Abdulmenem Hamdache
Lebanese International University
Tripoli, Lebanon
raycosta77@yahoo.com

Contrastive study of Arabic and English idioms and pragmatic accuracy of online translation applications

Abstract

When Lebanese English language learners send emails to their instructor, they translate Arabic idioms into English using online applications. This often results in incoherent and inconsistent translation that hampers communication between student and instructor. Wrong semantic and pragmatic use of English as L2 in case of idioms leads to difficulty in verbalizing the necessary meaning. Therefore, this research is aimed at contrasting and comparing idioms between Arabic and English, particularly, two Arabic idioms مربط الفرس 'the bottom line' and بنت الحلال 'a bride' widely used in writing and speaking, to find out whether the concordances and collocations of these idioms concur and differ in meaning when translated into English using online applications. When the idioms are literally translated, the meaning totally changes. This study adopts corpus linguistics approach making use of 2 corpora – International Corpus of Arabic Website of Bibliotheca Alexandrina and The Corpus of Contemporary American English – to find and analyze instances quantitatively and qualitatively of how the two idioms collocated and concorded in Arabic and English. Continuous sampling of the tokens and contextual analysis enabled to list all the meanings found for the idioms. The results indicate that it is possible for both Arabic idioms to find English units (a multiword unit and a word correspondingly) with meaning equivalency, however, oftentimes their translated versions (especially of the second idiom) lacked accuracy to provide the literal and pragmatic meanings of the idioms.

Keywords: phraseology, prefabs, idiom, meaning equivalency, collocation, concordance, corpus linguistics

Хамдаше Абдулменем
Ливанский международный университет
г. Триполи, Ливан
raycosta77@yahoo.com

Перевод арабских идиом на английский язык с помощью онлайн приложений: контрастивное корпусное исследование

Аннотация

Когда ливанцы, изучающие английский язык, отправляют электронные сообщения своим преподавателям, они переводят арабские идиомы на английский язык, используя онлайн приложения. При этом перевод зачастую получается неадекватный, что создаёт сложности в общении студента с преподавателем. В случае идиом неверная семантика и прагматика переводной версии приводит к неудачам в вербализации необходимых значений. Это послужило мотивацией к проведению настоящего исследования, нацеленного на сравнительно-сопоставительные характеристики двух арабских идиом – مربط الفرس 'суть / важнейшая составляющая' и بنت الحلال 'невеста', – часто используемых в письменной и устной речи, и их английских

переводов с помощью приложений. Требовалось выяснить, насколько их конкордансы и коллокации совпадают и различаются, ведь при буквальном переводе оригинальное значение идиомы зачастую кардинально меняется. В данной статье применён подход корпусной лингвистики, а именно были использованы два корпуса – Международный корпус арабского языка Александрийской библиотеки и Корпус современного американского варианта английского языка – для проведения количественного и качественного анализа вхождений указанных оригинальных идиом и их переводов. Посредством сплошной выборки и контекстного анализа был составлен перечень значений идиом и их переводных версий. Результаты показывают, что арабские идиомы-оригиналы имеют полные эквиваленты в английском языке (устойчивое выражение и отдельное слово соответственно), однако часто семантика и прагматика переводных версий, полученных с помощью онлайн приложений, не соответствует оригиналу, особенно для второй идиомы.

Ключевые слова: фразеология, устойчивые выражения, идиома, эквивалентное значение, коллокация, конкорданс, корпусная лингвистика

1. Introduction

Unlike native speakers (NS), non-native speakers (NNS) who learn English as L2 struggle to find the correct idioms for their intended utterances. These idioms come in multiple words such as razor-sharp, make inroads into, nun down, in the wee hours, by hook or by crook. They constitute the phraseological part accounting for nativeness in language [Howarth, 1996] which is a desirable skill for most L2 learners. Idioms and other multiword units are studied within phraseology. Phraseology is defined as prefabricated language (prefabs) used in receptive and productive skills. This use is an internalized process which is a key element to native-like language characteristics.

In the era of hi-tech, corpus linguistics approach gives us a perfect tool to study true-to-fact usage of prefabs including idioms. It was stated by [Lindquist, 2009] that corpus linguistics is a methodology containing a number of methods that can be used by researchers in various disciplines including phraseology. Corpus linguistics analyzes naturally occurring language in computerized corpora. The analysis is performed by a computer with specialized software. This research used collocations and concordances from ICA (International Corpus of Arabic) and COCA (The Corpus of Contemporary American English) to compare and contrast the original meanings of two Arabic idioms مربط الفرس and بنت الحلال and the meanings of their English versions when they are pragmatically and correctly used when translated into English or lack thereof.

A few words should be said about the term "concordance". It can be used in two meanings. Firstly, it is the listing of all occurrences of a given single word or multiword complex gathered from various sources placed in an annotated corpus1. Secondly, as defined by [Miller et al., 1993], concordance is a textual corpus and a lexicon so combined that every substantive word in the text is linked to its appropriate sense in the lexicon. In this research, concordances (in the first meaning of the term) were used to perform quantitative and qualitative analyses to count the collocations where مربط الفرس and بنت الحلال meant the same in their English versions and when they differed.

When Lebanese English language learners try to translate some Arabic idioms into English, it results in incoherent and inconsistent meanings which negatively affect the fluency of writing. This renders the intelligibility and communication unnatural look to the native eye. To be able to produce natural looking language in Arabic and English, NNS must acquire the

intuition of language as NS have inherently. When compared and contrasted, NS phraseology contains many prefabs occurrences while NNS has limited number of used prefabs if any at all.

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the concordances and collocations of مربط الفرس and بنت الحلال when they have the meanings in English similar to their original meanings in Arabic?

2. Do students adopt the results of translation in their writing verbatim or otherwise?

1.1. Literature review

In this literature review, two issues are addressed: first, units studied within the frame of phraseology and second, corpora and corpus linguistics approach.

According to [Glaser, 1988], phraseology is the linguistic description of set expressions whose meaning can't be derived from their parts. Prefabs as defined by [Roey, 1990] are the linguistic phenomena wherein a given vocabulary item prefers the company of other words. DeCarrico & Nattinger [1988] stated that prefabs are linguistic devices studied from a number of views, such as lexical terms prefabs, idioms formulaic sequences and lexical bundles, carried out by linguists due to the fact they're a familiar feature of language. Prefabs made up more than half of the local students writings of native system [Erman & Warren, 2000]. An appropriate command of them is a vital part of fluent and idiomatic production in writing and speaking. Cowie [1991] noted that phrasal expressions are composites or multiword devices. He also referred to them as traditional expressions or as phrasal (lexical) items. Idiom refers to expressions that can be semantically completely opaque, e.g., shoot the breeze, and spill the beans. Idioms that aren't completely opaque, e.g., let off steam, hang on by the skin are figurative idioms. The biggest classes of multiword devices are restricted collocations (RCs). These are usually expressions wherein one detail has a specialized meaning that occurs best in mixture with the alternative detail, e. g., curry favor or put on a display. Howarth [1996] noted preceding research which confirmed that about half of the English journalistic prose includes restricted collocations or idioms. He discovered that nonnatives make extra sparing use of RCs than natives. However, they make many errors. Yet, these collocation mistakes do not appear to correlate intently with other measures of a learner's skills. Idioms present fewer issues for nonnatives than restricted collocations do, presumably due to the fact that idioms tend to be notably fixed and salient. Howarth [1996] showed that EFL instructors, knowing little of the phraseological mechanism of the language, lead inexperienced persons to believe that English has best two categories: loose combinations and idioms, with little focus of the center ground occupied through RCs.

On the other hand, Arab grammarians [Al-Jahith, 1948 ; Ibn-Jinni, 1952 ; Al-Jurjani, 1978] delved into the meaning of collocation in Arabic. According to Al-Jurjanı [1978], a lexical item is meaningful when it is used in a context and appears in fixed relationships with different elements consistent with positive linguistic and nonlinguistic criteria. For example, we can't provide an explanation for lexical units like, عّذب ,انيق ,حسن ,رشيق ,حلو by looking up the meaning of their separate phrases, for the reason that every set has an extended utterance that means altogether which in this situation refers back to the speaker's feelings. A factor is worth citing here is that the idea of collocation is handled in Arabic under one of a kind labels, i.e., al-tadaam التضام; al-musaahaba al-lugawiyyah المصاحبة اللغوية; al-mutalazimat al-lafziyyah المتلازمات اللفظية .

Ghazala [1985 as cited in Mustafa, 2010, p. 35], classifies al-mutalazımat al-latzıyyah into three categories:

التركيب القواعدي للمتلازمات اللفظية (the grammatical patterns of collocations);

التركيب اللفظي للمتلازمات اللفظية (the relationship between the parts of the combination);

التركيب الاسلوبي للمتلازمات اللفظية (the stylistic patterns of collocations).

In the section of translation, Al Saidi [2012] researched the interpretation of body part idioms (BPls), such as you are my heart, my heart bleeds for her, take my heart, from English into Arabic no matter their elevated style. It makes a special importance of using the native language resources in locating the dynamic (idiomatic) equivalencies. The first-rate strategy furnished that it is to be in the target language. The observation aims to offer a few definitions of idioms and identifies the challenges idioms pose throughout the translation manner and proposes a theoretical model for managing such issues. As a result, the researcher concludes that the important problem in translating is that they bring various elements of that meaning. Also, Arabic and English, regardless of the fundamental cultural, social, religious and political differences among them, have many perfect or nearly ideal idiomatic equivalents in both corpora.

Nowadays, language corpora are those native language resources that represent various speech genres, written and oral, embracing large time periods. It was claimed [Biber, et al., 2004] that a general reference corpus is not a collection of materials from different specialist areas – technical, dialectal, etc. – it is a collection of materials that is broadly homogeneous but gathered from a variety of sources. These materials are texts of certain size. Corpus linguistics is targeted at a set of texts, written or spoken, that may be stored and processed using analytical software program for qualitative and quantitative evaluation [Carter et al., 2007].

Quantitative evaluation, as described by [Aliaga & Gunderson, 2000], is collecting numerical statistics which might be analyzed using mathematical strategies. Qualitative study uses the investigator's potential to interpret samples of language in context which can be the way for classifying examples in a particular corpus by their meanings [Parkinson & Drislane, 2011].

2. This study

2.1. Methodology

Data collection. The data were collected from the ICA and COCA, the targeted tokens were idioms مربط الفرس and بنت الحلال as well as their English equivalents and variations when translated. These corpora were chosen as popular ones providing sizable number of texts of various genres and forms: ICA contains 100 million Arabic words, and COCA contains more than 560 million English words, both are equally divided among spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers and academic texts.

Data analysis. For corpus-based studies, quantitative techniques are essential to compare patterns in language phenomena use. However, a crucial part of the corpus-based approach is going beyond the quantitative patterns and moving deeper into qualitative features of the examined phenomena to propose functional interpretations explaining why the patterns exist.

The first part of the study looked for the collocations of مربط الفرس and بنت الحلال and their frequency concordances in text to deduce whether they have equivalence in meaning in English. Each of the two original Arabic idioms were entered in KWIC (keyword in context) automatic search of ICA to find out how many times were used in this corpus. Then, concordances of مربط الفرس and بنت الحلال were copied from ICA and pasted into online translation applications: Bing Translator, Cambridge Dictionary and Google Translate. Later, the study looked for tokens related to them to construe the variations in meaning for each idiom. Finally, the concordances of the idioms were looked up to establish the contextual meaning of how the idioms interact with other words to serve the intended utterances.

The second part of the study looked for the literal translations of مربط الفرس and بنت الحلال into English in COCA. Then the translations were entered into KWIC to determine their frequency. After that, the frequency lists were sorted out to detect any equivalence in meaning of the translated idioms with the Arabic peers. The sort-out lists were divided into tokens to categorize the variations in meaning of the English translations of the idioms. Finally, the results were compared and contrasted in Arabic and English contexts.

2.2. Results and discussion

2.2.1. Results

Figures 1–2 show that in the ICA corpus of 100 million words coming from various sources (books, magazines, articles, etc.), both Arabic idioms are characterized by similar frequency of occurrence: the idiom مربط الفرس was used 29 times (Fig. 1), and the idiom بنت الحلال was used 22 times (Fig. 2). Being almost the same frequent, they differed as far as the genres and sources. The idiom مربط الفرس was mostly used in press and net articles devoted to science, art and culture with very few occurrences from literature (fiction?) coming from books. Meanwhile, the idiom بنت الحلال appeared mostly in literature more often coming from book sources and net articles with press being a lesser frequent source.

F i g u r e 1. **Frequency list of مربط الفرس in ICA**

When copied from the fist frequency list (Fig. 1) and pasted into online translation applications, the first idiom مربط الفرس brought different results meaning that the translations provided by several online applications such as Bing Translator, Cambridge Dictionary, and Google Translate sometimes yielded different meanings. Bing and Cambridge Dictionary gave the translation variant with the correct literal and pragmatic meaning which is the crux of the matter. Figure 3 shows the concordances of the crux of the matter in COCA which means 'the bottom line' or 'the most important thing', any of these being a perfect match for the meaning of the idiom in question in all its concordances.

However, Google gave sometimes stall, and other times horse stall or the stud of the horse. Stall had one meaning which was 'booth' or 'stand'. Likewise, horse stall had one meaning which is 'horse stable' or 'shed'. Since stall and horse stall had no significance in

meaning equivalencies to the study, I entered the stud of the horse in COCA searching for meaningful concordances. The search turned up zero results in COCA. I then searched for the stud only looking for frequency to see whether any collocates meant 'the bottom line'. The result showed that the stud was used 137 times in COCA corpus of 560 million words. Figure 4 shows the collocations of the stud in English with other words.

Search Results 22 Result Found 14.034 Seconds

Report	Country	Source	Genre					Sentence	Context
Report	Egypt	Press	Miscellaneous	الجديدة ترى ضرورة الحفاظ على البيت الذي تربي	بنت الحلال	الذي ولدت فيه وتعلمت من جدرانه ـ وأن	.1	Sentence	Context
Report	Egypt	Press	Miscellaneous	الجديدة من بنات أفكاره باعتبار أن مجلس الجامعة	بنت الحلال	أو بالقلق وهو يعرض على مجلس جامعته والعمداء	.2	Sentence	Context
Report	Saudi Arabia	Press	Literature	التي توفر له أسباب الراحة ـ وتقوي ذراعه	بنت الحلال	في مشاريع أخرى رابحة ـ وما ينقصه هو	.3	Sentence	Context
Report	Outside Arab World	Books	Literature	؟ + قد أبدو صغيرة على	بنت الحلال	تصدق ـ + ماذا تقولين يا	.4	Sentence	Context
Report	N/A	Books	Literature	ـ الغيبة ـ نور ـ	بنت الحلال	يا أبي ـ صدقتني ـ لكن حين أجد	.5	Sentence	Context
Report	N/A	Net_Articles	Literature	" لبنا : ـ " والله	بنت الحلال	ناصر : ـ " واحد يا	.6	Sentence	Context
Report	N/A	Net_Articles	Literature	قومي " عبير : ـ "	بنت الحلال	" لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله يا	.7	Sentence	Context
Report	N/A	Net_Articles	Literature	أنتي تعرفين شمس تقول اللي يصدفه قلبها ...	بنت الحلال	لكن حركاته صارت اهدأ " ـ يا	.8	Sentence	Context
Report	N/A	Net_Articles	Literature	مصير الحب يتلاقى " شمس :	بنت الحلال	" سحر : ـ " يا	.9	Sentence	Context
Report	N/A	Books	Literature	التي تسر خاطرك . قال العم	بنت الحلال	صبحك الله بأنوار النبي يا بني ـ ورزقك	.10	Sentence	Context
Report	Syria	Books	Literature	التي تربحك .. ورغم ضعفي بلغة هؤلاء الناس	بنت الحلال	خير ـ على خير ـ الله يسعد لك	.11	Sentence	Context
Report	Syria	Books	Literature	لأخيك حامد . الذي بلغ سن الثلاثين ولم	بنت الحلال	ولأمر آخر خاص بنا . وهو البحث عن	.12	Sentence	Context
Report	Syria	Books	Literature	التي تناسبه ـ واليوم لما سمعت أن المداعيس	بنت الحلال	وصرت أتنسم أخبار الفتائل لعل الله يهيئ له	.13	Sentence	Context
Report	N/A	Books	Literature	ـ اليوم عيد ـ عرس العرب في ميونخ	بنت الحلال	نحتفل بقدومهم إلى ميونخ ـ أريد قطعة يا	.14	Sentence	Context
Report	N/A	Net_Articles	Literature	ودعك من عصيانى كانت لها أمنية	بنت الحلال	فأذق فؤادي غرحة بالبحث عن =	.15	Sentence	Context

F i g u r e 3. **Concordances of the crux of the matter in COCA**

	CLICK FOR MORE CONTEXT							HELP	SAVE TRANSLATE ANALYZE
1	2019	SPOK	CNN_Newsroom				off (INAUDIBLE) that there was something on the table in Hanoi. The crux of the matter seems to be how much can Kim Jong-un do on denuclea
2	2019	FIC	Fan Fic				" # Now it was Val's turn to shiver. So this was the crux of the matter then–not fear of leadership, but fear of where his leadership would
3	2019	NEWS	New York Times				TV director, will be the executive producers of the Netflix series. # The crux of the matter is that the adaptation of the novel can now benefit fro
4	2018	SPOK	Fox_Hannity				? Now, here's the problem and this is where we get to the crux of the matter. We have to analyze this deeply. What's happening is
5	2018	NEWS	Baltimore Sun				and brats of all kinds, a homebrew contest and -- to get to the crux of the matter -- more than 150 international, domestic and Maryland beers,
6	2017	SPOK	Fox: Ingraham Angle				. They do not want to hear from us, Laura and that's the crux of the matter. They do not want our names to be brought up again
7	2017	SPOK	Fox: O'Reilly Factor				undocumented criminals for federal authorities. They refuse to do that. That's the crux of the matter that irresponsible politicians like De Blasio
8	2016	MAG	Jezebel				Republican parties are on record as opposed to Proposition 60 as well. # The crux of the matter is money. Those campaigning against Prop 60 h
9	2016	ACAD	...e American Philosophical Soci...				in which that heated air may be applied.51 # This statement gets us to the crux of the matter. Follett almost says that this patent is a patent on
10	2015	SPOK	Fox: O'Reilly Factor				, use the phrase " deep lack of trust ". And that is the crux of the matter. Many Americans and Israelis will oppose any deal the President makes
11	2015	MAG	Atlantic				. Coz I trust nobody. " This remark seemed to get right at the crux of the matter. Liberty Reserve was a financial system, like all others,
12	2014	SPOK	Fox: The Five				workers can't do that because there are fewer jobs. And that's the crux of the matter. If you are not being treated fairly and I agree some
13	2014	MAG	Esquire				up with a good investigative apparatus. " # And here we get to the crux of the matter: If Elliot Rodger had been a Pakistani immigrant, would the
14	2013	MAG	Atlantic				He said it all depends on when the question is asked. # But the crux of the matter, he said in the deposition, was that O'Brien's suggestion

F i g u r e 4. **Collocations of مربط الفرس in COCA**

There are 100 tokens of the stud. For the sake of conciseness, I chose the mostly used collocations to analyze my results and these are: fee, locations, wall, and mare.

T a b l e 1. **Meanings of the stud collocations**

Idiom translation	The stud *fee*	The stud *locations*	The stud *wall*	The stud *mare*
Meaning	It is a price paid by the owner of a female animal to the owner of male animal for the right to breed to it.	It is a large-headed piece of metal that pierces and projects from a surface, especially for decoration.	It is an interior wall consisting of a frame of upright timbers to which laths and plasterboard are attached.	It is a female horse used for breeding.
Frequency	9	4	4	3

Comparing the results shown in Figure 4 and Table 1, we can see that the stud has no equivalency in meaning related to the actual translation of مربط الفرس into English which must mean 'the bottom line'.

When copied from the second frequency list (Fig. 2) and pasted into online translation applications, the second idiom بنت الحلال had no coherent meaning whatsoever which differs from the results for the first idiom that included adequate translation. Thus, the translation of بنت الحلال yielded halal girl in all the three applications: Bing Translator, Cambridge Dictionary and Google Translate. This translation meant nothing in Arabic. The accurate and literal translation must have meant bride. To further investigate whether halal girl meant something in English which could be close in the meaning to the original Arabic meaning, I looked for collocations of halal in COCA (see Fig. 5).

+ NOUN		NEW WORD	?	+ ADJ		NEW WORD	?	+ VERB		NEW WORD	?
50	8.84	meat		13	10.52	kosher		10	4.41	eat	
44	6.16	food		3	4.05	fresh		8	4.00	serve	
18	10.72	butcher		3	5.66	organic		8	4.10	sell	
13	4.72	market		3	9.15	permissible		6	5.51	obtain	
11	6.26	shop		2	2.73	hot		5	2.32	must	
10	5.81	restaurant		2	3.19	middle		5	3.04	buy	
10	7.89	turkey		2	3.96	unique		4	2.28	provide	
8	8.65	certification		2	4.75	joint		4	4.93	feature	
7	4.20	product		2	6.97	dietary		4	8.32	slaughter	
7	4.58	animal		2	8.06	lawful		3	3.05	produce	
6	8.02	tourism		2	12.31	women-only		3	4.54	demand	
5	2.59	law		1	4.12	nearby		3	4.68	clean	
5	3.82	opportunity		1	4.29	prominent		2	2.02	require	
5	5.47	meal		1	4.35	subsequent		2	2.34	carry	
5	7.29	cart		1	4.35	controversial		2	2.99	force	
5	11.56	hottie		1	4.36	distinct		2	3.14	post	

F i g u r e 5. **Collocations of بنت الحلال in COCA**

The word *Halal* generated 373 collocates. It appears that roughly 300 collocates of بنت الحلال are related mostly to food, and this has nothing to do with the meaning 'bride'. Therefore, بنت الحلال has absolutely no equivalency in meaning related to the actual English translation.

2.2.2. Discussion and Criticism

The first idiom مربط الفرس has one category of meaning in Arabic which is 'the bottom line'. The literal translation of مربط الفرس into English yielded several collocations where it meant 'the bottom line' in Bing Translator and Cambridge Dictionary while Google Translate did not produce coherent and accurate translation. However, the second idiom بنت الحلال meaning 'bride' did not have any equivalence in meaning when translated into English by either of the three online applications. Therefore, the first idiom had at times appropriate pragmatic meaning and proper implicature on the perlocutioner where it meant 'the bottom line', whereas the second idiom had none. This answers the first research question of what the concordances of بنت الحلال and مربط الفرس are when they have the same meanings in English and Arabic. The results show that it is possible for both Arabic idioms مربط الفرس and بنت الحلال to find English units (a phraseological unit and a word correspondingly) with meaning equivalency, however, oftentimes the translated versions lacked accuracy to provide the literal and pragmatic meanings of the idioms.

This study has two limitations. Firstly, it took into consideration the noun / noun translation of مربط الفرس and بنت الحلال neglecting lemmas and other possible collocations of noun / verb, noun / adjectives which could have led to finding one similarity or equivalence in meaning in English and Arabic.

The second limitation is connected with the method itself. The interpretations concerning the use of the idioms in different genres from various sources as well as concerning translation success and failures were obtained using language corpora. However, corpus linguistics approach is not free from criticism. N. Chomsky argued that, "corpus linguistics doesn't mean anything from a language perspective as it is concerned not with how language works, but with how language is observed. It is, therefore, external remnants of language rather than illustrations of its inner workings. Thus, it is not scientific" [as cited in Andor, 2004, p. 97]. Others critics of corpus linguistics, e. g. [Widdowson, 2000], stated that corpus linguistics decontextualizes the language in that it removes the language from its context and also removes it from an ethnography of communication.

Not accepting decontextualization argument, it must be admitted that this study did not include any participants to yield conclusive results of idiom translating between Arabic and English. There is no way of knowing whether students were able to detect the incongruent idiom and if they did what would they use instead to get the meaning across? Do they copy and paste verbatim or use transliteration?

Despite the criticism, the evidence of the positive attitude to utilizing corpora tools in translation is growing (see, e.g., the empirical study of [Mohammed, 2022] based on the data from the participants performing instrumental translation). Also, it is beneficial for teaching and learning language on the whole and idioms in particular as far as corpora are an inestimable source for various universal and genre-dependent textual conventions, therefore, with data from corpora we can move from incidental intuition-based learning to adopt systematic comprehensive approach based on authentic frequently used items [Bausela, 2016 ; Rafatbakhsh & Ahmadi, 2019].

3. Conclusion

This paper studied two Arabic idioms مربط الفرس and بنت الحلال to compare and contrast in meaning when literally translated into English. The idioms مربط الفرس and بنت الحلال pragmatically mean 'the bottom line' and 'a bride' in English. There were two instances of equivalence in meaning between the English version and Arabic version for the first idiom. However, there were no matches in meaning when the second idiom was translated into English. While both idioms sustained their meanings throughout the ICA, their English translations

crisscrossed over several unrelated meanings in COCA, and the original idiomatic meaning could be totally lost. As far as idioms and collocations are the touchstone of producing native or near native oral speech or writing, they must be targeted in the process of language learning and interpreters' training. Comparing the results on both idioms, it is also clear that being almost the same frequent, the second one poses a bigger challenge for Lebanese learners of English.

This research on contrastive idioms between Arabic and English can shed a light on the preconception that English language learners have about using instant online translation applications as being a reliable/unreliable (with varying degree) source of producing immaculate translation. It can also improve the translation apps available online which sometimes fail to produce the pragmatic meaning between the languages and result in misinforming learners.

Since this research was based on samples of a few exchanged emails between students and instructor where idioms were incoherently translated, further studies need to include a larger sample of student writings. The writings must include more idioms and larger translated texts to assess whether students can judge for themselves which idiom transfers the exact intended meaning in the target language and which doesn't. Whence such a study is conducted, it should provide an answer the second research question about whether students adopt the results of translation in their writing verbatim or otherwise.

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