacy of rewrite rules which is partly projected in 'conspiracies' (i.e. various rules are triggered to ensure the application of a rule, or to avoid the violation of a certain language structure) and 'duplication problem' (see McCarthy, 2008 [8]; Kager, 2004 [2]; Kisseberth, 1970 [7] for further details) calls for a new linguistic approach that considers the interaction between language rules or constraints as substantial to any linguistic analysis.

The central assumption of OT is that there are universally violable constraints whose ranking differ cross-linguistically (McCarthy, 2008 [8]). In contrast to rule based theory, universal constraints are violable in that optimal candidates do violate certain constraints that are lower-ranked in the language system. Universal constraints such as Onset, NoCoda, *Complex, and *Clash constitute the core principles of Universal Grammar and individual languages opt for varied rankings depending on the priorities of the language system. For instance, Complex Coda is universally marked and hence avoided cross-linguistically but some languages such as English tolerate the violation of this constraint as there are a number of English words ending in a complex coda. Thus, *Complex is lower-ranked in the hierarchy of constraints in English language system, while other languages, such as Moroccan Arabic, do not allow outputs with complex codas to surface as optimal, and as such *Complex must be higher-ranked in the language system. Besides, these universal constraints compete in the process of generating the optimal candidate, and only through language-specific rankings such a conflict is resolved.

The linguist's task is then not as simple as deriving language rules that describe the realization or distribution of alternations. Rather, within OT, the linguist is primarily concerned with the conflict between universally violable constraints, and how individual languages resolve this conflict (McCarthy, 2007 [9]). A constraint that is given more priority 'i.e. higher-ranked' and therefore should not be violated by the 'optimal' candidate in a language may be given less priority 'i.e. lower-ranked' in the hierarchy of constraints in another language and vice versa. Since any optimal candidate incurs the violation of a certain constraint, languages prefer to violate lower-ranked constraints to satisfy higher-ranked ones. However, this violation should be minimal (hence economy in grammar) in the sense that the optimal candidate always incurs the least violations of the ranked constraints in comparison to the other competing generated candidates or 'outputs'.

Two important components of grammar are central to OT: Gen (short for Generator) and Eval. OT proposes that there is no restriction on the input (i.e. the richness of the base) (McCarthy, 2002 [3]; Prince & Smolensky, 1993 [4]) and accordingly the Gen generates all possible output candidates to an input. The Eval then evaluates those generated candidates in a parallel assessment based on the ranking of the constraints to select the optimal one. The evaluation process can be between input-output pairs or output-output pairs done via considering two important conflicting constraint families: faithfulness and markedness constraints. The next section is devoted to these two constraints.

### 2.1.1.    Faithfulness and markedness constraints

Faithfulness constraints ensure correspondence between the input and output forms, while markedness constraints target the well-formedness of the output forms (McCarthy, 2008[8]). Faithfulness constraints project the input-output matching relationship and rule out any differences – be it segmental, featural, prosodic, etc. - between input and output forms. For instance, an output that contains an epenthesized segment which has no correspondent in the input violates the faithfulness constraint DEP (militating against epenthesis), while an output that deletes a segment from the input violates MAX constraint (militating against deletion). On the other hand, markedness constraints enforce some pressure on attaining unmarked language structures (Kager, 2004 [2]). For instance, universally marked syllable structures such as CVCC and VC violate the markedness constraints *Complex (the avoidance of complex structures) and Onset (an obligation to obviate onsetless syllables), respectively. Whether markedness constraints block these marked structures from being surfaced depends on how an individual language tolerates the emergence of marked structures.

In this respect, faithfulness and markedness constraints are 'inherently' competing (Kager, 2004 [2]). To generate an optimal candidate, a language may give more priority to satisfying markedness restrictions at the expense of violating faithfulness constraints or the opposite. For instance, two output candidates, one with a simple coda and one with a complex coda, may be generated from an input with a complex coda. A language that prioritizes markedness constraints will allow the candidate with a simple coda to be realized as the 'harmonic' one at the expense of violating lower-ranked faithfulness constraints; in contrast, in any other language, where faithfulness constraints dominate markedness ones, the candidate with a complex coda will surface as the optimal one incurring the violation of lower-ranked markedness constraints. Therefore, the satisfaction of some markedness constraints entails the violation of some faithfulness constraints and the opposite also holds true. The next section will present more insights into this conflicting relationship (between markedness and faithfulness constraints) with reference to translation.

## 2.2. Optimality in translation

Previous researchers have applied the principles of OT mainly to verse translation. This is partly due to the 'unique' or remarkable interaction between form and content and the challenge that verse translation poses to translators. It could also be justified by the effect of faith alignment constraints that strictly govern the interaction between form and content. Although limited in number, studies such as those conducted by Mansell (2008 [10]; 2004 [11]), and Dols and Mansell (2008 [12]) are substantial references about the adoption of OT in verse translation. These studies have highlighted the competing markedness and faithfulness constraints between the source and target texts and how this conflict is resolved by language-specific rankings. They have specifically examined the effect of faith alignment constraints and showed how they interact between content and form in verse translation. Perhaps the lack of abundant body of literature dealing with OT in translation is due to the fact that translation itself is not as characterized by consistent language rules as phonological, morphological, or syntactic rules and processes, which are systematically governed and predicted in a certain linguistic environment. That is, a phonologist, for instance, can derive the involved markedness and faithfulness constraints and analyze their interaction and generate their ranking by examining the consistent occurrence and distribution of a certain rule in an individual language, unlike translation which is often done holistically: a variety of linguistic components are considered simultaneously. As a further example, two phonologists most often come up with a similar ranking of constraints after analyzing a consistent phonological rule, whereas two translators translating the same source text into two different target texts will not produce identical outputs and as such derive different ranking of constraints. In the same vein, the present study contributes to these previous findings by analyzing the translation of English idiomatic expressions into Standard Arabic.

The fact that translators employ a number of conflicting strategies to produce an optimal translation entails the plausibility to incorporate OT in translation. According to Pym (1992[13]), the translation process involves selecting a target text from a number of generated candidate translations. This selection is based on the evaluation of the set of candidates, a view that is central to any OT analysis. In addition, no single target text is fully identical to the source text (Dols & Mansell 2008[12]) since languages are characterized by some structural differences 'called parameters by Chomsky'. This entails two main points: 1) every target text violates some language properties or constraints in the source text to satisfy some other constraints in the target text, and 2) more than one translated text could be accepted as long as it is linguistically and culturally accepted in the target language. Concerning the first assumption, the translator endeavors to remain faithful to the source text at the same time approaches a translated text that respects the language structure of the target text 'output'. This conflict is resolved by translators' preferences (Dols & Mansell 2008[12]): the priorities or ranking they give to the conflicting constraints, which must consider the target language system. This view is similar to input-output interaction in OT in the sense that some languages, for example while dealing with a certain phonological process, give priority to faithfulness to the input while others prefer to satisfy markedness constraints to faithfulness to the input. As a result, and as referred to in the second assumption, multiple translations to the same source text are possible. This view is also key to OT: a different ranking produces different optimal

outputs. Therefore, as endorsed in OT, translation is characterized by the conflict of faithfulness to the source text and markedness that requires structural well-formedness in the target text.

Furthermore, since faithfulness to both the source text and target text is hardly possible, translators try to make a decision about which language structures in the source and target texts to be preserved and which to be violated. For example, in poetry translation, faithfulness to the target text meter can be achieved at the cost of fidelity to the source text content or vice versa. A translator may prefer not to translate a certain word or phrase to meet the requirement of the target text meter if this latter is undominated. This is similar to OT in that faithfulness and markedness constraints inherently conflict.

Translation also incorporates OT's assumption that there are no optimal perfect outputs, dubbed 'fallacy of perfection' (Kager, 2004 [2]). It is commonly assumed that no translated text is fully identical to the source text. Even the optimal translation that any translator seeks to achieve violates some language structures or constraints of the target text. No optimal target text is perfect in that it satisfies all source text and target text constraints. Therefore, translators attempt to produce a translated text that is the most harmonic one compared to any other competing candidates, the one that involves minimal violations of ranked constraints.

Before embarking on the conflicting constraints in idiom translation, it is worth discussing the translation of idiomatic expressions.

### 2.3. Translation of idiomatic expressions

Idioms are linguistic expressions that represent the social and cultural aspects of a language. They are defined as figurative language (Larson, 1984 [14]; Lyons, 1997 [15]), and as fixed expressions (Cowie & Mackin, 1975 [16]), which cannot be literally understood by decomposing the meaning of the constituents making up the idiom. Idioms are also said to be culturally based expressions in the sense that they entail the customs, beliefs, religion, values, etc. of their users. They originated as metaphorical expressions and over time and due to their frequent use they become part of people's daily communication (Farghal & Mansour, 2020[17]). These defining characteristics of idioms often pose certain difficulty to their understanding and translation by nonnative users of a language. The translation of idiomatic expressions is one of the challenging tasks that translators face. The difficulty arises from the fact that idioms are imbued with cultural connotations, and any literal translation of the individual words that disregards the cultural background of the target language will result in a nonsense translation in the target text. Therefore, the translation of idioms requires having both substantial linguistic and cultural knowledge: while linguistic knowledge, including, for example, phonological, morphological, and syntactic competence, helps the translator produce a grammatically correct output, cultural background is indispensible to any culturally adapted translation. Only by having deep insights into the culture of the target language, the translator can decipher the implied meaning of a certain idiom, and subsequently produce an accepted translated text. Hence a translator should be linguistically and cross-culturally competent in the source and target language. This is particularly important if the source and target languages are characterized by major social and cultural differences, such as English and Arabic.

Since English and Arabic are different in cultural roots, they involve idiomatic expressions which hardly have total equivalence (Oualif, 2017[1]). This variation stems from a range of cultural factors such as religion, customs, beliefs, history, etc. that are encoded in linguistic expressions. To decode them, as emphasized earlier, the translator should be bilingual (mastering both English and Arabic) and bicultural (having a deep cultural knowledge of both Arabic and English), and should know more than the denotative meaning of words. In this context, Ambrose (2008[18]) argues that to comprehend the English lexicon one must be able to decipher the denotative and importantly the connotative meaning that words imply and the figurative language, which involves idioms. Thus, by the same reasoning, only through knowing Arabic idioms the translator can understand the Arabic lexicon and translate English idioms correctly into their equivalent Arabic ones. This can be achieved through listing Arabic idioms in bilingual dictionaries (see Jarad & Abu-Ssaydeh, 2017 [19] for more details). The next section will elaborate more on this issue by considering the interaction between markedness and faithfulness constraints.

### III.    IDIOMS WITH TOTAL EQUIVALENCE: INTERACTION OF CONSTRAINTS

Since English and Arabic do not belong to the same language family, they have few total equivalent idiomatic expressions. One commonly used idiom in Arabic and English with the same form and meaning is the English idiom *'To shed crocodile tears'*, and its equivalence in Arabic ( يذرف دموع التماسيح /judrifu dumuʕ ʔattamasiħ/. The structure of this idiom and the meanings of its constituent parts are very similar to those in Arabic. Researchers (e.g. Oualif, 2017 [1]) attribute this structural and semantic similarity to the fact that such idiomatic expressions are not originally Arabic; they were integrated into Arabic through translation and over time people started considering them as originally Arabic idioms. To account for such idioms within the framework of OT, we will focus on the interaction of the following faithfulness and markedness constraints.

As mentioned earlier, faithfulness constraints control any deviations between the input and output (McCarthy, 2008 [8]). In translation, the input is the source text and the output is the target text. The following first four faithfulness constraints are adopted from Mansell (2004, [11]), while the other constraints are proposed according to the nature of the idioms we are dealing with.

**F/Order**:  do not change the order of the source text linguistic elements.

If this constraint is undominated (i.e. at the top of the ranking), it will prevent the realization of any output that violates it.

**Max ST-TT**: do not delete any material from the source text.

When this constraint is undominated in a certain language, the optimal target text will preserve the linguistic items of the source text.

**Dep ST-TT**: do not epenthesize any material in the target text that is not part of the source text.

In a language in which this constraint is ranked high, priority should be given to the correspondence between the input and output.  If it is dominated some change must be made.

**Ident**: the meaning of a word or phrase in the source text should be preserved. This includes both IdentLex and IdentSem.

If this constraint is ranked high, the meaning of the source text's lexical items must be preserved in the target text.

**F/cont**: this constraint ensures that the content expressed in the source text must be kept in the target text.

Any language which ranks this constraint high will obligatorily privilege the content conveyed in the source text.

Markedness constraints, on the other hand, control the well-formedness of the output with respect to the target text system. We will confine the analysis to two constraints:  M/Idiom and *LitT.

**M/Idiom**: if it is ranked high, then priority is given to the output that is idiomatically accepted in the target text. That is, only the candidate that is adapted to the idioms of the target text will surface.

**\*LitT**:  Any literal translation of the source text is ruled out in the target text. If it is undominated, no literal translation will be allowed to surface.

One of the substantial features of any idiom translation is the preservation of the idiomatic meaning entailed in the source text. It is also assumed that since English and Arabic belong to different cultural roots and language family (Oualif, 2017 [1]), any literal translation of an English idiomatic expression can never surface as the optimal target text translation. Hence, to generate optimal outputs (referred to with a pointing hand ☞) that are accepted in the target text's (Standard Arabic) idiomatic expressions, markedness constraints should dominate faithfulness constraints. Note that domination in OT is represented in the tableau with an unbroken line and by the symbol >> in all other contexts of use; on the other hand, a dotted line in a tableau, or a comma separating constraints as in (1) below, shows that certain constraints are not ranked with respect to each other, and reversing their ranking will not result in a new optimal candidate. To this end, the posited preliminary ranking of constraints is as follows:

(1) **M/Idiom, \*LitT >> Max ST-TT, F/Cont, Dep ST-TT, IdentLex, F/Order**

We assume that this ranking governs the interaction between markendess and faithfulness constraints in all idioms (i.e. the idioms with total, partial, or no equivalence in two languages). Accordingly, although the English idiom *'it is raining cats and dogs'* does not have total equivalence (same form and meaning) in Standard Arabic, it is selected to illustrate the ranking of constraints. The target text outputs are transcribed using IPA conventions, except the symbol for emphasis which is indicated with a dot underneath the relevant segment.

(2)  M/Idiom, \*LitT  >>  Max ST-TT, F/Cont, Dep ST-TT, IdentLex, F/ Order

| ST: It is raining cats and dogs | *LitT | F/Cont | Max ST-TT | Dep ST-TT | IdentLex | F/Order |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☞  TTa: تمطر بغزارة<br>/tumṭiṛu biɣazara/ | | | | | | |
| TTb: تمطر قططا وكلابا<br>/ tumṭiṛu qiṭaṭan wa kilaban/ | *! | * | | | * | |
| TTc: تمطر كلابا وقططا<br>/ tumṭiṛu kilaban wa qiṭaṭan / | *! | * | | | * | * |

Some remarks concerning the interaction of constraints are in order. First, (2TTa) is the optimal candidate as it satisfies the higher-ranked markedness constraint *LitT as well as lower-ranked constraints. The other candidates (2TTb and 2TTc), on the other hand, incur fatal violation (indicated in OT by the symbol !) of higher-ranked markedness, *LitT, and lower-ranked faithfulness constraints. Second, any possible re-ranking of the set of posited constraints will not result in a different optimal candidate because the two conflicting candidates, unlike the optimal one, violate both higher and lower ranked constraints. Likewise, the same optimal candidate will be allowed to surface under any re-ranking of faithfulness constraints since the winner incurs no

violation of these faith constraints. However, by adding another candidate, faithfulness constraints, though dominated by markedness ones, are decisive (or tie-breakers) in generating the optimal candidate as two candidates, for example, tie in markedness constraints: equally fare better or worse on these constraints. Tableau (3) illustrates this interaction:

**(3) Dep ST-TT as a tie-breaker**

| ST: *It is raining cats and dogs* | M/Idiom | *LitT | F/Cont | Max ST-TT | Dep ST-TT | IdentLex | F/Order |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☞ **TTa:** تمطر بغزارة / tumṭiru biɣazara/ | * | | | | | | |
| **TTb:** تمطر قططا وكلابا / tumṭiru qiṭaṭan wa kilaban/ | * | *! | * | | | * | |
| **TTc:** تمطر كلابا وقططا / tumṭiru kilaban wa qiṭaṭan/ | * | *! | * | | | * | * |
| **TTd:** تمطر بغزارة وكثرة / tumṭiru biɣazara wa katra/ | * | | | | *! | | |

As tableau (3) evidently illustrates, the optimal candidate (3TTa) ties with the candidate (3TTd) since they equally satisfy the higher-ranked constraint *LitT and violate M/Idiom. They also both fare better on the dominated faithfulness constraints, F/Cont, Max ST-TT, IdentLex and F/Order. Here comes the role of Dep ST-TT constraint as a tie-breaker. Candidate (3TTd) loses in the competition as it violates the latter constraint by epenthesizing a word that has no correspondence in the source text; it lacks a lexical input. Therefore, though dominated, the faithfulness constraint Dep ST-TT still actively rules out candidate (3TTd).

Notice also that all the competing candidates in tableau (3) violate M/Idiom. This implies that although candidate (3TTa) is accepted and hence surfaced as the translation of the source text, it is still not the preferred equivalent Arabic metaphorical or idiomatic expression that would best express the translation of the English idiom. This optimal candidate is also not preferred as it incurs a violation of a higher-ranked constraint. Indeed, any violation of the constraints at the top of the hierarchy cannot be compensated by the satisfaction of lower constraints. With this in mind, we claim that in the presence of a candidate that satisfies M/Idiom, a new optimal output will be generated. To test this, we suggest another candidate that competes with the optimal candidate (3TTa), as demonstrated in the following tableau:

(4)

| ST: *It is raining cats and dogs* | M/Idiom | *LitT | F/Cont | Max ST-TT | Dep ST-TT | IdentLex | F/Order |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TTa:** تمطر بغزارة / tumṭiru biɣazara/ | *! | | | | | | |
| ☞ **TTe:** تمطر كأفواه القرب / tumṭiru ka ʔafwahi ʔalqoṛbi/ | | | | | | | |

As we examine the competing constraints in the tableau above, candidate (4TTa) involves a fatal violation of M/Idiom, while candidate (4TTe) is emerges as the winner as it fares better on the higher-ranked M/Idiom constraint. It follows from this that it is the appropriate idiomatic expression that Standard Arabic prefers as an equivalence to the English idiom *'it is raining cats and dogs'*. It will always surface as the winner regardless of the violations of the lower-ranked faithfulness constraints, which is due to the fact that the violation of higher-ranked constraints is considered fatal in the evaluation of the candidates.

Faithfulness constraints also seem to compete together. As translators always endeavor to remain faithful to the source text's message, fidelity to the content of the source text must be preserved; otherwise, a translator would produce a completely deviant text. For this reason, F/Cont cannot be sacrificed for the sake of fidelity to the faith constraints, Max ST-TT, Dep ST-TT, F/Order, and IdentLex. Instead, the latter constraints may be sacrificed to satisfy F/Cont constraint. Faithfulness to the source text's content is always a top priority in the process of translation. Given this fact, F/Cont must dominate the other faith constraints, as illustrated in the following tableau:

**(5) F/Cont >> Max ST-TT, Dep ST-TT, IdentLex, F/ Order**

| ST: **To fish in troubled water** | F/Cont | Max ST-TT | Dep ST-TT | IdentLex | F/Order |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☞ **TTa:** يصطاد في الماء العكر / jaṣṭadu fi ʔalmmaʔi ʔalʕakir/ | | | | | * |
| **TTb:** يصطاد الماء العكر / jaṣṭadu ʔalmmaʔi ʔalʕakir/ | *! | * | | | * |
| **TTc:** يصطاد العكر الماء / jaṣṭadu ʔalʕakir ʔalmmaʔi / | *! | * | | | |

Evaluating the conflicting candidates, candidate (5TTa) emerges as the winner as it satisfies the highest ranked faith constraint, F/Cont, whereas candidates (5TTb) and (5TTc) are ruled out because of their fatally violating F/Cont. Thus, the interaction of the constraints in tableau (5) point out to the fact that no output that violates F/Cont can be realized as optimal. F/Cont cannot be sacrificed to generate the optimal candidate.

Now we consider the interaction among the other remaining faithfulness constraints, (i.e. Max ST-TT, Dep ST-TT, IdentLex, and F/Order). As an idiom is a fixed phrase, no material that is part of the source text should be omitted, and no material that is not part of the source text should be added. This entails that in translating fixed idioms, especially those that have total equivalence, priority is given to satisfying Max ST-TT and Dep ST-TT rather than to IdentLex and F/Order, as demonstrated in the ranking below:

(6)  F/Cont >> Max ST-TT, Dep ST-TT >> IdentLex, F/ Order

Accordingly, the possible translation or output to the English idiom '*Kill two birds with one stone*' on the left is preferred to the candidates on the right.

(7)

ضرب عصفورين بحجر واحد        >        بحجر ضرب عصفورين
/ ḍaraba ʕuṣfuṛajni biħaʒaṛin waħidin/           / biħaʒaṛin ḍaraba ʕuṣfuṛajni /
(kill two birds with one stone)        (with stone kill two birds)

بحجر  ضرب عصفورين و اكثر        >
/ biħaʒaṛin ḍaraba ʕuṣfuṛajni wa ʔaktar /
(with stone kill two birds and more)

Therefore, for the idiom ( ضرب عصفورين بحجر واحد : /ḍaraba ʕuṣfuṛajni biħaʒaṛin waħidin/) to be surfaced, Max ST-TT and Dep ST-TT should dominate IdentLex and F/Order. Tableau (8) illustrates this interaction:

(8)  Max ST-TT, Dep ST-TT >>  IdentLex, F/Order

| ST: Kill two birds with one stone | F/Cont | Max ST-TT | Dep ST-TT | IdentLex | F/Order |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☞TTa: ضرب عصفورين بحجر واحد /ḍaraba ʕuṣfuṛajni biħaʒaṛin waħidin/ | | | | * | * |
| TTb: ضرب بحجر واحد عصفورين / ḍaraba biħaʒaṛin waħidin ʕuṣfuṛajni / | | | | * | **! |
| TTc: بحجر ضرب عصفورين / biħaʒaṛin ḍaraba ʕuṣfuṛajni / | | *! | | * | * |
| TTd: بحجر ضرب عصفورين و اكثر / biħaʒaṛin ḍaraba ʕuṣfuṛajni wa ʔaktar / | | *! | ** | * | * |

The optimal candidate (8TTa) ties with the sub-optimal one (8TTb) in the sense that they equally satisfy F/Cont, Max ST-TT and Dep ST-TT, and violate IdentLex and F/Order. The only difference lies in the minimal violations of F/Order: candidate (8TTa) has minimal violations of F/Order than the sub-optimal candidate. Therefore, though candidate (8TTb) may seem correct in Standard Arabic, it is unusual. This could be due to the fact that Standard Arabic allows the violation of F/Order constraint, but such a violation should be minimal.

The interaction of constraints also reveals that F/Order is the tie-breaking constraint between (8TTa) and (8TTb), and in OT any constraints that break the tie are unrankable. The unranking between F/Order and IdentLex is also evidenced by the fact that candidate (8TTa) still wins regardless of the ranking of F/Order and IdentLex; there is no argument for ranking F/Order at the bottom of the hierarchy or anywhere else. Therefore, we assume that IdentLex and F/Order are equally ranked. They do not conflict.

In addition, according to the ranking of the constraints in tableau (8), a new candidate such as (*TTe:* قتل عصفورين بحجر واحد : /qatala ʕuṣfuṛajni biħaʒaṛin waħidin/ ) would emerge as the optimal one as it does not violate IdentLex constraint. However, it would not be the case since a higher markedness constraint (namely M/Idiom) will rule it out, as shown in tableau (9). This also provides a further piece of evidence for the dominance of markedness constraints over faithfulness ones.

(9)

| ST: Kill two birds with one stone | M/Idiom | *LitT | F/Cont | Max ST-TT | Dep ST-TT | IdentLex | F/Order |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☞ TTa: ضرب عصفورين بحجر واحد / ḍaraba ʕuṣfuṛajni biħaʒaṛin waħidin/ | | | | | | * | * |
| TTe: قتل عصفورين بحجر واحد /qatala ʕuṣfuṛajni biħaʒaṛin waħidin/ | *! | * | | | | | * |

Having considered the interaction of faithfulness constraints, let us finally examine the interaction of markedness constraints. It is a widely held view that any English idiom that is literally translated into Standard Arabic will be eliminated. Similarly no Arabic translation of an English idiomatic expression can surface as the optimal target text translation unless it adapts to the metaphorical or idiomatic expressions of Standard Arabic. This concludes that Standard Arabic does not tolerate the violation of *LitT and M/Idiom constraints and are always at the top of the constraints' ranking. Therefore, the optimal candidate will never happen to violate *LitT or M/Idiom. Also these two constraints do not seem to be in conflict and hence are unranked, as tableau (10) shows.

(10) M/Idiom, *LitT >> F/Cont >> Max ST-TT, Dep ST-TT >> IdentLex, F/ Order

| ST: To fish in troubled water | M/Idiom | *LitT | F/Cont | Max ST-TT | Dep ST-TT | IdentLex | F/Order |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☞ TTa: يصطاد في الماء العكر / jaṣṭadu fi ʔalmmaʔi ʔalʕakir/ | | | | | | * | * |
| TTb: يصطاد الماء العكر / jaṣṭadu ʔalmmaʔi ʔalʕakir/ | *! | * | * | * | | * | * |
| TTc: يصطاد في الماء المتسخ / jaṣṭadu fi ʔalmmaʔi ʔalmmuttasix/ | *! | * | | | | | * |

In sum, we have seen that markedness and faithfulness constraints conflict in generating the optimal candidate. This conflict, like any competing constraints, is resolved by the ranking that Standard Arabic gives to English-Arabic translation of idioms with total equivalence. We have specifically shown that markedness constraints dominate faithfulness ones, and while some faithfulness constraints are in conflict, markedness constraints are equally ranked. In the next section, we will discuss some useful insights about the integration of OT in the teaching of translation, especially at the university level.

# IV.         IMPLICATIONS TO TEACHING TRANSLATION

Adopting OT is not meant to be a radical change in approaching translation or to propose a new theory of teaching and learning translation. The assumption is that OT may be incorporated to better analyze translation processes, especially at higher education, provided that learners are already exposed to advanced or comprehensive linguistic knowledge and have developed some phonological awareness. What supports this claim is the fact that translation is also characterized by violable universal competing constraints in the decision making and meaning negotiation processes that translators utilize to obtain optimal outputs. Indeed, the same strategies or steps endorsed in translation are equivalent to the constraints incorporated in OT.

The integration of the tenets of OT in teaching translation offers new insights into understanding the translation process. In translation classes, students are often driven towards generating correct target texts of a source text (i.e. they are, in some sense, 'product-oriented'). We suggest, instead, orienting them towards the interaction and conflict among the constraints that derive the correct or optimal target text. The aim is not only to aid students to produce a linguistically and metaphorically accepted output in the target text, but also to uncover the competing constraints and how such a conflict culminates in a winner and one or more losers. Students are then guided to become more 'process-oriented'. By doing so, the added value is that students will be taught that translation strategies or constraints are conflicting, an interesting fact that is not primarily highlighted in the teaching of translation. More importantly, students should learn that even the accepted translated text (from a number of competing candidates) does violate certain lower-ranked constraints since no translated text is entirely faithful to the source text. Similarly, the suboptimal translated outputs (that some students, for example, generate in a translation class) should be evaluated in terms of their interaction with the optimal output with reference to the constraints that they violate. This will clearly help students understand why such outputs are ruled out and more importantly why some of them can be optimal if a different ranking of the constraints is adopted while others can never be optimal under any possible re-ranking of a set of constraints.

OT also offers students the opportunity to acquire the linguistic skills to evaluate how the source and target languages rank universal constraints. By comparing both the source and target texts students will be able to draw conclusions about how each language system ranks certain constraints depending on the extent to which it tolerates the violation of markedness and faithfulness constraints. For example, a higher-ranked constraint in the source text may be lower-ranked in the target text and vice versa. Thanks to teaching translation through adopting OT's faithfulness and markedness constraints, students will determine which language constraints to violate at the expense of satisfying other constraints while translating a certain text from one language to another.  In other words, students of translation will know that the violation of lower-ranked constraints is less costly than the violation of higher-ranked constraints.

## V.      CONCLUSION

This paper has been concerned with the integration of OT in the translation of idioms from English into Standard Arabic. It has specifically highlighted the interaction between markedness and faithfulness constraints as regards the translation of idiomatic expressions with total equivalence between English and standard Arabic. We have shown that to arrive at linguistically and culturally accepted idioms in Standard Arabic, markedness constraints must dominate faithfulness constraints. Correspondence to the input (the source text) is violated for the sake of satisfying higher-ranked markedness constraints. The faithfulness constraints have also been shown to follow a certain hierarchical ranking.  Accordingly, we have argued that the translation process, especially that of idioms, is better approached by the adoption of OT as translation itself is characterized by the presence of universally violable competing constraints. In the last section, we have raised the issue of adopting OT in the teaching and learning of translation. We have claimed that what should be possibly of more interest to the teachers of translation is not merely the correct target text but the evaluation of and interaction between the faithfulness and markedness constraints that conflict in generating an optimal output or candidate. Finally, future research may target the adoption of OT in idiomatic expressions with partial or no equivalence in the target language.

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