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Adab Al-Rafidayn Journal

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in the field of arts and humanities both in Arabic and English**

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Editor-in-chief

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*The Most Prominent Difficulty the M.A. Students
of Translation Encounter in Translating Mosuli
Food and Drink Proverbs into English*

Muhammad Faiq Al-Azzawi *

Hala Khalid Najim *

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Abstract

This research aims to identify the prominent difficulty facing the translator when translating Mosuli food and drink proverbs into English. Accordingly, a group of Mosuli food and drink proverbs are presented to thirteen M.A. students in the Department of Translation / College of Arts / University of Mosul to translate them immediately into English. After analyzing the students' responses, it is found that the most prominent difficulty facing those translators is that: translators failed to convey the exact meaning of the proverbs into English, due to their lack of awareness that most of Mosuli proverbs like the rest of Arab proverbs contain metaphors, which make the apparent meaning of the proverbs different from the true meanings of the proverbs and therefore, the translation is inappropriate.

Keywords: Difficulty, Translation, Food and Drink, Arabic Proverbs.

1. Introduction

Mieder (2004: 3) illustrates that the proverb is an important element of the nation's identity, whose classical function is instructional because it has wisdom, fact, ethics and traditional opinions. As for Baldick (2008: 274), proverbs are brief popular sayings of strange authorships, explaining some common truths or superstitions as in:

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Prof/ Dept. of Translation/ College of Arts / University of Mosul.

1. Too many cooks spoil the broth.

This proverb explains the wisdom in which all societies operate and which calls for the presence of only one person who is responsible for making decisions, because having more than one person in decision-making may spoil the matter even if they intend to reform. Therefore, we note in all societies, for example, the existence of one president or king of a country, one chief justice with assistants, or one director of a school ... etc.

Bekkai (2010: 17) argues that a proverb is a simple, tangible, popular and repetitive utterance that explains a fact built on popular sense or experience of humanity. It is utilized for different goals by speakers. Occasionally, proverbs are utilized as a method of saying an object gently or in a hidden way. Other times, a proverb can be utilized to make a discussion more powerful; a weak person is able to employ the tradition of the ancestors to boost his position.

It is worth mentioning that proverbs in English have certain cultural characteristics that are different from those of Mosuli Arabic proverbs in that the former have four main cultural features, which are: living environment: where Britain is an island, which makes the lives of its citizens closely related to the sea. Therefore, the majority of their proverbs often speak about fishing, navigation, ... etc. ; religious traditions: Christianity is the main religion in English-speaking nations, which naturally makes the Bible, with all its personalities, stories and events, an important source of English proverbs; cultural heritage: plays, stories, myths, sayings are the main resources for proverbs in English; and customs and habits: milk, butter, bread, salad, sandwich, pudding, cake, and apples are noted as the most common elements of foods, drinks, and fruits in Britain, that's why they are widely used in English proverbs. (Xiangyang, 2016: 277-282)

In contrast, the Holly Qur'an and Al-Hadith Al- Sharif are the main sources for Arabic proverbs, because Islam is the main religion in Arab countries. This will be discussed in detail in the following pages.

Aim of the Research

This study aims to identify the most common problem the translator faces while translating Mosuli food and drink proverbs into English to avoid it and work on finding an effective solution to it.

Hypotheses of the Research

This study hypothesizes that rendering Mosuli food and drink proverbs are one of the difficult areas of students' translation, since many translators may fail in rendering the real meaning of Mosuli proverbs into English.

Procedures of the Research

Providing a full explanation of Arabic proverbs, colloquial proverbs with explanations for their levels, characteristics, as well as their importance are also discussed. An emphasis is put on Mosuli food and drink proverbs, regarding an indication of their most important sources. Some proverbs are given to thirteen M.A. students from The Department of Translation, College of Arts, The University of Mosul to render them into English. Therefore, their answers are collected and analyzed relying on the communicative and semantic methods of translation of Newmark (1988).

Value of the Study

This study is expected to be useful for specialists from professors and students in translating proverbs, and in identifying the appropriate translation method for them. In addition, this study is also expected to be of great value to those interested (non-Arabic speakers) in the study of Mosuli proverbs, because it contains good information about Mosuli proverbs and their explanations.

2. Arabic Proverbs

Sameer (2016: 134) defines proverbs as inherent, well-built, and short sayings which reflect the wisdom of Arabs, through which they gain their intended aims. Al-Abdullah (2011: 32) states that

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Proverbs are divided in terms of looking at the time of their appearance into several types:

- Proverbs appeared in the Pre-Islamic era.
- Proverbs appeared in the Islamic era.
- Proverbs appeared after the era of protest.

There are criteria by which these proverbs are known. One of the criteria for the Pre-Islamic era is attributed to the people who lived in that period such as Luqman Bin Aad to whom the proverb "رب أخ لم تلده أمك" (Perhaps, he is a brother that you never had) is attributed. Or they are attributed to tribes from the Pre-Islamic era, as in the proverb: (Al-Abdullah, 2011: 32)

2. من دخل ظفار حَمَّر. (Whoever enters Dhifar, let him speak Himyariyya)

(ibid.)

In some cases, the incidents in which proverbs were said to indicate their time, especially those that occurred during the Dahis and Al-ghabra' war or the war of Al-bassos, as in:

3. أشأم من داخس. (More ominous than Dahis)

(or more ominous than Al-ghabra') **4. (أو) أشأم من الغبراء.**

(Al-Abdullah, 2011: 32)

As for the Islamic proverbs, there are proverbs that Al-Qur'an was the cause of their creation, as in:

4. أتب من أبي لهب. (More damned than Abu Lahab)

(Al-Abdullah, 2011: 33)

Or some of the sayings of the companions, as in:

**(There is no calamity unless there is
another one above it)** by Abu-Bakir Al-sideeq

(ibid.)

Regarding the proverbs said after the age of protest, which is the period that extends from the first Pre-Islamic era to the second-century A.H, it includes new proverbs that people from non-Arabs said at the beginning of the first Abbasid era (ibid).

Al-Abdullah (2011: 38) summarizes the goals of proverbs with the following two points:

1. Pun and metonymy are one of the goals of proverbs where one reaches his goal without fearing the consequences of saying it, and this leads to a feeling of great comfort as he places on his shoulders this burden that he bears without saying it explicitly. As a person, humans do not naturally tend to accept direct advice, but rather tends to accept advice and guidance in an attractive template, so the presence of a descriptive story with puns is more eloquent in clarifying the situation.
2. Proverbs represent a rich subject for those interested in debates and controversy, and they use it to strengthen their argument and weaken the arguments of their opponents. Therefore, providing scientific and practical experience briefly compensates for the long narration. (Al-Abdullah, 2011: 38)

As for the classification of proverbs, linguists vary on the bases of classifying proverbs. Some adopt the historical bases; therefore, proverbs can be classified into pre-Islamic proverbs and Islamic proverbs. In this division, the linguists find it important to differentiate geographically between Iraqi pre-Islamic proverbs, Hejazi pre-Islamic proverbs, Yemen pre-Islamic proverbs ...etc. Another basis for classifying proverbs is the social one which is divided into rural proverbs and urban proverbs. The third basis is the linguistic one, according to which, proverbs are divided into standard proverbs and colloquial ones (Abbas, 2012:125-126).

2.1. Colloquial Proverbs

The colloquial proverb is the proverb that the public use whether it is an eloquent proverb that changed a little but it did not depart from its original eloquent pronouncement, or it was an eloquent proverb, but it changed so much that the listener could not know its origin or it was a proverb that was transferred in late times from neighboring Arab countries and its origin is not Arabic (Al-Aboudi, 1979: 154).

Colloquial proverbs differ from eloquent proverbs in that they do not adhere to the rules of parsing and eloquence and are often stemming from the local dialect of each origin and they are almost more common than classical and more influential in the hearts of popular due to their ease of use and also their novelty (Alblushi and Alhusnia, n.d.: 3).

According to the suggestive and intensifying aspects of the proverb, the proverb forms an integrated textual structure despite its short construction. However, when interpreting it, it calls for several series of previous texts. The proverb is concise rhetoric, often harmonized, of an unknown source, and of an educational nature formulated in a folk style that transcends the ordinary daily speech. It is the creativity of an intelligent, wise individual who has the wisdom of a community, conscious experience, and pure instinct (Al-Ubaidy, 2006: 40).

Abasha and Bilqashimy (2015: 16) define the colloquial proverb as a short phrase that includes a good idea or basis for human behavior. A person from the public said it on an occasion and then it spread among people to use it on occasions similar to the one when it was first said, and it is formulated in a metaphorical style for the sake of being easy to memorize and remember.

2.1.1. Levels of Colloquial Proverbs

Al-Ubaidy (2006: 41) divides the levels of colloquial proverbs into four levels:

1. The phonetic level: the colloquial dialect was distinguished by having unfamiliar voices in The classical language. The colloquial dialect also allowed itself to use methods in reducing sounds without presumptions indicating the deleted item.
2. The morphological level: the colloquial dialect has morphological structures that are not familiar in classical language, especially about the imperative verbs and the diminutive nouns.
3. The grammatical level: the colloquial dialect got rid of the phenomenon of parsing and tended to the use of al-sukun at the end of the words. Also, dual nouns as well as masculine sound plural lost their nominative case.
4. The semantic level: the colloquial dialects invented the words that may have no origin in the eloquent dictionary and have been used with agreed connotations (ibid).

2.1.2. Characteristics of Colloquial Proverbs

Hijazi (2008: 61) clarifies the most important characteristics of colloquial proverbs that distinguish them from other proverbs through the following points:

1. Colloquial proverbs are known for brevity and their meanings are clear, in addition to the magnificence of their rhythms and exquisite metaphors.
2. Colloquial metaphors are the presentation of past events where each of these proverbs has a source that describes a trend in daily life.
3. Colloquial proverbs are distinguished by their contradictions, which is due to the contradictory life, which in turn reflects the psyche of peoples through their social relationships. These contradictions in social relations are closely related to the interests of members of one society. Accordingly, the existence of paradoxical proverbs in a single society is a natural phenomenon.
4. Colloquial proverbs vary in length since there are long proverbs, in addition to the presence of short proverbs.
5. Colloquial proverbs are characterized by their widespread, for they are used at high levels by all members of a society to enhance their views and persuade their opponents since the proverb are

tools to guide the behavior of people with each other within the limits of an environment.

6. Colloquial proverbs are distinguished by their colloquial language, which is the language used by the public who are characterized by their simplicity and their simple lives. (ibid.)

2.1.3. The Importance of Colloquial Proverbs

As a result of the great spread of colloquial proverbs among people, they play a major role in our lives, due to the various social, political, economic, and religious connotations they contain. Therefore, Abi (2015: 25-26) shows that importance through the following points.

1. Colloquial proverbs are used to guide and control the behavior of the individual by directing him to good morals and encouraging him to adhere to good values and customs, making him distinguish between right and wrong.
2. Colloquial proverbs are of great importance for preserving the heritage of a society, as they provide great benefits to researchers and scholars who are interested in the civilization and culture of a particular nation. Colloquial proverbs are the link between the past and the present because they are part of their heritage and culture. So, each proverb is a treasure full of human experiences that benefit members of society (Abi, 2015: 26).
3. Colloquial proverbs add to the speech an aesthetic touch, due to the characteristics of the proverbs using rhyme, images, in addition to being brief statements through which the meaning emerges.
4. The main role of proverbs is communication between members of one society and between different societies or different nations. Through proverbs, it is possible to communicate with another community and know its culture, its way of thinking and its way of life since proverbs represent a mirror for the traditions, customs and social values of a nation. (ibid.)

2.2. Mosuli Food and Drink Proverbs

Mosuli acquires its name since it is the dialect of Mosul and its districts. It is not standard, and does not have specific rules for

replacing some sounds with others, but it is known as a dialect of /q/, since it is kept unchanged in comparison with Baghdadi and Southern dialects which use /g/ instead, as in:

<u>Southern dialect</u>	<u>Mosulli dialect</u>	<u>English</u>
/gōlat/	/qōlit/	she said

It is also characterized by changing the sound /r/ into /gh/, as in:

<u>Southern dialect</u>	<u>Mosulli dialect</u>	<u>English</u>
/rūs/	/ghūs/	head

(Al-Bazi 2006: 22 and Albuarabi, 2018: 1377)

Mosul is an ancient historical city which has a distinguished geographical location between the plain and the mountain, where it is located on a plateau overlooking the Tigris River, where its fertile banks witnessed the emergence of civilizations one after the other to form a distinct and integrated civilization unit, and that is why Mosul is one of the major cities that witnessed the emergence of hundreds of professions to cover the economic activity of the city, and as a result of the need for these professions for a large number of craftsmen, the owner of the profession was urging his children to learn the craftsmanship to be an aid to him and to provide material and moral support to the family, so the prosperity of these professions had a great role in the welfare of their owners and hence the welfare of the city as a whole (Mahmood, 2009: 33-34).

AL-Imam (2011: 52-55) and Al-Ubaidy (2011: 155-163) state that when Mosul turned into a major civilized metropolis, and as a result of the improved economic situation of its residents, hearty meals such as kuba, kabab, Burma, and many other dishes became new items in the mosuli list of dishes which reflects their high taste in making food and the high efficiency of its women in cooking which is one of their requisite skills as housewives. This interest in food explains the use of food items in a large number of Mosuli proverbs, as in:

(Use groats to get bread) [Sem. Tr.] **٨. حط جريش وخذ عيش.**

(Plan well to achieve your goals) [Com. Tr.]

The meaning of the proverb is that whoever puts crushed grains with a little water on the fire and without much effort, this is guaranteed to turn into food. This proverb is said to encourage people to take the reasons for doing any work correctly.

Al-Sabawi (2014: 4) states that the residents of Mosul have some features and attributes which distinguish them from others, especially about their dialect in addition to the fact that they are favorably disposed to the austerity policy. Mosul has its own savings system due to the crises the city has gone through. The historical texts explain this fact clearly by showing that the inhabitants of this city succeeded in resisting the siege imposed by the Persian leader Nader Shah, who aimed at starving the city's residents to control it. This success is due to wise behavior in storing and preserving food where rice, wheat, and barley in addition to cheese, and meat were kept in special barrels prepared for this purpose. This bitter experience and many others like the famine of Belek, which occurred during the World War I and lasted for three years and the food crisis that happened during the World War II motivated the population to invent simple ways to keep food for long periods and used in emergencies. Also, this made them follow special methods in regulating and reducing spending. So, this behavior is well reflected in many proverbs. (ibid.) Consider the following:

(The date seed helps the large jar) [Sem. Tr.] **٩. نواية تسند الزير.**

Tr.]

(every little helps) [Com. Tr.]

This proverb is used to urge not to underestimate the importance of anything, no matter how simple, as it may have a benefit and importance that we do not know.

(A grain over a grain becomes kubba) [Sem. ١٠. حبة حبة تصير كبة. Tr.]

(Save a little, you will have much) [Com. Tr.]

This proverb is used to show that when small things congregate, they are important, such as money and food. This proverb aims to advise people to save and not waste.

Hamid (2019: 565) explains that since the majority of Mosul residents are Muslims, residents of Mosul are especially interested in the atmosphere of Ramadan, as well as Eid and their rituals, Where the variety and abundance of food on the tables is a cause of pride, and this is reflected in the Mosuli proverbs. Consider the following:

١١. صام صام وفتح على بصلي.

(He fasted for a long time then ate an onion) [Sem. Tr.]

(After unremitting efforts he got little) [Com. Tr.]

(Hamid, 2019: 56)

The above proverb is used to describe people who are patient and make great efforts, but they get little from those efforts, which is not commensurate with what they made. These proverbs are also used to denote the ugly life partner with whom a person is satisfied after a long period of celibacy. (ibid.)

Al-Ubaidy (2006: 43) states that many proverbs are built around a true story or a known accident in history. In turn, Abdullah (2011: 30-34) strengthened what Al-Ubaidi says by providing the following example:

12. الما يعرف تدابير وحنطو تاكل شعيرو.

(Who does not know how to manage his affairs, let his wheat eat his barley) [Sem. Tr.]

(He is the one who does not plan well and does not know how to manage it) [Com. Tr.]

(Abdullah, 2011: 30)

The above proverb is said to reveal whoever does work and fails as a result of negligence, as it is said when a man went from the city to the village and wanted to work in agriculture so he planted wheat and barley. After the harvest, he sold wheat and bought for its price a horse that he tied near the pile of barley so the horse began eating from the barley which was almost depleted, and the horse was overfed and died. (ibid.)

Standard Arabic is considered a significant resource for many Mosuli proverbs, such as the following examples:

١٣. ما كل بيضة شحمة وما كل صفرا تمرة (Al-Ghulami, 1964: 130)

١٤. ما كل ببيضاء شحمة ولا كل سوداء تمرة (Al-Ziadi, 2009: 78)

**(Neither everything white is fat, nor everything black is a date)
[Sem. Tr.]**

(All that glitters is not gold) [Com. Tr.]

This proverb is said to show that people differ in their character and morals, so there is no match between appearance and morals. The first person to say this proverb is Amer Bin Dhahl, whose mother married after his father's death from another man, so she took her son Amer with her, but after the death of his stepfather, Amer returned to his tribe to get his money from his uncle Qais, and found that his uncle had spent Amer's money. Therefore, Amer became angry and tried to strangle his uncle by saying this proverb to show that he and his father may look alike in shape, but morally they are not. (Ibn-Tuloon, 2002: 96)

3. Data Analysis and Discussion

Thirteen MA students in the Department of Translation/ College of Arts/ University of Mosul are asked to translate some of food and drink proverbs from Mosuli Arabic into English based on Newmark's (1988) semantic and communicative translation. The translators are informed of the necessity for translating the texts depending on their information to identify the background knowledge they have for these Mosuli proverbs and their equivalents in English.

SL Text (1):

- السماق إذا يتهدا بالزقاق يتودا

(Al-Dabbāgh, 1956: 72)

1. Untranslated.
2. Make it suitable.
3. Make it suitable.
4. Untranslated.
5. Untranslated.
6. Make it suitable.
7. Make it natural.
8. Make it suitable.
9. Untranslated.
10. Untranslated.
11. Untranslated.
12. Untranslated.
13. Be calm and patient in your life.

Discussion:

This proverb means that sumac spice is eaten only hot or be discarded. (ibid.) In turn, this proverb indicates the importance of finishing our work without delay. As for the translation of this proverb, only six subjects (2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 13) have rendered it into English. But despite that, none of the types of translation (communicative or semantic) are followed, because all the translated subjects contain mistakes that vary between spelling mistakes as in (7), or irrelevant translation as in the rest five

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subjects. As a result, and because all the translated subjects into English are wrong, they are considered failed subjects because they do not succeed in communicating the original meaning of the SLT. Concerning the subjects (1, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, and 12) they fail, since the respondents cannot translate them into English. Consider the table below.

Translator	SLT:	السماق إذا يتهدا بالزقاق يتودا		
	TLTs			
	Types of Translation			
	Semantic Translation	Communicative Translation	Appropriateness	
1	–	–	–	
2	–	–	–	
3	–	–	–	
4	–	–	–	
5	–	–	–	
6	–	–	–	
7	–	–	–	
8	–	–	–	
9	–	–	–	
10	–	–	–	
11	–	–	–	
12	–	–	–	
13	–	–	–	

Proposed Translation: Do not delay today's work until tomorrow.

SL Text (2):

- أشغب من العين ليش أشغب من الساقى

(Al-Ghulami, 1964: 15)

TL Texts:

1. Untranslated.
2. Untranslated.
3. I want the best.

4. Untranslated.
5. Go to the source directly.
6. I want the best.
7. Untranslated.
8. You are really dead to me.
9. Take the best.
10. Untranslated.
11. Get it done well.
12. Drink the clean water and avoid the dirty one.
13. Be relevant.

Discussion:

This proverb guides people to do what they want by themselves, and not to ask others to help them as long as they can do the work. (Al-Ghulami, 1964: 15) About the translation of this proverb, it is noted that eight of the subjects (3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 13) have rendered this proverb into English, while the rest five subjects have not. Both communicative and semantic translation are absent with this proverb, where none of the subjects follow any of the mentioned above types. As for the subjects (3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 13), they are all treated as failed subjects, because they fail in giving the intended meaning of the original text. This proverb contains a metaphor, which makes it has a different meaning to what it looks like. As a result, the translator must adopt communicative translation which gives him more flexible options in conveying the meaning of the SLT, and this does not happen at all. Concerning the untranslated subjects (1, 2, 4, 7, and 10), they are considered a failure, since the translators do not render the proverb into English.

Translator	SLT:	أشغب من العين ليش أشغب من الساقى.		
	TLTs			
	Types of Translation			
	Semantic Translation	Communicative Translation	Appropriateness	
1	—	—	—	
2	—	—	—	

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3	–	–	–
4	–	–	–
5	–	–	–
6	–	–	–
7	–	–	–
8	–	–	–
9	–	–	–
10	–	–	–
11	–	–	–
12	–	–	–
13	–	–	–

Proposed translation: Dependence is weakness, self-reliance is strength.

SL Text (3):

إذا سفاك الماي العار امسك ذبالو

(Al-Ghulami, 1964: 17)

TL Texts:

1. Untranslated.
2. Untranslated.
3. Complete your job.
4. Untranslated.
5. If the enemy tried to be your friend, watch your back.
6. Untranslated.
7. Untranslated.
8. Untranslated.
9. Untranslated.
10. Untranslated.
11. Untranslated.
12. Untranslated.
13. Untranslated.

Discussion:

The example above calls for the importance of paying attention to the beginner (the person who does not have much experience in a certain field) while he does his job to avoid failing (Al-Ghulami, 1964: 17). There are not many translations about this proverb, only two subjects (3, and 5) have rendered it into English, but unfortunately, none of them conveys the meaning of the SLT to the TLT, which means their failure in translation. That is, both communicative and semantic translations are not followed by this proverb. Regarding the rest of the subjects (1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13), they are counted as a failure, because none of them translates the proverb into English.

Translator	SLT:	إذا سقاك الماي العار امسك ذيالو.		
	TLTs			
	Types of Translation			
	Semantic Translation	Communicative Translation	Appropriateness	
1	–	–	–	
2	–	–	–	
3	–	–	–	
4	–	–	–	
5	–	–	–	
6	–	–	–	
7	–	–	–	
8	–	–	–	
9	–	–	–	
10	–	–	–	
11	–	–	–	
12	–	–	–	
13	–	–	–	

Proposed translation: Watch the fool so as not to spoil the task.

4. Conclusion:

Based on the translation results of the three proverbs above, we can conclude that none of the translators succeeded to render these proverbs appropriately, because they do not notice that these proverbs are metaphorical expressions whose meanings are completely different from their apparent meanings. Therefore, the translator has to consider that most proverbs are metaphorical expressions that need from him to dive deeply to grasp the intended meaning of the proverbs, and then translate them correctly. This can be achieved by avoiding the translation of the vocabulary of proverbs separately because this process loses its meaning, which is only completed by translating the entire proverb. Therefore, the translator is advised to follow communicative translation because it aims to translate the precise contextual sense of the ST by using a method that makes content and language easily understandable and acceptable to the readers.

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الصعوبة الأبرز التي تواجهها طلاب ماجستير الترجمة في ترجمة أمثال الطعام والشراب

الموصلية إلى الإنكليزية

محمد فائق العزاوي * وهالة خالد نجم *

المستخلص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحديد الصعوبة الأبرز التي تواجهها المترجم في ترجمته لأمثال الطعام والشراب الموصلية إلى الإنكليزية، بناءً على ذلك تم تقديم مجموعة من أمثال الطعام والشراب الموصلية إلى ثلاثة عشر طالباً للماجستير في قسم الترجمة/ كلية الآداب/ جامعة الموصل لترجمتها بشكلٍ فوريٍّ إلى الإنكليزية، وبعد تحليل إجابات الطلاب فقد تبين بأن الصعوبة الأبرز التي تواجه هؤلاء المترجمين تتمثل في أن: جميع المترجمين فشلوا في إيصال المعنى الدقيق للأمثال إلى الإنكليزية وذلك لعدم إدراكهم بأن معظم الأمثال الموصلية شأنها شأن باقي الأمثال العربية تضم استعارات مما يجعل معنى الأمثال الظاهري مغايراً للألفاظ الحقيقية للأمثال؛ ولذا تكون الترجمة غير موفقة. الكلمات المفتاحية: الصعوبة، الترجمة، الطعام والشراب، الأمثال العربية.

طالب ماجستير/ قسم الترجمة/ كلية الآداب/ جامعة الموصل.

أستاذ/ قسم الترجمة/ كلية الآداب/ جامعة الموصل.