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STRATEGIES IN TRANSLATING IDIOMS AND FIXED EXPRESSIONS
FROM ENGLISH INTO ALBANIAN

Ilda POSHI[d]
Fari LACKA[e]

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to identify the problems and explore the methods, strategies and techniques related to the translation of idioms and the fixed expressions, based on main translation theories. In the translation field there is still a lot to do especially regarding publications or works dealing with both theory and/or practice of idiom translation. As part of a language, usually idioms have been included within the body of bilingual dictionaries, being treated as part of an entry and not as a separate unit. This can be improved by publishing specific dictionaries for idiomatic expressions. Translation in general presents a lot of difficulties and issues to deal with. Still the process becomes more complicated when we deal with idioms and fixed expressions, which at first seem to be untranslatable. The issue of translatability or untranslatability in general and of idioms in particular has always concerned the researchers of translation studies and translators in particular. This is an important concept on how one is to translate them in different contexts. Different methods, techniques and shifts used by numerous translators, scholars and illustrations taken from theoretical and practical field show that there are some procedures which may be applied in idiom translation. This paper will first deal with the definitions of idioms. Such definitions are taken from well-known linguists, translators, scholars and dictionaries. In the next chapters it will explore the characteristics of idioms and their use. Following the classification of difficulties set out by Baker in In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation, this paper endeavours to analyse and practically apply them largely for translation of English idioms and the equivalent Albanian pairs. The findings show that in order to translate idiomatic expressions as correctly as possible, a number of factors should be taken into consideration. By comparing how idioms pertaining to several European languages have been translated, we conclude that the translation of idioms and fixed expressions is possible and depends on the approach we consider to embrace towards the translation process.

Key words: translation, idiom, fixed expression, method, technique, strategy

[d] *Beder University, Department of English Language and Literature, iposhi@beder.edu.al*
[e] *Beder University, Department of English Language and Literature, farilacka@yahoo.com*

1. INTRODUCTION

"*A hard nut to crack*", that is how I would define an idiom in particular and its translation in general. In fact, we think that without idioms, - this vital part which compared to the whole body of a language is as small a quantity as spices in a dish but which makes it tasty, - a language would be dull. The idioms are used in a variety of linguistic situations and contexts. Being cultural-bound and not so frequently used as other words of a language, idioms are difficult for users, learners, and translators, who might   as   well   be   considered   as   culture   ambassadors. The translation process is difficult. It is a communication act and as such we may say that normally it must have existed in a certain form or other since people started to communicate and intercommunicate. Being a complex process, translation has always presented problems to people dealing with it, to the extent that some kinds of texts have been considered as untranslatable, especially with literary works, which represent a real challenge to the translators.

Frequently, though, the body of the languages contains untranslatable words and terms to describe specific concepts, ideas, phenomena, which might pertain to everyday life, (greetings, wishes, blessing, cursing, swearing); to economy (business, industry, tools, machines etc); politics; law (juridical terms); science and art; geography and history; culture and sport; ranks and hierarchies, religion, names of plants, animals, etc. Nowadays there are numerous available dictionaries in many fields and languages, but few dealing properly with the translation of idioms from one language into another.

1.1. Scope of Study and Limitations

This study endeavours to present some ways on how to tackle the problems that the translators face while dealing with this kind of translation. First, we have chosen this topic because we have always been interested in that part of languages dealing with idioms, proverbs, fixed expressions, jokes and puns, which in our opinion are the very flavour of a language. Second, in translation studies, these *expressions figées* [fixed expressions] deserve to be studied on their own due to their characteristics and specific usage. Another fact is that few studies have been carried out in this area of the language, even though idioms, in general, are an integral part of the language and of the everyday communication. Therefore, it is really important to discuss ways how to

translate them into Albanian language and to consider how well the latter can deal with this particular aspect of English language.

Other studies in several languages, such as in Russian, Arabic, Farsi or French have been carried out by scholars and theorists. Since idiomatic expressions are used in many areas of knowledge, this study will deal only with the translation of idioms pertaining to the literary field. Idiomatic expressions used for pragmatic purposes will be mentioned and exemplified, though.

1.2. Hypothesis and Research Questions

This study aims to prove that problematics and strategies propounded and suggested by Mona Baker and Vinay and Darbelnet in idiomatic translation of other languages are present and can be applied in Albanian language as well.

Some questions we will try to answer are:

- o What are idioms and fixed expressions and why do they represents such a challenge in translation practice?
- o What are the problematics of idiom translation in English and Albanian?
- o How many strategies and techniques do literary translation in general and idiomatic translation in particular recognize?
- o Can Mona Baker's strategies be applied in the translation of idioms into Albanian?
- o To what extent can idioms and fixed expressions be translated and are there any undisputable and errorless strategies to help the translator fulfil such mission?

1.3. Methodology and Resources

To carry out this research and collect and explore the examples the analytic-comparative methodology is used, that is:

1- a selective exploitation of examples of ST and TT *to see the strategies used by the translator.*

2- pondering on the rules being followed *to establish the degree of correspondence.* Analytically we will determine if the equivalence of the idiom of the phraseological unit happens at:

a) - explicit (form & content) level of the sign; b) - implicit (only in form) level of the sign;

The main source for the framework of this thesis are: Mona Baker's (1992) *In Other Words* and specifically the third chapter of this book, the Equivalence above Word Level, where the author deals mainly with the idioms and fixed expressions; and Vinay & Darbelnet's *A Methodology for Translation,* which deals with translation in general, but some of the techniques might be applied to the translation of idioms. To support the overall conception of the thesis, other well-known authors' works, such as Eugene Nida's, Peter Newmark's, Rosamund Moon's, or papers from eminent figures in linguistics, such as Ferdinand Saussure, Roman Jakobson have been used.

Many of the examples are taken from these books and others from various internet sources, in particular, those which contributed indirectly to the purpose of the thesis, such as images. Comparatively, in order to make the examples understandable and discriminate the difference between the original and translated version (being this German, French, Italian, etc.) we have provided the backtranslated version for all future readers.

2. IDIOMS: DEFINITION, PROBLEMS, DIFFICULTIES AND STRATEGIES TO TRANSLATE THEM

Idioms are that part that transgresses the ordinariness of the language. They are often witty and humorous sayings used in different contexts and situations and usually figuratively, due to their capacity to express a lot in just a few words. Sometimes we have difficulties in understanding them even in our native language because they do not follow the general grammatical or semantic rules of a language. We feel more perplexed and confused when we hear or use them in a foreign language, because when we study a language we usually tend to neglect them and to pay attention to words and terms we consider important or appropriate to our needs.

2.1. Definitions from dictionaries

Usually, dictionaries give different definitions which vary somewhat slightly from one to another. Fjalori i Gjuhës së Sotme Shqipe (1980; 709) defines the idiom as '*shprehje me ndërtim të veçantë, tërësisht a pjesërisht e ngurosur, që përdoret në një gjuhë prej kohësh me kuptim të njësishëm (i cili nuk del drejtpërdrejt nga shuma e kuptimeve të fjalëve përbërëse) dhe që nuk mund të përkthehet fjalë për fjalë në një gjuhë tjetë*r'.

In English backtranslated as 'an expression having a special construction, fully or partially fixed, which is used in a language conventionally and with a unique meaning (not deriving directly from the meaning of component words) and which cannot be translated word-for-word into another language.'

The Oxford online dictionaries give the following definition of the idiom:

A group of words, whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words: 'Let the cat out of the bag' is an idiom meaning to tell a secret by mistake (Oxford Learners' Dictionary Online).

Therefore, this funny idiom, 'it is raining cats and dogs', is firstly a group of words composed of:

1- A pronoun (it), a verbal form (is raining), two nouns (cats, dogs), a conjunction (and).

Second, its meaning is different and cannot be deduced from separate words. It is obvious that its meaning (it is raining a lot) cannot be deduced from the nouns cats and dogs, which have nothing to do with weather or in this case with the heavy rain. Only the word rain may imply to a certain degree what the meaning of the idiom could be.

Meanwhile, the Albanian relevant idioms (Stefanllari; 1998: 321) are created by the same predicate and different nouns that imply the idea of large quantities of rain: 'Bie shiu litar'- *it rains like ropes;* 'Bie shi me gjyma'- *it rains in jugs;* 'Bie shi me shtamba'- *it rains in pitchers.*

If someone expresses dissatisfaction with the wrong order or procedure of things, then he or she might say: You have *put the cart before the horse.* This phrase is composed of: 1- A verb (put) a determiner (the), two nouns (cart, horse) and a preposition (before). Currently in Albanian two phrases expressing the same idea are used: 'vendos qerren para kalit'- *put the cart before the horse*; 'vendos parmendën para qeve'- *put the plough before the oxen.*

The Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary defines an idiom as 'an expression that cannot be understood from the meanings of its separate words but that has a separate meaning of its own'. Thus, according to this definition, the idiom has a particular structure, both grammatically and lexically different from any other structure, which gives a difference in meaning also. As we see, both definitions emphasize that the meaning cannot be derived from the meaning of the separate elements of the idiom.

Grammatically speaking the idioms are peculiar constructions because, though composed of grammatical changeable units (nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives etc), they have some structures which usually cannot be changed.

2.2. Definitions from Scholars

Idioms as a linguistic phenomenon have been widely studied by many scholars whose aim has been to define, to discover the relevant linguistic and grammatical features and to find the best ways by which to deal with this difficult part of a language, especially with their translation from and into other languages. Different definitions are given by scholars who study translation in general and that of idioms in particular.

'If natural language had been designed by a logician, idioms would not exist', write the two well-known scholars Cacciari and Tabossi, in the forward section of their book Idioms processing, Structure and Interpretation (p. vii). This means that this part of languages mostly sounds as irrational and arbitrary.

Makkai (1972; 122), considers the idioms as '*multiword expressions whose meaning is not predictable from their component parts*'.

This is true, because: **First**, idioms are composed of more than two lexical parts. For example:

  'By and by' (*pas kaluar gjatë, pas pak, së shpejti*) is composed of: a preposition (by), conjunction (and), preposition (by),

  The idiom 'by heart' (*përmendësh*) is composed of: a preposition (by) and a noun (heart)

  'To turn one's nose up', (*ngrej, ose mbaj hundën përpjetë*) is composed of: Verb (to turn), pronoun (one, my, his, her etc), noun (nose), adverb (up).

Second, usually, it is almost always impossible to predict their meaning since the component words often imply no relation to the meaning of the separate words.

If we were to analyze the idiom 'come up (out) smelling of roses' and take the words separately, we would not be able to grasp the meaning of it: First: 'come up' has a lot of meanings (occur unexpectedly, appear, arrive etc), but none of them close to the meaning of the idiom as a whole. We can say the same for smelling (which is a simple act of emitting or inhaling a smell), or for roses which usually stands for the symbol of beauty. When taken as a whole, the component parts give a completely different meaning implied by the three of them: 'emerge from a situation with a reputation

intact' (as the Concise Oxford Dictionary defines the meaning of this idiom), which has the Albanian equivalent: *ia dal, ia hedh pa lagur*.

Fernando, 1996, defines an idiom as a three-fold one. She states that idioms are:

a) ***Conventionalized multiword expressions*** (Mustonen; 2010: 30): This means that idioms have become something accepted or taken for granted. As soon as they start to be used as a part of the vocabulary, no one casts any doubt or raises any question on how they have come into being. According to Saussure, 'The bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. Since I mean by sign the whole that results from the associating of the signifier with the signified, I can simply say: the linguistic sign is arbitrary.' (Saussure; 1959: 67). Since he used the term 'sign' to design the entire word, this means that the words, the lexical body of language, are arbitrary. Consequently, even the idioms are arbitrary and we cannot say or should not ask why English speaking persons say '*head over heels in love'*. As we mentioned before, the idioms have always at least two parts, which may be a noun, pronoun, adjective, verb adverb, preposition, conjunction.

b) ***Almost always non-literal*** ((Mustonen; 2010: 30): That means that component parts of the idioms and the entire idiom itself cannot be translated word for word, apart from several idioms that as we will see, are borrowed from one language to another, though the TL may have or have had its own correspondent idiom. Typical examples of the borrowed idioms are the ones that come either from the mythology, old stories, tales, fables or even famous people's sayings. In his epic work Odysseus, while narrating the return of the main character to his home, Homer describes a scene where Odysseus and his friends experience a terrible event, that of having to fight with two monsters: *Scylla and Charybdis*. 'Scylla and Charybdis, in Greek mythology, were two immortal and irresistible monsters who beset the narrow waters traversed by the hero Odysseus in his wanderings described in Homer's Odyssey, Book XII (Encyclopedia Britannica)

…*To be between Scylla and Charybdis means to be caught between two equally unpleasant alternatives'* (Encyclopedia Britannica)

'Scylla and Charybdis' is used to refer to a situation involving two dangers in which an attempt to avoid one increases the risk from the other, literary. In classical mythology, Scylla was a female sea monster who devoured sailors when they tried to navigate the narrow channel' (Siefring; 2004: 254).

After the Odysseus of Homer was translated and made known, it started to be used in several modern languages, especially in literature, though languages have their own expression. English, for example, has its equivalent between the devil and the blue sea and the Albanian language has its own idiom: '*midis dy zjarresh' (lit. between two fires).*

A very commonly used expression borrowed and used not only in the literary field but in the everyday life too, is *the Achilles heel*. The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms, provides the following definition of the expression:

'*An Achilles heel'*- a person's only vulnerable spot; a serious or fatal weakness. In Greek mythology, the nymph Thetis dipped her infant son Achilles in the water of the River Styx to make him immortal, but the heel by which she held him was not touched by the water; he was ultimately killed in battle by an arrow wound in this one vulnerable spot' (Siefring; 2004: 2).

As already mentioned, English has borrowed a great deal from the Latin language and the other languages that derived from it (especially French, Italian, Spanish). Nevertheless, apart from the mere terms, English has borrowed idioms and expressions, too. In our everyday communication, we see that people have different preferences and that could not but be noticed since in ancient time and the following expression has its origin during the Roman Empire era. This is the definition provided in the Oxford Dictionary of Idioms:

'*There's no accounting for tastes - impossible to explain why different people like different things, especially those things which the speaker considers unappealing, proverb…. Since the late 18th century, this has been the usual English form of the Latin expression de gustibus non est disputandum -there is no disputing about tastes'* (Siefring; 2004: 2).

The world cultural heritage owes a lot to Aesop and his fables, many of which are known and read by the children and grown-up persons and many of these fables have left sayings that we use even nowadays. When someone is envious of something he or she cannot have, we make fun by saying: Sour grapes. In fact, what does it means and what is its origin?

'*Sour grapes* - an attitude in which someone disparages or pretends to despise something because they cannot have it themselves. In Aesop's fable The Fox and the

Grapes, the fox, unable to reach the tempting bunch of grapes, comforts himself with the thought that they were probably sour anyway' (Siefring; 2004: 270).

All these examples show that the idioms can be borrowed in the same way the simple words or terms are. In other cases, the idioms cannot be translated literally, because they imply always a kind of figure of speech which creates an image or implies a truth expressed conventionally.

c) *Indivisible units whose components cannot be varied or varied only within definable limits* (Mustonen; 2010: 30). In fact, usually, the component parts of an idiom cannot be or may be slightly varied. Moon (1998; 3), defines idiom as: -**1-** An ambiguous term, used in conflicting ways. Inlay or general use, idiom has two main meanings. First, an idiom is a particular means of expressing something in language, music, art, and so on, which characterizes a person or group.-**2-** An idiom is a particular lexical collocation or phrasal lexeme, peculiar to a language".

Baker (1992; 63), deals with the problem of equivalence on two levels:-**1- Equivalence on word level; 2- Equivalence above word level**;

In the second case, she considers first the collocations and then idioms and fixed expressions, considering the latter as 'being at the end of the scale from collocations in one or both of these areas: flexibility of patterning and transparency of meaning: **a) Flexibility** of patterning; which means that idioms change their pattern less than collocations; and **b) Transparency** of meaning; which implies that their meaning is less transparent than that of the collocations. Baker, who has largely dealt with the translation of idioms, defined them as 'frozen patterns of a language which allow little or no variation in form and often carry meanings that cannot be deduced from their individual components' (Baker; 1992: 63).

2.3. Context and use

Used in everyday language and in many fields of human activities, idioms represent different realities. Thus, many of them originate from different sources and realities and have different components. Idioms are cultural-based phenomena. For example, English idioms related to the sea or sailing, are more numerous than in Albanian. From history we know that English people have sailed a lot throughout the world, thus introducing many sailing terms and expressions into the vocabulary. Therefore, finding equivalence or trying to translate them from English into Albanian language can prove

difficult and really challenging. Countries differ by culture, so we cannot tend to find always similar idioms or expressions when we compare two languages.

The following examples pertain to naval terms: **1-** *To be (all) at sea* - 'jam tym (lëmsh), e kam kokën (mendjen) tym, lëmsh, jam fare i hutuar'. *–I'm all at sea*. I've no idea how to repair cars (Stefanllari; 1998: 19); **2-** *From stem to stern* - 'nga bashi në kiç, nga fundi në krye' (Qesku; 2000: 1152); **3-** *Old salt* – 'ujk deti' (Qesku; 2000: 727); **4-** *Sail close to/near to the wind* - 'veproj në mënyrë të rrezikshme' (gati të paligjshme)…*he's sailing to the wind*, with those large contracts he makes (Stefanllari; 1998: 336).

As we see from the examples above, none of the translations from English into Albanian has full equivalence to sailing terms into Albanian, though the meaning may be conveyed by other idioms or expressions. Usually, idioms follow the structural and grammatical rules of a language, but the way how they have become part of the relevant language and how they have been created is difficult to be determined.

Example 1: *Be in the limelight* - to receive attention and interest from the public ~ Limelight was a type of lighting used in the past in theaters to light the stage. *He's been in the limelight recently, following the publication of a controversial novel.* (Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms, (1998; 230). The above-mentioned idiom has a cultural background. Since its invention, the limelight has been used in the theater like a spotlight, to direct the audience's attention to a certain actor. If an actor was to be the focal point of a particular scene, he would be thrust '*into the limelight.'*

Example 2: 'To meet one's Waterloo': We know Napoleon's legendary defeat in Waterloo, where he definitely lost his power. 'Meet your Waterloo - experience a final and decisive defeat. The battle of Waterloo in 1815 marked the final defeat of Napoleon's army by the British and the Prussians' (Siefring; 2004:308). In this case, we cannot find an equivalent idiom by using either of the two components of the SL idiom since Waterloo pertains to the geography and history of another country. Again in this case we have to refer to a similar idiom in meaning and use the very witty saying "do vejë dhelpra sa dovejë, gëzofçiun do ta gjejë" (lit. the fox might go round and round but at the end it will meet the fur-maker), or use the calque procedure and say si Napoleoni në Vaterlo (lit. as Napoleon in Waterloo).

As we see, the idioms have almost the same meaning in both languages, but a different grammatical or lexical structure. In my opinion, idioms are a group of words used

always figuratively, having a different meaning from the one of the component words taken separately and usually impossible to translate literally into another language. With regard to use of idioms, we have to say something about the register, which is important when translating because of the audience to which this translation is intended The Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms (1998; 15), determines the following register labels of idiom use:

a) **Informal** - *idioms which are used with friends and family or people you know in relaxed situations.* **Examples:** 'Be barking up the wrong tree' (CIDI; 1998: 23); 'Be fed up/sick to the back teeth' (CIDI; 1998: 15); 'So long' (CIDI; 1998: 236); 'Get lost' (CIDI; 1998: 238) ; 'Lose your marbles' (CIDI; 1998: 246); 'Do a moonlight flit' (CIDI; 1998: 260); 'Eat like a pig' (CIDI; 1998:298).

b) Formal - idioms which are used in a serious or polite way, for example in business documents, serious newspapers, and books, lectures, news broadcasts, etc. (CIDI; 1998: 15). **Examples:** 'On no account must/should' (CIDI; 1998: 2); 'Alma mater' (CIDI, 1998: 7); 'Au naturel' (CIDI; 1998: 13); 'Post·haste' (CIDI; 1998: 307).

c) Very informal - idioms which are used in a very informal or not very polite way, often between members of a particular social group (CIDI; 1998: 15). **Examples:** 'On your bike!' (CIDI; 1998: 34); 'Bore the arse off' (CIDI; 1998: 46); 'Be out of your brain' (CIDI; 1998: 48); 'Drop dead!' (CIDI; 1998: 92).

d) Old-fashioned - idioms which are still used but sound old-fashioned (CIDI; 1998: 15). **Examples:** 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away' (CIDI; 1998: 9); 'Be in bad odour with' (CIDI; 1998: 18); 'Be as busy as a bee' (CIDI; 1998: 55); 'Go through fire and water' (CIDI; 1998: 137) 'French leave' (CIDI; 1998: 148).

e) Taboo - idioms which are likely to offend people and are not used in formal situations. **Examples:** 'Kiss/lick sb's arse (CIDI; 1998: 11); 'Go piss up a rope!' (CIDI; 1998: 330); 'Be in deep/the shit' (CIDI; 1998: 346).

f) Humorous - idioms which are intended to make people laugh (CIDI; 1998: XV). **Examples:** 'To teach one's grandmother to suck eggs' (CIDI; 1998: 161); 'Let sleeping dogs lie' (CIDI; 1998: 356); 'What's your poison?' (CIDI; 1998: 305); 'Be pushing up (the) daisies' (CIDI; 1998: 311); 'Be in seventh heaven' (CIDI; 1998: 343); 'Snail mail' (CIDI; 1998; 359); 'Wear the trousers' (CIDI;1998: 419).

g) Literary - idioms which are mainly used in literature. **Examples:** 'The bitter fruits' (CIDI; 1998: 36);'In the bosom of '(CIDI; 1998: 46); 'Hearth and home' (CIDI; 1998:

186); 'The last gasp of sth.' (CIDI; 1998: 220); 'Cast pearls before swine' (CIDI; 1998: 295); 'Be as silent as the grave' (CIDI; 1998: 352); 'By the sweat of your brow' (CIDI; 1998: 378); 'A sword of Damocles hangs over sb.' (CIDI; 1998: 379).

As already mentioned, in this paper we will deal only with literary idioms which are mainly used in literature, but according to the situation they may be used many often in everyday conversation or different forms of writing such as: newspapers, magazines, advertisements. By literary idioms, we mean that we exclude those pertaining to science, to laws, sport.

2.3.1. Characteristics of Idioms

Regarding their features, Baker, (1992: 63) states that 'idioms and fixed expressions are at the extreme end of the scale from collocation in one or both of these areas: flexibility of patterning and transparency of meaning. They are frozen patterns of the language which allow little or no variation in form and, in the case of idioms, often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components'. Then based on this statement she points out five main features that characterize the nature of idioms saying that 'unless s/he is consciously making a joke or attempting a play on words, a speaker or writer cannot normally do any of the following with an idiom:

o Change the order of the words in it (e.g. 'the short and the long of it', to dig one's grave (*i hap varrin, i bëj gropën vetes*);

o Delete a word from it (e.g. spill the beans, cap in hand (me *zemër në dorë*);

o Add a word to it (e.g. 'face the *classical* music');

o Replace a word with another (e.g. 'the *tall* and the short of it'; 'bury *a hatchet'*);

o Change its grammatical structure (e.g. 'the music was faced, *the bucket was kicked* (Baker; 1992: 63).

However, unlike idioms the fixed expressions and proverbs often have fairly transparent meanings. The meaning of as a matter of fact can easily be deduced from the separate meanings of its constituent words, unlike the meaning of the following idioms: '*As pull a fast one'* and *'fit or fill the bill'*.

Meanwhile, Moon (1998; 177), distinguishes three main characteristics of idioms she calls surface characteristics which are: ambiguity (and homonymy); polysemy; metaphoricality;

Ambiguity: Sometimes context is important in understanding the meaning of idioms. It clarifies the real intent of the speaker, or whether the expression should be considered literally or figuratively. Usually, when an idiom has a literal counterpart it may be ambiguous and Moon (1998; 177), says that 'homonymy or ambiguity is sometimes considered an essential criterion for the notional class of pure idiom'. Let us imagine we are in kitchen situation.

a)   Johnny is in trouble?

b)   Why?

c)   He tried to make a cake, he failed and he burnt the fingers. The owner reprimanded him harshly.

From what we hear, we do not understand whether he literally burnt his fingers or suffered other consequences due to the owner's reprimand. Therefore, only the context can clarify the idiom was used in its literal or figurative meaning. The same problem would result with the use of the following examples: **-1-** *Meanwhile, shareholders are in trouble. In a real crisis, they may be able to do little but watch their paper wealth go up in smoke. (OHPC: journalism) (Moon; 1998: 179)* **– 2-.** *Restaurants lose a good proportion of food through the back door and no one, so to speak, spills the beans.* (Moon; 1998: 180)

Polysemy: Polysemous fixed expressions are those which have two or more non-compositional meanings, in addition to any literal ones. This causes a real problem to translators because the relevant word or expression in the TL may not have all the meanings the word in the SL has. Moon discusses several cases and gives figurative and literal meanings of the idiomatic expressions. She says that 'the most typical cases are where one meaning is an anomalous collocation and the other a metaphor' (Moon; 1998: 188) and some of the examples included by her are: **Example 1: *Abandon ship (a.*** leaving a ship that is sinking; **b. -** giving up an enterprise;) **Example 2: *Tread water: (a.-*** stay upright while floating in the water; **b.-** do nothing (Moon; 1998: 189).

Sometimes, the idiomatic expression might have variations which seem similar, but in fact, have different meanings. The examples below show his category of idioms, which might be easily misinterpreted, if we do not pay enough attention. **Example 1: a) - PLANT goes/runs to seed** - produce seeds ; **b) - SOMETHING goes to seed** – deteriorate; **Example 2: a) - X slips/gets through the net** - evade, escape; **b) - X/SOMETHING slips/falls through the net -** be missed or ignored; **Example 3: or**

else –   1. (conjunction) prefacing contrast; **2.** (convention, filler) - indicating threat (Moon; 1998: 189-190)

Metaphoricality: Apart from everyday life, idioms are largely used in literature and many often in other forms of writing like newspapers, magazines etc. Idioms in different contexts work as metaphors or as similes. Regarding this characteristic of metaphors and metaphorical expressions, Moon (1998: 193), states that 'their rhetorical power results from the tension between their essential untruthfulness and the ways in which they could be considered to be representative of the truth. Exaggeration and manipulation of reality are key features of metaphorical expressions'. She further categorizes the metaphor as follows: **a. Metonymy:** *Absence makes the heart grow fonder; Fight tooth and nail; Hate someone's guts; Lend a hand; On foot, by foot; Two heads are better than one (Moon; 1998: 193-194) /-/* **b. Personification:** *The pot calling the kettle black; The world and his wife; Time flies ; Time and tide wait for no man* (Moon; 1998: 195) /-/ **c. Animal Metaphors** (*in brackets is the Connoted characteristic)**:**   *As blind as a bat* (=weak eyesight); *As busy as a bee, a busy bee* (=industry); *A red rag to a bull* (=rage); *Shed crocodile tears* (=insincerity); *Dead as a dodo* (=obsolescence); *Treat someone like dog* (=ill-treatment); *Eat like a horse* (=appetite); *As stubborn as a mule* (=obstinacy (Moon; 1998: 195); *Fight like cat and dog = (*of two people) be continually arguing with one another (Siefring; 2004:47). /-/**d. Hyperbole, Absurdity, and Truism:** *A storm in a teacup; Be neither here nor there; Breathe fire; Be paved with gold; Chilled to the marrow/bone ;Cost an arm and a leg* (Moon; 1998: 196-198). /-/ **e. Irony:** *A bright spark; Happ(il)y ever after; One's heart bleeds; Pearls of wisdom; Ray of sunshine; Whiter than white* (Moon; 1998: 200)

2.4. Criteria and Classification of Idioms

2.4.1. Criteria

Language is a social phenomenon; consequently, most of the idioms are related to the everyday language and conversation, to literature, Bible, though idioms may originate from other fields of human activities as for instance, science and technology (at the wheel, a Mickey mouse company, in the limelight, etc). Since the language evolves continually, even idioms follow the same way. Some of them get 'old - fashioned', some brand new ones become part of the linguistic corpus. Moon (1998: 6) defines three main criteria to determine a string of words an idiom, or idiomaticity, as follows:

a) Institutionalization: Bauer states that the 'institutionalization is the process by which a string or formulation becomes recognized and accepted as a lexical item of the language (Moon; 1998: 7).

b) Lexico-grammatical Fixedness: Otherwise called 'formal rigidity' the lexico-grammatical fixedness 'implies some degree of lexico-grammatical defectiveness in units, for example with preferred lexical realizations and often restrictions on aspect, mood, or voice' (Moon; 1998: 7). As classic examples she mentions the following idioms: '*call the shots', 'kith and kin', and 'shoot the breeze'*. She also emphasizes that both institutionalization and fixedness are not sufficient criteria to indicate the status of a string of words as an idiom.

c) Non-compositionality: For Moon, the non-compositionality criterion 'is regarded as a semantic criterion, in the broadest sense, and semantic non-compositionality is the archetypal form'. This means that an idiom does not require a word-by-word interpretation or translation. Typical cases are metaphorical idioms. As non-compositional idioms, she defines also the 'institutionalized strings which are grammatically ill-formed or which contain lexis unique to the combination' (Moon; 1998: 7). In this group, we could mention for example the following idiom: come hell, or high water (Moon; 1998: 8). There is also a subcategory which Moon calls it 'pragmatic non-compositionality' (Moon; 1998: 8). The components of idioms of this type of non-compositionality can be decoded, but the entire meaning of the idiom has a 'special discoursal function' and they 'include proverbs, similes, and sayings' (Moon; 1998: 8).

In *Relevance Theory and the construction of idiom* meaning, (Vega-Moreno; 2003: 305), states that 'the relation between an idiom's form and its meaning may be more or less direct.' According to her, this relation can be a 'one-to-one relation in that each word contributes independently to the figurative interpretation. **Example:** 'behind closed doors', or 'pop the question': the figurative interpretation of these idioms is implied by considering their components independently.

Gibbs & Nayak; Nunberg, call these idioms as 'normally decomposable' (Vega-Moreno; 2003:305). The other case is when the relation of the components of the idiom is 'all-to-one relation with the (literal) meaning of the whole phrase being semantically related to the figurative interpretation, (e.g. *bury the hatchet, push the panic button*).

These idioms are typically known as 'abnormally decomposable' idioms (Vega-Moreno; 2003: 305).

And the third case is when 'the relation may be none-to-one in that the constituent words neither individually nor as a whole appear to be in any semantic relation to the idiomatic meaning (e.g. *chew the fat, break a leg*). These idioms are referred to as 'non decomposable' (Vega-Moreno; 2003: 305).

Based on such kinds of semantic relations between the components of an idiom, the idiomatic meaning might be: -**1-More or less transparent** with the constituent words contributing to idiom meaning rather literally (e.g. 'miss' in miss the boat); -**2-Metaphorical** (e.g. 'blow' in blow one's stack); - **3-Hyperbolical** (e.g. eat one's heart out); - **4- Not contributing** at all to deriving idiom meaning (e.g. kick the bucket, chew the fat, shoot the breeze); (Vega-Moreno; 2003: 306).

Considering the fact that the constituent part of an idiom can be analyzable (decomposable), or unanalysable (non-decomposable), the author further divides them into three other categories: -**a) Conventionality:** According to her, conventionality is 'the relation between a certain string of words and a certain semantic representation' (Vega-Moreno; 2003: 306). To be conventional for idioms means to be arbitrary in the way how they 'express a certain conceptual representation' (Vega-Moreno; 2003: 306). **Example:** If something is too expensive, in English we use the idiom to cost an arm and a leg, while for an Albanian it would be *kushton qimet e kokës*, literally meaning to cost the hair of one's head. The equivalent French idiom is *coûter les yeux de la tête*, (to cost the eyes of one's head).- **b) Analysability:** By analysability, (Vega-Moreno; 2003: 306)*,* intends the degree to which 'the constituent concepts encoded by the idiom string can be used to access assumptions in memory which will contribute to the derivation of the intended interpretation'. Or*,* when the whole idiom can be analysed based on the meaning of each component word taken separately. **Example:** *Bite hand that feeds you*: as seen this is one of the idioms, whose component words can be analysed separately and we may get the whole meaning. The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines its meaning as '*deliberately harm or offend a benefactor'. The harm* or *offense*, are implied by the use of *bite* and *the benefactor* is *the hand that feeds you.-* **c) Transparency:** The third criterion mentioned by Vega-Moreno (2003: 306), is the transparency expressed by 'the relative ease with which these assumptions are accessed and implications derived'. For an idiom being transparent, opposite of opaque means

that we may interpret and sometimes translate its meaning with ease. **Example:** *Dig one's own grave,* (to do something foolish which causes one's downfall: (COE dictionary), is transparent as an idiom and it openly implies the meaning of doing something which may be dangerous or harmful.

2.4.2. Classification of Idioms

How are idioms classified? Moon (1998; 4), claims that 'idiom denotes a general term for many kinds of multi-word expressions' whether semantically opaque or not'. Fernando (1996; 35), distinguishes three sub-classes of idioms: **1)** *Pure Idioms:* 'a type of conventionalized, non-literal multiword expression'. Pure idioms are always non-literal, however they may be either invariable or may have little variation. In addition, idioms are said to be opaque (Shojaei; 2010: 1223). **2)** *Semi-idioms***: '**semi-idioms are said to have one or more literal constituents and one with non-literal sub sense'. Therefore, this type of idioms is considered partially opaque' (Shojaei; 2010: 1223) and, **3)** *Literal idioms***:** 'this sub-class of idioms are either invariable or allow little variation'. In addition, literal idioms are considered to be transparent as they can be interpreted on the basis of their parts (Shojaei; 2010:1223).

Meanwhile, in order to distinguish the idiomatic to non-idiomatic forms, (Adelnia & Dastjerdi; 2011: 880), give the following classification, dividing the idioms into five categories:

a. Colloquialism, which they describe it as 'an expression not used in formal speech or writing. Colloquialism or colloquial language is considered to be characteristic of or only appropriate for casual, ordinary, familiar, or informal conversation rather than formal speech or writing. They are used in daily conversations'. **Examples**: *Gonna* (in American English): short form of go to); *wanna*: short form of want to. Sometimes a whole expression may be a colloquialism. **Examples**:

There's more than one way to skin a cat– something that you say which means that there are several possible ways of achieving something (CIDI; 282); *Be a pain in the neck*– to be very annoying (CIDI; 289); *You're telling me* – something that you say in order to show sympathy to someone who has the same problem or bad experience as you (CIDI; 385).

b. Proverbs: A proverb is generally a simple and very popular way of speaking, but also used in other contexts. Mieder defines a proverb as' a short, generally known

sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable form and which is handed down from generation to generation' (Adelnia & Dastjerdi; 2011: 880). The Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, Second Edition (2001; 1556), gives the following definition on a proverb: **1.** A short popular saying, usually of unknown and ancient origin that expresses effectively some commonplace truth or useful thought; adage; saw. **Examples**: 'A cat in gloves catches no mice' = restraint and caution (or 'pussyfooting') achieve nothing (Simpson & Speake; 2003). **Other examples** include: *A golden key can open any door; All that glitters is not gold; The early bird catches the worm ; Honey catches more flies than vinegar* (Simpson & Speake; 2003).

c. Slang: Slang is the use of highly informal words and expressions that are not considered as the standard use of language. It is often used as a way to say words that are not appropriate or somehow taboo (Adelnia & Dastjerdi; 2011: 880). **Examples**: *Chick* (for a young girl); *The Apple* (referring to N.Y city); *Wild* (for astonishing, amazing etc);

d. Allusions: Allusion is a figure of speech that makes a reference to a place, event, literary work, myth, or work of art, either directly or by implication (ibid). All the examples below, illustrate better the way how many of the allusions were created and how they are used in our days, in any of the above-mentioned areas: *Garden of Eden*: = the place where Adam and Eve lived in the biblical account of the Creation

a place or state of unspoilt happiness or beauty (Soanes & Stevenson; 2004); *Muse* = some creature of inspiration; the daughters of Mnemosyne and Zeus, divine singers that presided over thought in all its forms (Literary devices); *Odyssey* = a long journey; named for Odysseus, the character in The Odyssey, by Homer (Literary devices); *Don Quixote* = someone overly idealistic to the point of being unrealistic. From the Cervantes story and The Man of La Mancha (Literary devices); *Scrooge* = a bitter and/or greedy person; from Dickens', A Christmas Carol (Literary devices); *El Dorado* = a place of reputed wealth; from the legendary city in South America.(Literary devices); *Uncle Sam* = government of people of the United States; derived from Uncle Sam, a business man in the 1900s (Literary devices); When I first read the word *Judas*, I could only guess its meaning from the context and years later when I read the story of the Bible, I was able to associate it to the connotation it had in a Russian author's book.

e. Phrasal Verbs: A phrasal verb is the combination of a verb and a preposition, a verb and an adverb, or a verb with both an adverb and a preposition (Adelnia & Dastjerdi,; 2011: 880). A phrasal verb often has a meaning which is different from the original verb. **Examples**: *Break something in* (accustom a horse to being ridden); *make off* (leave hurriedly); *get b*y (manage to do something); *set off* (begin a journey); *set on* (attack somebody); *put up with* (tolerate).

2.5. Problems and Difficulties during the Translation of Idioms

As a concept, the untranslatable, regarding either terms or contexts, is part of the translation process. Roman Jacobson's main idea was that 'all cognitive experience and its classification is conveyable in any existing language' (Hatim & Munday; 2004: 10) and he classifies as untranslatable only the poetry (Hatim & Munday; 2004: 10), because '…in verse the form of words contributes to the construction of the meaning of the text. Such statements express a classical dichotomy in translation between sense/content on the one hand and form/style on the other.' (Hatim & Munday; 2004: 10).

From this statement, the authors deduce that the sense may be translated, while the form often cannot 'and the point where form begins to contribute to sense is where we approach untranslatability. This clearly is most likely to be in poetry, song, advertising, punning and so on, where sound and rhyme and double meaning are unlikely to be recreated in the TL' (Hatim & Munday; 2004: 10). From this last statement, we approach the domain of untranslatability because the idioms represent the case of translating both sense (meaning) and form.

In fact to a native speaker they sound quite natural and easy, because they grow up with language at each step they take into life and consequently with the presence of idioms, though people rarely pay attention to this special category of words or phrases. As part of a community speaking the same language and using a set of words and utterances, we take idioms‟ use for granted. But as soon as we become aware of their appearance in our speech or written form we start to think and we get confused about their meaning, use and especially their translation: So, are idioms translatable?

This is a question to each many scholars and researchers have devoted much time and efforts, most of whom concluding that they also may be translated in one way or another. But, before concluding on their translatability, we have to define first what an

idiom is and what are some of its characteristics, in order to later proceed with other steps leading to the purpose of this paper stating that: idioms can be translated.

In the everyday conversation and by common people, idioms are often recognized as witty or humorous sayings. Almost everyone uses them in both spoken and written form.

Example 1: We often criticize other persons and instead of simply saying: 'Be practical' we say *Keep your feet on the ground,* (ec me këmbë në tokë) ;

Example 2: When we what to 'make fun of an ill or old person is expected to die', we say: *He/she has one foot in the grave. =* 'Ai/ajo është/ka një këmbë në varr'. As we see from the last example, we may deduce its meaning to a certain degree because by analysing the word 'grave', one is able to understand that to have a foot in the grave means to be in a kind of danger, since the word grave implies death and consequently something bad. Unfortunately, this does not happen every time we see or hear an idiom. When wanting to oppose the opinion of somebody, usually English people say: *My eye!* At first hearing it is difficult to understand why the speaker utters such words: 'Does he/she have a sore eye?' or 'Is he/she blind?'. Yet, we do not know that it means something totally different and unrelated to these questions: it simply means that something is unbelievable.

Example 3:

a- I think Jimmy is a shy person?

b- Jimmy!? Shy, *my eye*! He is such an insolent one. (Using English)

Somebody who has never heard the idiom eat crow probably would guess it, but it would be almost impossible to understand its meaning. The Oxford dictionary defines its meaning as follows: *Eat crow* - Be humiliated by having to admit one's defeats or mistakes: the experts will be eating crow tonight (Soanes & Stevenson; 2004).

Since normally no-one can eat a crow's flesh, we could guess to a certain point that it can mean to do something against one's will, but not the exact one given by the dictionary.

Once an idiom or fixed expression has been recognized and interpreted correctly, the next step is to decide how to translate it into the TL. The difficulties involved in translating an idiom are totally different from those involved in interpreting it. Here, the question is not whether a given idiom is transparent, opaque, or misleading. An opaque expression may be easier to translate than a transparent one.

The **main difficulties** involved in translating idioms:

*(a) An idiom or fixed expression **may have no equivalent** in the TL* (Baker; 1992: 68): A language chooses to express, or not express various meanings, which cannot be predicted and only occasionally match the way another language chooses to express the same meanings. One language may express a given meaning by means of a single word, another may express it by means of a transparent fixed expression, a third may express it by means of an idiom and so on. Therefore, we should not to expect to find equivalent idioms and expressions in the TL as a matter of course. Like single words, idioms and fixed expressions may be culture-specific. Greeting and wishes related to specific social or religious occasions provide good examples.

Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!

Less problematic, but to some extent also culture-specific, are the fixed formulae are used in formal correspondence, such as *Yours faithfully* and *Yours sincerely* in English. These, for instance, have no equivalents in Albanian formal correspondence. Instead, we may use '*me respekt'*, '*me konsideratë të lartë'* (lit. 'with respect', 'with high consideration').

Idioms and fixed expressions which contain culture-specific items are not necessarily untranslatable. The translation cannot be linked to specific components of an idiom, but the meaning it conveys and its association with culture-specific contexts which can make it untranslatable or difficult to translate. **Example:** The English expression 'to carry coals to Newcastle' though contains a reference to Newcastle coal and uses it as a measure of abundance, is nevertheless closely paralleled in Albanian by '*shpie ujë në det'* ('to carry water to sea'). Both expressions convey the same meaning: to supply something to someone who already has plenty of it. In French, the same meaning can be rendered by the expression *porter de l'eau à la rivière* (lit. to carry water to the river).

The idiom '*bie shi me gjyma'*, has the same meaning as '*it rains cats and dogs'*.

*(b) An idiom or fixed expression **may have a similar counterpart** in the TL, but its context of use may be different. The two expressions may have different connotations, for instance, or they may not be pragmatically transferable* (Baker; 1992: 69). **Example 1:** *'To sing a different tune'* is an English idiom which means to say or do something that signals a change in opinion because it contradicts what one has said or

done before. In Albanian '*marr/luaj tjetër avaz'* (to play different tune), also refers to a different but not necessarily contradictory point of view. ; **Example:** The English idiom '*in the palm of one's hand'* means have somebody or something under control, while the Albanian counterpart, when you *have/keep somebody in the palm of one's hand*, means that you treat him/her very generously and kindly.

*(c) An idiom **may be used in the SL in both its literal and idiomatic senses** at the same time* (Baker; 1992: 69). In these cases, a play on idiom cannot be successfully reproduced in the TT. Usually, they can be translated only in languages having similar or almost similar idiom. **The following extract** taken from a passage constituting part of the British Translators' Guild Intermediate Examinations for all languages (1986), is being used by Baker just to illustrate this case: 'He had sufficient influence to be able to poke his nose into the private affairs of others where, less aristocratic noses might have been speedily bloodied.' In this case, Albanian language has an identical idiom, 'fut hundët', and same component words and the meaning is the same.

*(d) The convention of using idioms in **written discourse**, the **contexts** and their frequency of use may be **different** in the SL and TL. English makes frequent use of idioms in advertising, publicity, newspapers etc.* (Baker; 1992: 70). Consider this illustration from a headline.: *Patient at Death's door - Doctors pull him through* (Headline jokes). Here the play on meaning results from the literal and idiomatic use of '*to pull through'*, which could be interpreted as 'pull the patient through the death's door/push him to death', or as 'make the patient get through the illness'.

Discussing the difference in the rhetorical effect of using idioms in general and of using specific types of idiom in the SL and TL, Fernando and Flavell 1981 conclude that 'translation is an exacting art. Idioms more than any other feature of language demands that the translator be not only accurate but highly sensitive to the rhetorical nuances of the language (Baker; 1992: 71).

According to Newmark (1988; 28), 'in translating idiomatic into idiomatic language, it is particularly difficult to match equivalence of meaning with equivalence of frequency'. He also believes that 'the chief difficulties in translating are lexical, not grammatical - i.e. words, collocations and fixed phrases or idioms' (Newmark; 1988: 31)

Davies (2004; 193), mentions a number of problems students may face in translating idioms and fixed expressions:

1 -recognition

2 -no equivalent in the TL

3 -a similar counterpart in the TL with a different context of use

4 -an idiom used in the ST both in its literal and idiomatic sense at the same time

5 - the difference between the convention, context and frequency of use in the SL and TL.

Baker (1992; 65), believes that 'the main problems that idiomatic and fixed expressions pose in translation relate to two main areas: the ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly and the difficulties in rendering various aspects of meaning that an idiom or a fixed expression conveys into the TL. The translation in general and that of the idioms in particular becomes more difficult when they are used in puns, jokes or advertising. In these cases, we have not to do only with the translation of the idiom as a lexical unity, but also of the context.- **Example 1: '**I have been to the dentist and *I know the drill.'* This is a pun using the idiom *to know the drill* (to know, to have experienced something) and its literal meaning (drill - a tool, machine used by the dentist for boring holes on the tooth); -**Example 2: '**I married him, because I thought he was *filthy rich* and now I discovered he's simply *filthy.*' Again a play on words formed by using the idiom (filthy rich) containing the adjective 'filthy' which stands for very, extremely and use of adjective filthy which is synonymous with 'dirty, shabby', thus implying poor, the opposite of rich. In this case, for the Albanian translation, we may use the adjective 'i *krimbur'*, which in the same way as the word filthy, though not completely, may imply both meanings. Therefore, the Albanian translation would be: *U martova me të sepse mendova se ishte i krimbur në para dhe tani zbulova se ishte thjesht i krimbur.*

2.6. Strategies for Idiom Translation

a) Idioms, fixed expressions and the direction of translation: While most of the idioms do not change in form, some are more flexible than others. One does not use the idioms and fixed expressions of a foreign language with the competence of a native speaker. Even translators have many difficulties in judging when and how to manipulate an idiom. As already mentioned, according to Baker (1992), the main problems that idiomatic and fixed expressions pose in translation relate to two main areas of difficulty: - **1-** The ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly; and -

2- The difficulties involved in rendering the various aspects of meaning into the TL.

b) The interpretation of idioms: In chapter 3.2.2, Baker (1992: 65) states that 'the first difficulty that a translator comes across is being able to recognize that s/he is dealing with an idiomatic expression. This is not always so obvious'. This means that among the numerous idioms in a language, some of them can be easily recognized and some others not. According to her, 'the easily recognizable include expressions which:

1) -Violate truth conditions, such as '*It's raining cats and dogs*', '*throw caution to the winds*', '*storm in a tea cup*', '*jump down someone's throat*', and '*food for thought*'.

2) -Include expressions which seem ill-formed because they do not follow the grammatical rules of the language, for example '*trip the light fantastic*', '*blow someone to kingdom come*', '*put paid to*', '*the powers that be*', '*by and large*', and '*the world and his friend*'.

3) -Start with *like* (simile-like structures) also tend to suggest that they should not be interpreted literally. These include idioms such as '*like water off a duck's back*'. (Baker; 1992: 65)

According to her, 'the more difficult an expression is to understand and the less sense it makes in a given context, the more likely a translator will recognize it as an idiom' (Baker; 1992: 65). Usually the idioms do not make sense if translated or interpreted literally. Therefore, this implies that when a translator cannot make sense of an expression in a context, will alert the translator to the presence of an idiom of some sort. There are two cases in which an idiom can be easily misinterpreted.

a - some idioms are '**misleading**'; they seem transparent because they offer a reasonable literal interpretation (Baker; 1992: 66). In English and probably in all languages, there might be idioms which have both a literal and an idiomatic meaning. Baker (1992; 66), mentions a very common idiom '*go out with*', which has an idiomatic meaning (have a romantic or sexual relationship with someone), or the literal one (leaving a place with someone). Such idioms provide a good opportunity to create puns or jokes playing on both of these meanings. Therefore, a translator unfamiliar with the idiom in question may accept the literal interpretation and miss the play on idiom.

b - an idiom in the SL may have a **very close counterpart** in the TL which looks similar on the surface but has a totally or partially different meaning (Baker; 1992: 66). For example, the idiomatic question '*to pull someone's leg*', meaning to tell someone something untrue as a joke in order to shock and amuse him/her when they find out

later that it was a joke. In French, a similar expression: '*tirer la jambe*' ('pull the leg') means to drag one's steps. In Albanian, the literal translation of this idiom would lead to two different meanings, depending on the fact whether the noun leg is used in singular, or plural. If the singular counterpart of the word leg in Albanian is used in the singular, the idiom form would be '*tërheq këmbën*', which means to invoke somebody's death. If we use the plural, the idiom form would be '*tërheq këmbët*', meaning to drag one's feet. Here we have to note that the Albanian word '*këmbë*' is polysemic and is used for both of the English words: 1 –foot;   2 –leg; -

These kinds of idioms having different meanings in the SL and TL become easy traps for the translator who is not familiar with the SL idiom.

c) Strategies for translating idioms: Translation of an idiom or a fixed expression into another language depends on many factors. It is not only a question of finding idioms with similar meaning in the TL, but also a matter of significance of the specific lexical items constituting the idiom, frequency of use, context, and appropriate register. Finding an idiom of similar meaning and similar form in the TL may seem the ideal solution, but that is not always possible. Questions of style, register, and rhetorical effect must also be taken into consideration. Fernando and Flavellm (1981; 82), are correct in warning us against the 'strong unconscious urge in most translators to search hard for an idiom in the receptor-language, however inappropriate it may be'. This means that in most cases the translator will not find an ideal idiom to fulfil the need for its translation. Meanwhile, regarding the translation which concerns the above word level, Baker, (1992; 72-28), proposes these **four strategies** to translate idioms.

1- Using an idiom of similar meaning and form (Baker; 1992: 72): This first strategy 'involves using an idiom in the TL which conveys roughly the same meaning as that of the SL idiom and, in addition, consists of equivalent lexical items (Baker; 1992: 72). Nevertheless, it goes without saying that this kind of match cannot be always possible. Usually they might pertain to idioms having the same origin (deriving from myths, literature, similar traditions and usages or shared between cultures throughout the times). **Example:**

English: I went to the dentist, and asked him to fill the molar, and remove the wisdom tooth at the same time. Might as well *kill two birds with one stone* (Learn English animal idioms)

Albanian: Shkova tek dentisti dhe i kërkova të më mbushte dhëmballën dhe njëkohësisht të më hiqte dhëmbin e pjekurisë. Kështu, *me një gur vrisja dy zogj.*

The idiom *to kill two birds with one stone* has similar meaning and form with the Albanian idiom *me një gur vras dy zogj* (Qesku; 2000: 560). *'Apple of discord'*, which at the same time is a borrowed one from the Greek mythology (Siefring; 2004: 8) and in Albanian the same borrowed form '*mollë sherri'* (Qesku; 2000: 43) is used. **Similar examples include:** *Be frightened to death* (Siefring; 2004: 75) = 'Jam i trembur për vdekje' (Stefanllari; 1998: 127); *Go downhill* (Siefring; 2004: 85) = 'Shkon tatëpjetë' (Stefanllari; 1998: 127) ; *Take your hat off to* (Siefring; 2004: 138) = 'Heq kapelen dikujt' (Stefanllari; 1998: 391); *You reap what you sow* (Siefring; 2004: 239) = 'Ç'të mbjellësh do të korrësh' (Qesku; 2000: 878); *Reap the benefits (fruits) of* (Siefring; 2004: 324) = 'Korr fitimet e' (Stefanllari; 1998: 324); *Free rein* (Siefring; 2004: 240) = 'Frerët e lira' (Qesku; 2000: 897).

2 - Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form (Baker; 1992:74): It is often possible to find an idiom or fixed expression in the TL which has a meaning similar to that of the source idiom or expression, but which consists of different lexical items (Baker; 1992: 74). **Example 1:** The English expression *be as snug as bug in a rag* and the Albanian expression *si veshka mes dhjamit* (Qesku; 2000: 1089) (literally - *like the kidney wrapped in fat*), use different lexical components to express almost the same idea.- **Example 2: *As fit as a fiddle*** is used in English to say that a person is quite healthy, while in Albanian the equivalent version would be **'*si kokërr molle'*** (lit. *like an apple*) (Stefanllari; 1998: 7). Again both idioms have similar meaning and different lexical components. **Other examples:** *Dig your own grave* (Siefring; 2004: 79) = 'I hap varrin vetes' (Qesku; 2000: 440); *Dog eat dog* (Siefring; 2004: 81) = Ha njeriu njerinë (Stefanllari; 1998: 91); *Wet behind the ears* (Siefring; 2004: 90) = 'I ka buzët me qumësht' (Stefanllari; 1998: 432); *Out of the frying pan into the fire* (Siefring; 2004: 117)   = 'Nga shiu në breshër' (Stefanllari; 1998: 292); *In seventh heaven* (Siefring; 2004:141) = 'Zë qiellin me dorë' (Qesku; 2000: 1019); *Take root* (Siefring; 2004: 247)   = Hedh rrënjë (Stefanllari; 1998: 394).

3- Translation by paraphrase (Baker; 1992: 74): This strategy is mostly used when 'a match cannot be found in the TL or when it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic language in the TT, because of the differences in stylistic preferences of the SL and TL.

Example 1:

English: a. John, when do you plan to buy a house? **b.** *When my ship comes home.*

Albanian: a. Xhon, kur ke ndër mend të blesh shtëpi? **b.** *Kur t'i kem xhepat plot.*

Backtranslation: a. John, when do you *intend* to buy a house? **b.** When my *pockets are full.*

Based on Siefring (2004; 259), the idiom '*when my ship comes in' (*or *home)*, means 'when someone's fortune is made' and 'it dates back to the period of Britain's maritime empire, when the safe arrival of a valuable cargo meant an instant fortune for the owner and those who had shares in the enterprise'. **Example 2:**

English: *Anne, please help me out of jam. I need a ride to the city.*

Based on the definition provided by Qesku (2000; 545), one of the meanings of the word *jam* has been translated as 'hall, telash, kokëçarje, bela' therefore the translation of this joke would be something like:

Albanian: *Ana, të lutem më ndihmo të dal nga ky hall. Kam nevojë të më çosh me makinë në qytet.*

 The expression *in/out of jam* has been translated by using *dal nga një hall/telash.* Nevertheless, it should be noted that the word 'jam' in the meaning of 'traffic jam' has no equivalent in Albanian, therefore, the double meaning implied in the joke is impossible to be conveyed too.

Other examples: *With flying colours* (Siefring; 2004: 59) = 'Me lavdi, faqendritur' (Qesku; 2000: 196); *Follow your nose* (Siefring; 2004: 113) = 'Eci drejt përpara '(Stefanllari, 1998, p. 120); *Come (or go) under the hammer* (Siefring; 2004:134) = 'Shitet/del në ankand' (Stefanllari; 1998: 167).

4 - Translation by omission: The omission procedure works the same way as with single words. It may be applied when:

a. there is no close match in the TL;

b. its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased; or

c. stylistic reasons (Baker; 1992: 77).

Apart from strategies proposed by Baker, we may use even some of the general strategies for translation proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet;

a) The Borrowing: Languages may borrow not only single words, but even idioms or expressions, though probably to a lesser extent. In the introduction of his dictionary Jashari, 2007, p. iii-iv, says that '*shumë nga këto shprehje të përkthyera apo si në gjuhë të huaj, dalin në shtyp, letërsi e përkthyer…fjalime, diskutime, debate, intervista e*

biseda të tjera, sidomos rreth çështjeve politike, ekonomike e shoqërore'. (*lit. backtranslating*) *Many of these translated expressions either translated, or in their original form, appear in the press, in the translated literature…speeches, discussions, debates, interviews and other conversations, especially those related to political, economic and social issues.*

Further he states that 'huazimet frazeologjike, siç dihet janë shprehje që përdoren të papërkthyera në gjuhën shqipe, ruajnë të njëjtën fonetike me atë origjinare: bing bang, big brother, fifty-fifty, etc' (Jashari; 2007: 8-11) (*lit. backtranslating*) *As already known, phraseological borrowings are expressions used in Albanian in their non-translated form and keep the same phonetic form as the original one.* **Other examples** of borrowed expressions provided in this work:

It is the ABC = 'Është ABECEJA' (Jashari; 2007: 2); *The black sheep* = 'Dele e zezë' (Jashari; 2007: 31); *Fifty-fifty* = 'Pesëdhjetë e pesëdhjetë, pesë e pesë, barabar, pa humbur askush' (Jashari; 2007: 363)

Example 2: From the famous story of the roman emperor, Julius Cesar, who wanted to pass the river Rubicon, the following idiomatic expression has been borrowed in several languages: *The die is cast* = 'Zaret u hodhën/ç'u bë u b'ë (Stefanllari; 1998: 88); *The die is cast* - an event has happened or a decision has been taken that cannot be changed. O. This expression has its origins in Julius Caesar's remark as he was about to cross the Rubicon, as reported by the Roman historian Suetonius: *jacta alea esto – 'let the die be cast'* (Siefring; 2004: 78).

Evidently, this idiom pertains to a very special situation and context, which explains why it has simply been borrowed in its almost unchanged form (Compare with the French version *les dés sont jetés,* where the only difference is that in French the noun die is used in its plural form.

We could say the same for many other idioms with a historic background such as a *Pyrrhic victory: 'a victory gained at too great a cost. O. Pyrrhus was a king of Epirus, who defeated the Romans at Asculum in 279 BC, but in doing so sustained heavy losses and lost his finest troops'* (Siefring; 2004: 232).

b) The Calque: Even this second procedure is used for both single words and expressions. **Example:** The translation of the idiom, *bury the head in the sand,* into Albanian is *Fshihem si struci në rërë* (which implies to hide oneself, in the same manner as an ostrich does, by burying the head in the sand), and can be related to the

case when the calque respects the syntactic structure of the Albanian language. Or if we consider some of Shakespeare's sayings having entered into the realm of idioms as for example: *Much ado for nothing* = 'shumë zhurmë për asgjë' ; *To be, or not to be* = 'të rrosh, a të mos rrosh'; [shprehja vjen nga monologu i Hamletit në tragjedinë me të njëjtën titull të Shekspirit (Akti III, Skena I; 362) (lit. backtraslating: The expression is taken from the monologue of Hamlet, in the tragedy with the same title of Shakespeare (Act III, Scene I)].

If we consider that some of the idioms have almost the same form in many languages, we will be able to understand why this form of borrowing enriches the languages in general: *It's a dog's life* = 'është jetë qeni'; *You have made your bed, now you must lie on it* = 'si shtron, ashtu gjen' (Stefanllari; 1988: 262)

It is obvious that these examples represent pure cases of calques. Normally, we should not endeavor finding calques for every each of the idioms we want to translate.

c) Equivalence: We may distinguish three main cases of equivalence in idiom translation:

1. Full Equivalence: We may find the full corresponding meaning and form from the SL to the TL. The idiom is fully translatable and it conveys the meaning in the same way in both languages. **Example:** *Strike while the iron is hot* = 'Hekuri rrihet sa është i nxehtë' (Stefanllari; 1988: 381).

In this case either meaning or form is given in both languages. We may even find the equivalent of some idioms in other languages as well. The correspondent translation of this idiom into French would be, 'il faut battre le fer pendant qu'il est chaud'. This fact shows what we mentioned before, that languages borrow and lend not only mere words, but also idioms or other expressions. **Example 2:** When we want to get the conversation going we say: 'break the ice' which has a full correspondence into Albanian, which is 'thyej akullin'. The following idioms have **full equivalence** into Albanian: *Behind bars* = 'në burg' (Stefanllari; 1998:21); - though, we might also use a calque of this expression and say '*prapa hekurave*', where '*prapa*' means 'behind' and '*hekurave*' (irons) 'the bars'. Other examples: *Behind one's back* = 'pas shpinës, krahëve të dikujt' (Stefanllari; 1998: 21); *Drag one's feet* = 'veproj ngadalë, pa u nxituar' (Stefanllari; 1998: 96); *On the tip of tongue* = në majë të gjuhës (Stefanllari; 1998: 288).

2. Partial Equivalence: In this case, we are able to convey the meaning of the idiom into the TL, but the components of the idioms are different, consequently the form is also different. **Example 1:** *Let the cat out of the bag* = 'Ia zbuloj petët lakrorit, nxjerr sekretin'. The meaning of the Albanian idioms is similar to the English one and does not have full correspondence, because the SL implies to discover a secret by mistake, unintentionally, while in the TL in implies the discovery of the secret, but not that of doing it by mistake. According to Spears (2005: 217), the idiom to '*lose one's shirt means*': Fig. 'to lose a lot of money; to lose all of one's assets (as if one had even lost one's shirt). I almost lost my shirt on that deal. I just lost my shirt at the racetrack.' In Albanian this idiom would be translated by the idiom '*lë këmishën*' (lit. 'let one's shirt'). In fact, the verb'*lë*' is many often used a synonym of the word '*humb/humbas*' (to lose).

'*Like lambs to the slaughter*' and '*like a lamb to the slaughter*': Fig. quietly and without seeming to realize the likely difficulties or dangers of a situation. *Young men fighting in World War I simply went like lambs to the slaughter.* The Albanian version would be '*si cjapi te kasapi*' (literally translated:'*a billy goat to the butcher*') (Spears; 2005: 404-405). **Other Examples: 1.** *Beyond a shadow of doubt* = 'Pa pikë dyshimi'; **2.** *Turn a deaf ear* = 'Bëj një vesh shurdh'; **3.** *Turn a blind eye* = 'Bëj një sy qorr'; **4.** *One swallow does not make a summer* = 'Me një lule nuk vjen pranvera'. In the second and third idioms, again there is not a full equivalence. While the idioms in the TL render the correct meaning of those in the SL, we are obligated to translate the verb '*turn*' by using the Albanian verb '*bëj*'. In both cases these idioms represent what Bell, (1991;15), argues that a total equivalence between a SL and TL text is something that can never be fully achieved.

3. No Equivalence: In this case there is neither correspondence, nor possibility to translate and we have to recur to different translation methods:

– *a. Glass ceiling* – this very specific idiom describing an inappropriate attitude towards women's right to work or study, does not exist in Albanian language and consequently it poses a real problem to the translator, if the latter wants to maintain the stylistic elements of the idiom or of the context in which such an idiom has been used. Even calque as a procedure cannot be applied. We could proceed with paraphrasing. – *b. Left-handed compliment* –In this case, the term compliment may be maintained and the term left-handed may be translated by another term having a synonymic meaning

with it. – ***c. To hear something straight from the horse's mouth*** – This is another typical idiom whose meaning is difficult to give into our language by an equivalent one. Of course, we may propose other alternatives to translate it, but not to find the equivalent.

It is important to mention that in the introduction of his *Fjalor Frazeologjik Anglisht-Shqip,* Stefanllari (1998), describes the methods used for the translation and presentation of the English idioms into Albanian and he say that: '' Në shqipërim ne kemi përdorur këto lloje përkthimesh:

a) Përkthimin me barazvlerës të plotë të gjuhës shqipe. Barazavlerës të plotë janë ata monoekuivalentë të gjuhës shqipe që përputhen me njësitë përgjegjëse të gjuhës angleze nga kuptimi, përbërja leksikore, figuracioni, vlerat stilistikore dhe struktura gramatikore: *An apple of discord* = 'mollë sherri' (Stefanllari; 1998: 3); *Buy a pig in a poke* = 'blej derr në thes' (Stefanllari; 1998: 3); *Play with fire* = 'luaj me zjarrin' (Stefanllari; 1998: 3)

***[Literally backtranslating:* a**) During translation into Albanian we have used these kinds of translation techniques: Translation with fully equivalent idioms into Albanian language. Fully equivalent idioms are the mono-equivalent expressions into Albanian which correspond to the relevant components of the English ones by meaning, lexical components, figurativeness, stylistic values and grammatical structures].

This first procedure is the same as the first translating strategy suggested by Baker and specifically: Using an idiom of *similar meaning and form.*

b) Përkthimi i idiomave me barazvlerës të pjessshëm. Përkthimi me barazvlerës frazeologjikë të pjesshëm transmeton plotësisht kuptimin e njësisë, por ruan dallime leksikore, gramatikore ose leksiko-gramatikore, si p.sh: *A wolf in sheep's clothing* = 'ujk me lëkurë deleje, qengji' (Stefanllari, 1998, p. iii); *Cudgel (beat) one's brains* = 'vras mendjen' (Stefanllari; 1998: 3); *Eat one's words* = 'ha fjalën' (Stefanllari; 1998: 3)

***[Literally backtranslating:* b**) Translation with partially equivalent idioms. This translation transmits the full meaning of the idiomatic unit, but keeps lexical, grammatical or lexico-grammatical differences].

This second strategy used by the authors of the dictionary reflects the second one mentioned in Baker, 1992 and concretely: *Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form.*

c) Përkthimin me anë të togfjalëshave të ndryshueshëm dhe të qëndrueshëm. Ky lloj përkthimi është bërë në disa forma. Së pari, nëpërmjet përkthimit me perifrazë. Ky lloj përkthimi është i përshtatshëm për idiomat që lidhen me ngjarje historike ose episodike si dhe idiomat me karakter terminologjik. Njëkohësisht përkthimi i idiomave është bërë edhe me ndihmën e frazeologjizmave kalke, si p.sh: *Take part* = 'marr pjesë '(Stefanllari; 1998: 3); *Take measures* = 'marr masa '(Stefanllari; 1998:3); *Break the ice* = 'thyej akullin' (Stefanllari; 1998: 3).

[Literally backtranslating: **c**) Translation by a changeable or unchangeable group of words. This translation has been performed in several ways. Firstly, by using the paraphrase. This type of translation is appropriate for idioms related to historical or episodic events or terminological idioms. The translation of the idioms has been performed even by using phraseological expressions, such as calque].

This third technique is similar to the "Translation by paraphrase" suggested by Baker, or "The calque"suggested by Vinay & Daberlnet.

d) Përkthimin e idiomave me anë të ekuivalent me një fjalë, si p.sh: *Hook, line and sinker* = 'tërësisht; plotësisht'

[Literally backtranslating: **d**) Translation of idioms with one-word equivalents].

e) Përkthim me forma të kombinuara të përkthimeve. Pra, përkthimin e kemi dhënë me paralele frazeologjike, me perifrazim dhe me një fjalë të vetme, si p.sh: *Keep a quiet (still) tongue in one's head = '*hesht, kyç gojën, mbaj gjuhën e mbledhur'*; Talk nineteen to the dozen –'*llomotis, flas pa pushim, flas si çatalle mulliri' (Stefanllari; 1998: 4)

[Literally backtranslating: **e**) Translation with combined types of idioms. Therefore, the translation has been performed with parallel phraseological expressions, paraphrase or one-word equivalents].

As we might see, the authors, as Stefanllari concedes, have used the main translation techniques suggested in Baker's and Vinay & Daberlnet's books.

3. CONCLUSION

This paper is an attempt to tackle only a few of the problems we face with during the study of idioms and their translation in particular. We have aimed to prove that the English idioms can be translated into Albanian. The starting point to succeed in translating idioms reflects the statement of Jakobson that '*all human knowledge can be translated*' and that only '*poetry is by definition untranslatable*'. We have shown that idioms are peculiar modes of expression which usually do not comply with the logical and grammatical rules. It is a well-known fact that English is a highly idiomatic language used in many fields and linguistics levels. To better serve the purpose of our paper, we have considered mainly those which pertain to the everyday and literary idioms, as the most frequently used ones.

Since idioms are considered as kind of fixed expressions, they allow little or no variation in form. Based on the works of eminent scholars, especially Baker, Moon, who dealt directly with the study of idioms and other scholars, such as Fernando, Newmark, Catford, Vinay & Darbelnet who mostly wrote about the translation in general, we deduce that the meaning of the idioms is usually metaphorical and they should be translated as a single unit. Being culturally based, they are often heard being used among everyday conversations of the people of the SC. Nevertheless, sometimes defining the meaning, explaining how or why people use them is, sometimes, difficult for the people themselves. To define the meaning of an idiom becomes difficult from the TC because, that culture might not have such idiomatic expression, the idiomaticity in another language is expressed with other words, different lexemes, and different word-order or it is not actually an idiom in the TC. Moreover, language, even those pertaining to the same family might be that different that the concept, the meaning or use of an idiom is not an idiom but a cliché, a simple word, or in other cases it simply does not exist at all in the TC. Still, our aim is not to prove the existence of such idioms in the TC, rather, to explore if the problematics and strategies defined by Baker, and Vinay & Darbelnet can actually be applied in the translations of idioms in Albanian.

In the paper, we have tried to analyse the idioms as a linguistics feature, the difficulties to understand and interpret them and finally to present what can be some of the most appropriate techniques to render their meaning as accurately as possible. Apart from the theoretical writings, a better way which would lead to more successful translation would be to include their study and use in further reading comprehension and perform

an in-depth study to collect new idioms from the various levels of language, why not creating neologisms by using the calque and paraphrase techniques described in this thesis. As Baker suggests, idioms can be translated: by a more general word, by a more neutral/less expressive word, by cultural substitution, using a loan or a loan word plus explanation, by paraphrase, by omission, by illustration. Such strategies are revised by Baker (2011; 97-107), a later edition of the first, confirming this way that the problem of idioms still persists, and moreover the strategies are moulded according to the languages under study. Still, this edition is a focus of further future study.

On the other hand, some of the methods proposed by Vinay & Darbelnet in *A Methodology for Translation* are: borrowing; calque; literal translation; transposition; modulation; equivalence; adaptation; (Venuti; 2004: 84-91). In case there is no corresponding idiom, the borrowing procedure or literal translation may be used, but only in very isolated cases.

There cannot be fixed standards for translating idioms, consequently, it is up to the translator to proceed with the appropriate translation methods and procedures which best convey the meaning of the idiom and context of use. As a principle, languages have their set of idioms which embodies the linguistic reality of the speakers of a certain language. As an integral part of the language, the use of idioms covers many activities and aspects of human life. Thus, their study should be extended beyond mere translation studies and developed extensively, as a way to avenue the development of the language itself. Finally, we conclude that, being cultural-bound and representing one of the most difficult cases of translation, idioms and fixed expressions fall within the area of translatability, therefore, the methods described by Baker and Vinay & Darbelnet are applicable for Albanian language as well. Furthermore, efforts should be made in studying them more in depth, in developing and enriching the language more and more by means of techniques as the borrowing and calques, creating idiomatic neologisms also, so that the idioms might not be 'hard nuts to crack'.

GLOSSARY
ST – Source Text
TT – Target Text
SL – Source Language
TL – Target Language
SC – Source Culture
TC – Target Culture
TT – Target Text

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